SLIGO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Discipleship 201

Session 6: *Do Not Worry*

Matthew 6:

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? **26** Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? **27** Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. **29** Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. **30** If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? **31** So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **32** For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **34** Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Philippians 4:6

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Summary:

Jesus' teachings can be challenging, but this one is definitely in the top five as far as trying to live it on a daily basis. In fact, it may be the challenge of our day. We live at a time in earth's history where we have access to far too much, we know too much, we do too much, we expect too much, we own too much . . . there is simply too much. But what we do not have too much of is rest—true unplugged, soul rest. Our daily existence consists almost entirely of man-made environments, surrounding us like a virtual prison from which we are held captive, far from the creation and its Creator. We live so fully submerged in this artificial world that we are completely extricated from the natural order of things and the normal laws that should govern our rhythms and health.

This reality and many other factors have created a world full of anxious and stressed-out people. Everywhere we turn, we see humans who are spent, running frantically from this to that, always occupied, always busy, and often deluding themselves that if they can just get to this next thing, then they can rest. But rest never comes.

It is very intentional, then, that Jesus refers us to nature when instructing us not to worry. Jesus was connected to the Creator and the creation. He lived within the natural order. When he looked around he simply observed that the birds did not worry about food, the flowers did not worry about clothes, all are under the watchcare of our Creator. And Jesus reminds us, we are of much more value to our Father then they.

Therefore, why should we worry? It is a useless activity that comes from living in man's kingdom. Worry has no place in the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever can be done with worry can be done much better without it. Some suggest that the opposite of faith is doubt, but really, the opposite of faith is worry. Jesus calls us to have faith in our perfect Father who deeply loves and values us. If the rest of creation can trust Him, maybe it's time we learn to also.

Quotes:

"I've suffered a great many catastrophes. Most of them never happened." — Mark Twain

"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." — Martin Luther King Jr.

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows. It empties today of its strength." — Corrie Ten Boom

Discussion Questions:

What are some ways worry can hurt us or make our lives worse?

Have you ever worried about something you realized later was never even a problem? Share a story where you worried for nothing.

Why do you think we worry?

Why are worry and anxiety such a prevalent problem in today's world?

What things can you do to help combat worry in your life?

Homework:

Your **practice** for this week is to set aside a minimum of 15 minutes each day to reflect on the following Scripture.

Day 1: Reflect on Matthew 6:25, 26. When you look at the birds, what can you learn? As you go throughout this week, look and listen for the birds in and around you. Listen to their songs, see their beauty, and let them remind you not to worry.

Day 2: Meditate on Matthew 6:27. When you step back and look at worry and anxiety, can you see how it does not help, but only harms?

Day 3: Reflect on Matthew 6:28-32. When is the last time you got excited about some item of clothing or accessory? Was it as beautiful as some of God's flowers? If God clothes the plants this way, don't you think He will take care of you? Where ever you go this week, look for flowers and let their beauty remind you about your loving heavenly Father.

Day 4: Reflect on Matthew 6:33, 34. Are you seeking God's kingdom or man's kingdom? Which one is better? Why? Maybe there's an area of your life where you need to seek God's kingdom first.

Day 5: Reflect on Phillipians 4:6. One of the best ways to deal with worry and anxiety is to give it to God. Of course, the challenge then is to not take it back. Make it a practice that anytime you start to feel worry, anxiety, or stress creep into your life, that you will say a prayer and give the issue to God.