“A mother is always a mother. She never stops worrying about her children, even when they are all grown up and have children of their own.” Worry and motherhood go together like Mom and apple pie. Sometimes the worries are very real.

In one article in Parenting Magazine, “Why Moms Worry” Jeannie Ralston (picture) writes: “When my first child, Gus, was 9 weeks old, I found I’d entered the big leagues. Of worrying. Of course, I naively thought I already knew something about worry. As if the arc of my career or my husband’s safety while traveling could compare to the nausea-inducing, heart-thumping fear I felt when I received that phone call from my friend who’d so generously babysat my son the day before. Desperately apologetic, she shatted an afternoon get-together with two neighbors by giving me the news she was in the hospital with meningitis and that I needed to watch Gus for symptoms. I'm not exaggerating when I tell you that I fell to my knees. I have witnesses.

Meningitis! Babies die of meningitis, I cried to myself as I clutched my tiny son and envisioned his writhing body in a plastic hospital bassinet, poked full of needles and tubes, while I sat vigil beside him, all bug-eyed, pale, and with splotches of gray hair where the color had been scared out of my strands. For the next week, during the incubation period, I slept (when I slept) with Gus on my chest so that I could feel every stirring. At the end of the week, he was fine, but I was as wrung-out as a cloth diaper and fully aware that I had only just begun to worry.

Worry is part of the dark underbelly of parenthood, the flip side of joy, pride, and fulfillment. The part they never really warn you about...From the day you find out you’re pregnant and remember the vodka martini you had two nights earlier, worry will be a piece of you...In the job description for a parent, worrying is right up there with providing food and buying cute dinosaur pajamas.”

Worry isn’t only a problem for Moms, it’s a problem for Dads, too. Men, women, even children struggle with worry. Levels of anxiety have increased dramatically over the last fifty years. Psychologist Robert Leahy, in his book Anxiety Free, (picture) says, “The average American child today exhibits the same level of anxiety as the average psychiatric patient did in the 1950s.”

Have you ever wondered how much time you waste worrying? It’s more than you think. Each week, we spend 14.31 hours worrying. That equals 744 hours of worry each year, which is 45,243 hours of worry over a lifetime. That equals 1885 days in a lifetime spent doing nothing but worrying. The bottom line is that we spend over five years of life enslaved by worry.

Our English word “worry” comes from an old Anglo Saxon word, wurgen, when means “to strangle.” Worry strangles your heart and mind. Somehow Don’t Worry–Be Happy just doesn’t cut it. Bobby McFerrin’s (picture) 1988 song was a megahit. The phrase, “don’t worry, be happy” was repeated over and over again. Bobby was half right. He got the “don’t worry” part correct, but when you know the Lord, you understand that faith is better than happiness. Jesus’ advice is better than Bobby’s – Don’t worry, Trust Your Father. As we continue our series in Luke, turn to Luke 12:22-34 (p. 871).

Worry is the key term here. Jesus is instructing His disciples that believers are to be distinctly different from a lost world. Not succumbing to worry and trusting our Heavenly Father is one of those foundational differences.

Last week we talked about a greedy farmer who worried because he had too much, but Jesus knows His disciples were tempted to worry because they didn’t have enough. They’d given up everything to follow Christ. They were living by faith and faith is always tested. “Greed can never get enough, worry is afraid it might not have enough.”

A lost world sings, “Don’t worry, be happy,” but has no basis for that other such blind optimism. Yet, the Christian can sing, Don’t worry, Trust Your Father. That’s based solidly on the character of God and His many promises to us. It’s why Jesus tells us, to be free from worry. If you’re taking notes…

1. We can trust our Heavenly Father because life is much more than food or clothing. “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.” Does Jesus know us? Contemporary culture is neurotic about food and clothing. If you haven’t already said this today, you will: What am I going to eat? What am I going to wear? The media feeds our neuroses. Every day we’re told something is bad for us. Some of it we were told was good for us last week. If you’re not worried about what you’re eating or wearing, you’re not paying attention.

Jesus says, “Do not be anxious.” It’s a double imperative, which means that rather than continually worrying, we’re to continually be worry free. The answer is a life lived looking to God, trusting Him to meet our needs. While it’s not a 1st world issue, food and clothing were big concerns in the 1st century where they often found themselves on the edge of survival.
There are more important things than worrying about our next meal. Our bodies are more than mannequins to dress up with this outfit or that fashion. Live for something much more than just food or clothing. Don’t treat them as ends in themselves, but as a means to the higher end of living for God.

If you have a well-fed, nicely clothed body, but you’re alienated from God, you’ve missed the main thing in life. Food and clothing shouldn’t be your main worry. Your eternal soul should be your main concern. If someone says, “Yes, but I’m going to starve to death,” Jesus replies, “But where will your soul spend eternity?” “But I’ll freeze to death if I don’t have proper clothing!” “Yes, but you’ll be too hot, if you’re not rightly related to God!” While all worry is wrong for the Christian, worry about minor matters is more foolish. It’s like a woman worrying about how her hair looks as she’s sitting in a boat about to be swept over Niagara Falls. That’s because…

**Worry is destructive.** The word translated anxious means “to be torn apart.” It was used of a ship coming apart as it’s tossed about in a storm. “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow,” said Corrie ten Boom (picture), “it empties today of its strength.” Then…

**Worry is deceptive.** It gives us a distorted view of God and of life. Worry convinces us that life is made up of this world stuff, food…clothing. We become so concerned about the means, we totally forget the end, which is to know and glorify God (Matt. 6:33). There’s a vast difference between making a living and making a life. Which one are you making?

2. We can trust our Father and not worry because He cares about the little things. In a scene from Peanuts (picture), Charlie Brown visits Lucy’s “counseling clinic,” where she dispenses advice for a nickel. Lucy begins by asking him what he’s afraid of, as she rolls off a list of phobias. She comes to the one that afflicts Charlie Brown and maybe many others living on this planet. Their conversation goes like this: Lucy says: “Maybe you have pantophobia? Do you think you have pantophobia?” Charlie Brown replies: “What’s pantophobia?” Lucy answers: “The fear of everything.” When he hears this, Charlie Brown shouts: “THAT’S IT!” Do you have “pantophobia”? Are you afraid of everything?

When Jesus taught, He often used common things like birds and flowers to teach profound truth. Can’t you see Him as He says, “consider the ravens,” point to a flock of birds flying by? Then, He points to some wild flowers, using them as an example of God’s care. You may not understand the doctrine of Divine Providence, but you know about birds and flowers! Jesus employs the simple to enable us see the eternal.

We can trust God because He provides for the birds. “Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!” We’ve got a nest of robins by our front door. Robins are beautiful and special. But Jesus doesn’t use a robin. He uses a raven (picture) to make His point. Ravens are scavengers. They eat all those possums that didn’t make it across the road. Yet, God cares for ravens. Do you? I have to be honest, I don’t care about ravens. They’re nasty. In Jesus’ day, they were unclean. Ravens don’t sow, reap or store food. They live from beak to mouth and God feeds them.

This doesn’t mean that God wants us to depend on handouts or be a bunch of bums. Scripture uses other animal examples of hard work and industry. Jesus uses a common bird, one His listeners abhorred, to illustrate that God provides for us. We’re much more valuable than a bunch of carrion eating crows, “How much more value are you?” If God feeds ravens, He’ll take care of us. Because you’ve never seen a starving raven and never will! So banish your worries as you realize God cares far more about you than He does about ravens. You can trust your Heavenly Father to take care of you.

We need to trust God because worry is a waste of time and energy. “And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?” Jesus next uses an unchangeable. Can you change when you were born? No, and you can’t change when you are going to die. This doesn’t mean that we’re presumptuous but we need to realize God is sovereign. We don’t control when we’re going to take our last breath, so why waste life worrying about it.

Have you heard of J.I. Rodale (picture)? He started publishing Organic Farming and Gardening magazine in 1942 and was the founder of Prevention Magazine. He was a guest on The Dick Cavett Show in 1971. During the early-evening taping that was to be aired later that night, Rodale had bragged during interview on the show, “I’ve never felt better in my life. I’m going to live to be 100, unless I’m run down by some sugar-crazed taxi driver.” He’d finished his interview and was seated on a couch beside the next interviewee and still on stage. But in the middle of that live taping, J.I. Rodale had a heart attack and died. The episode was never broadcast. “Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his life?” You can’t…so don’t worry about it.

Worry can’t lengthen life but it can shorten it. It makes life miserable. Does that mean we should all become parachutists or bungee jumpers? No, we need to be wise and work at staying healthy. But we can have peace because we know that ultimately God is in control. Many people waste their lives worrying they’re going to get some dreaded
people get ulcers, not so much from what they eat, as what’s eating them. The alternative is not to be care-less but to be trustful. Worry is a sin. It’s unproductive and runs counter to trust and faith in God.

**We can trust God because He provides for the flowers.** “Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith!” Birds illustrate God’s care about food; flowers indicate His care about clothing. The same God who lavishes such extraordinary beauty on such short-lived and common things like dandelions isn’t going to ignore His children’s needs. There’s been a lot of talk about Melania and Ivanka Trump’s (picture) high fashion clothes. Jesus says that God’s fashion designing has them all beat. If God cares about “cow food,” then He cares about you and me. You’ve never driven down the road and seen a bunch of cows eating grass and pulled over, “Don’t eat that! That’s a work of art!” But God cares about dandelions.

Do you know what we don’t like about flowers? They have such a short life span. Here today, gone tomorrow. They’re totally dependent. No water, no sun – they’re dead. Yet our Father lavishes and squanders His countless colors and beauty on them. If He does that for flowers, what will He do for those He made in His image and that He saved through the gift of His Son? What will He do for the children that He loves and has destined to live forever? Jesus answers with “how much more will He clothe you?” God will take care of us. Every bird, each flower is a testimony to His loving care.

Most of us think worry is a small sin. It’s not. It’s up there with lust or lying. There’s no greater sin than not believing God. When we worry, we’re calling God a liar. The remedy is faith in our faithful God.

We trust those we know. Do you know God? Spend time with Him. Spend time in His Word. That’s part of the cure for worry. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

If you saw some neighbor kids and they had worry written all over their faces, you’d ask, “What’s wrong?” If they responded, “We’re not sure whether our Dad is going to feed us tonight.” What would that say about their Dad and his love for his children? You might turn him in for abuse. Too many of us live as if our Heavenly Father either isn’t concerned or is unable to care for us. We must choose to trust in the God who loves and cares for us.

Periodically, you’ll meet one of those weird Christians who tell you that they never worry. You know what that means? They’re from Colorado and smoke weed…or they’re lying. We all struggle with worry. We do a disservice to the gospel and the cause of Christ if we’re dishonest about it.

Anxiety is part of the Curse, but this world’s cure is dumb. So I’m anxious and I’m told the cure is to look inside. What? Inside is why I’m anxious. I know what’s inside. I go to bed with that person. The cure is not the power of positive thinking. It’s looking outside, really, upside to the Father who takes care of ravens and dandelions. It’s not trusting me, it’s trusting Him.

3. **Worry is a behavior of the wrong Kingdom.** “And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.”

What we see on the news each day is wrong Kingdom? Whether it’s healthcare, welfare or jobs. It’s wrong Kingdom. Our confidence is not in D.C. or Madison. A pagan world deifies government, foolishly believing that the government can solve our core issues. They haven’t because they can’t.

This is so freeing. If our confidence is not in government but in God, we don’t get all bent out of shape when government blows it…again. Does anyone really believe government can fix healthcare? No way. Do you know why? They can’t solve the death problem but God’s already solved it.

Worry robs us. It loads the present with the weight of the future. As George MacDonald (picture) said, “No man ever sunk under the burden of the day. It is when tomorrow’s burden is added to the burden of day that the weight is more than a man can bear. Never load yourself so. If you find yourself so loaded, at least remember this: it is your own doing, not God’s. He begs you to leave the future to Him and mind the present.”

A Kingdom focus is preventative medicine against anxiety about this life. There are only two ways to live – for ourselves and the things of this world or to live for God and His eternal Kingdom. The issue is not what we have or don’t have, it’s which world are we living for.
Worry puts us in the same category as pagans. “For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.” Worry is a malignancy in our testimony. We’re to be different, yet worry makes us like those who don’t know Jesus. So worry is unchristian.

How can we share our faith with a lost friend if we don’t have faith? How can we encourage them to put their faith in Christ, if we’re not? Isn’t it hypocritical to talk about faith and not practice it? A clear faith should produce a peaceful heart.

Worry is practical atheism. A worrier may not be an atheist, but they might as well be. We can say we believe in God until our face turns blue, but when we worry we’re saying, “I don’t believe God exists,” or “I don’t believe He can be trusted.” A Christian who worries is a contradiction of terms.

This is the difference. There was a man who had a reputation for being a worry-aholic. He was always anxious and miserable from worrying. One day he showed up for work and there was an evident transformation in his attitude and even his countenance. He’s smiling and happy, as if he didn’t have a care in the world. One of his co-workers noticed and said, “What happened to you? You look great!” The former worry-wart said, “Oh, I hired a professional worrier to do all my worrying for me. I pay him and he worries for me. Anything that I might worry about, he does it.” His co-worker said, “That’s a great idea! How much do you pay him?” The man said, “I pay him $500 a week to worry for me.” His coworker said, “Wait a minute! $500 a week? You don’t make that much money. How are you going to pay him?” The guy responds, “That’s not my worry, it’s his!”

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if you could find someone who would take all your worries? Yet, that’s exactly what we have that unbelievers don’t have. Our Heavenly Father takes all our worries for free! 1 Peter 5:7: “Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.” You can say, “Lord, I won’t worry about this anymore, I’m going to unload this burden on You.” And God says, “Go ahead. I got this!”

Worry distracts us from God’s Kingdom. “Instead, seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.” What’s Jesus saying? We don’t have to worry about our needs. Our Father has it covered. We don’t have to focus on the temporal. It’s taken care of. We can focus on what matters, His Kingdom.

Too many of us try to multitask, focusing on this world and the next. We’re not doing a good job on either one. The present tense indicates this is to be a continual passion, a continual seeking. It doesn’t mean we’re going to live lives of opulence and luxury. We are though going to have our needs met.

Too many Christians are this world focused. It’s like taking Mom out for Mother’s Day dinner and you’re playing on your phone. You’ve missed what’s important. What are you focused on? What are you seeking? Throughout history there have been different kinds of kingdoms. They all had one important factor in common, every kingdom has a king. You can’t have a kingdom without one. Instead of trying to figure out what the Kingdom of God is, concentrate on the King, Jesus. The only thing a loyal subject in a kingdom must do is please the king. You can please King Jesus by loving Him, obeying and serving Him. He’s a loving, caring King who has the divine resources to meet all the needs in your life.

200 years from today, none of us will be alive. All the things we’re worrying about today won’t matter. But if you commit your life to pleasing God, in 200 years you’ll recognize it as the wisest thing you ever decided to do. In a million years, it will be the only thing that matters.

4. We can trust our Father because He enjoys taking care of us. “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” In a culture that teaches there’s no one home in the universe, that we’re trapped in some purposeless process, what an encouragement to know that we have a Heavenly Father. Our Father is everything many of us never had. He treats us tenderly and loves to care for us. The best a lost world can hope for is to superficially manage and mask the impact of anxiety. Jesus offers a radically different solution, He promises to eliminate it.

“Little flock” is an unusual term, found only here in the New Testament. It denotes tenderness as well as the sad reality that few (little) will actually find Him. What an encouragement to know our Father knows our needs and loves to care for us. It gives Him pleasure to give us anything we truly need.

Scripture continually compares us to sheep. Most animals have teeth, claws, or a shell for defense, but sheep don’t have any natural means of defense. We’re not lions or tigers or bears. God chose sheep to be the mascot of the human race. “All we like sheep have gone astray. We have all turned to our own way” (Isaiah 53:6). Without Christ we’re dumb, directionless and defenseless sheep. As sheep need a shepherd, we need a Savior. The God of the universe wants to be your Shepherd!

Because our Father provides for us we can focus on others. “Sell your possessions, and give to the needy.” Material security is subordinated to Kingdom priorities. Because our Father is so generous with us, we can be generous with everything – money, homes, possessions, time...our very lives. Everything we have must be committed to Christ. If
you’ve never done it before, pray through all you have, giving everything to God, especially your most treasured possessions.

For some this may seem extreme, but who are we giving it to? We’re giving it to our Father. I know Jane loves me and has my best interest. There’s nothing I hold back from Jane. Yet, Jane’s love for me is a pittance compared to God’s love for me. Why would I hold anything back from my Father?

Pursuing the Kingdom then means caring for others, just as we’ve been cared for. The security we have in God frees us to be generous. As famed missionary, C.T. Studd (picture) reasoned: “If Jesus Christ is God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”

Jesus isn’t saying that we must literally sell everything we have or give it all away. Scripture implies the right to private ownership of property in the 8th commandment, “You shall not steal.” If Jesus intended for His followers to sell all their possessions, He’d have rebuked those who owned homes, lands, etc., but He didn’t. What Jesus is saying is: “Have a loose grip on the things of this world. They won’t last anyway. Be generous in giving to those in need, and God will reward you with lasting riches in heaven.”

If you struggle with anxiety and living for this life only, give more. Giving generously frees us from worry. It puts our focus on God and eternity.

**Because our Father provides for us we can focus on the eternally significant.** “Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” If you believe God and His Word, then you know that this is the best investment advice that you will ever receive. So why do we struggle with it? Because we worry and have difficulty truly trusting our Father to take care of us. Our anxiety gets in the way of our faith and our generosity. Yet, the more that we trust Him, the more we grow and the easier it becomes.

Salvation means Lordship. God is not just to be a slice of life on Sundays or whenever we find Him useful. Rather, He’s to be the center of all we think, say, and do each day. He’s to be Lord over every facet of our lives, including our money. We live as His managers, seeking to glorify Him. That’s what it means to seek His kingdom. Stewardship frees us from anxiety.

**Conclusion:** Anxiety comes from self-focus. When you’re worried, who do you think about – YOU and your feelings. Peace and freedom come from a Father-focus, a big picture focus, knowing that the Father who gave His Son for your salvation is going to take care of you. You can trust Him.

Are you worrying? **Don’t Worry, Trust Your Father.** Now, you may be thinking, “Scott, if you knew what I’m going through, you wouldn’t be standing up there telling me not to worry!” It’s true. I don’t know what you’re going through, but God does. More importantly, He cares. He’s the one, not me, telling you not to worry. “Yes,” you say, “but He’s God, He doesn’t have anything to worry about!”

Let’s listen to one more voice. There once was a man who’d been attacked, stoned several times and left for dead. He’d been shipwrecked, thrown to wild beasts, and hunted by a vicious mob who wanted to kill him. He was in prison waiting to have his head chopped off. While he was in prison, surrounded by Roman guards, he wrote a letter. Here’s one of the things he wrote: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

If you refuse to worry and instead seek the King and ask Him for peace, He’ll give it to you. The world doesn’t understand this kind of inner peace. It only comes from God. Yet, when you have God’s peace, it protects your heart and mind like those Roman guards surrounding the Apostle Paul. Life is far too short to waste any of it worrying.

Don’t waste your life! Life only has two handles. When the difficulties of life confront you, you can grab the handle of worry and fear. Or you can grab the handle of faith and trust. But you can’t grab both at the same time.

Will you say, “Lord, today, I will let go of the handle of worry and fear and I will start taking the handles of faith and trust in you. I’m not going to let go. I’m choosing to trust in You.” From this day forward may the motto of your life truly be **Don’t Worry, Trust Your Father.**