

Take Faith - Trust
Matthew 6:24-34

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

NOTE: This sermon uses the previous week's (2/20/11) sermon story to launch into this weeks sermon

There is a story told of four men who were about to graduate from College and were meeting for lunch one last time before graduation. And during the lunch they got to talking about their future and what plans they had. One of them shared that he planned on making it big out in Hollywood as a movie producer. The other said he knew he would become an executive of a major New York based International trade company. The third friend boasted that he was planning on making it big in real estate. But the fourth friend didn't know what he wanted to be. He wasn't sure what he was going to do after tomorrow's graduation. And do you know what happen to these four friends? You do... The three with the plans and goals achieve their dream while the fourth one that didn't worry about tomorrow is lost and fades away. You have heard that before, because last week's sermon started with this story. Last week's sermon was stressing the end of Matthew chapter 5, the section of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus tells us to perfect, to fulfill, to achieve the goal of being god-like in all that we do, to set our eyes and minds, hearts and dreams on fulfilling our faith to be as perfect as possible in all our daily walk of life.

Now we jump ahead 24 verses in Jesus' sermon and we get the "Don't worry, be happy" section of the sermon on the mount. "Don't worry, Be Happy!" That's a great song, a wonderful motto? "Do not worry about your life."

But wait a minute that just doesn't seem right! Jesus says Don't worry about what you will eat or drink. Don't worry about your body or your clothing. Look the birds don't worry about those things and yet they get by. The flowers of the fields don't worry about those things and they are grow beautifully. So do not worry about tomorrow. Don't worry, be happy! So I suppose my sermon from last week was wrong and we should all be like that fourth friend who didn't worry about tomorrow, that had no goals and never achieved anything. Is that what Jesus is talking about now? No, of course not.

Yes, three times Jesus commands his listeners to "not worry", but a better way to translate this text from the original Greek would be that Jesus is giving us the command to not be over anxious about things of this world. Jesus knows things are not going to be easy. He is not just patting us on the back and saying, "That's okay everything's going to be alright!" So your family is falling apart – don't worry. So you have no job and no money, losing the house, no food – don't worry. So your health is failing, you have bad legs, arms, heart, lungs, can't see or hear, don't

worry. So you have enemies that are out to get you, hurt you, despise you and want to kill you, don't worry. Of course Jesus isn't saying anything like that. Jesus knew that his followers would have worries, pains, fears, anxious moments. He even prayed for them warning them that because of him people will hate them and revile them. Further more just before this in the sermon on the mount, he teaches his followers to pray to God to seek the gift of daily bread, the things we need to live on each day. He teaches them to pray asking God to not bring them into times of temptations and deliver us from times of evil. We should pray because these anxious times will come. So of course Jesus isn't telling us simply Don't Worry Be Happy!

What Jesus does say is to not be overanxious. To be overanxious about tomorrow is to be desiring above everything else control, power, and self-gratification- all things that we know will not and can not last. To be overanxious means that we are all consumed and 100% concentrated on things of tomorrow instead of living today. I am sure we have all heard people say that they could just get hold of this one more thing, reach that next level, have that much stocked away, then they can relax and be with the family, with friends, care for others and take time to live life. We call them obsessive-compulsive, over achievers or work-a-holics. But we all now people that are like this, consumed with achieving that dream of tomorrow they never live today.

There are those who simply worry to the extreme. Perhaps you have known people like this. They are anxious about their family, about their health, about the weather, about the latest news stories of violence or diseases, or disasters. They worry even though you and ever one else tells them they don't need to. They worry at night keeping themselves awake, they worry in the day not being able to eat. They worry so much their subconscious mind will even cause them to have bodies will become physically ill. They worry so much their attitudes will change, cutting people out and turning away from friends and relatives or are trying to help. And we all know that worrying to this extreme, being this anxious gets a person not one moment of peace but instead a deeper feeling of oppression. They fall deeper into despair and into the pit of darkness.

No Jesus is telling us quite clearly in this text today not to be this overanxious person. But on the other hand Jesus never says to just disengage from life and just give up either. He isn't saying just go with the flow and see what happens. He is not telling us to be that fourth graduate that just falls away in life not worrying about tomorrow and not having goals. He never tells his followers to not plan, not organize, not think about what is to come. But he does stress where our thinking should lie, where our goals should be listed, where our trust should be based on – God the Father who is everlasting. Every time the disciples come to Jesus asking him about what is to come, about the future, he turns their attentions on the one who they should be seeking. He always turns them back to the Eternal Kingdom of God that is everlasting. Throughout this entire

Sermon on the Mount Jesus has been telling his hearers to be engaged in life, to strive to follow God's way, to trust in the Lord and to walk in his ways.

We can Serve God and have faith in the one who lasts forever. We can strive to be faithful to God and put our trust and confidence in his promise of the eternal kingdom and if we can do that then we have no reason to fear. Because that love, mercy, grace, and place in that kingdom can never been lost, stolen, broken or destroyed. It is eternal. Don't worry about it, trust in God, put your stock in God's promise, put your worries in God's hands. God's eternal promise is true and everlasting.

What are you worrying about in your life this day, what concerns you. Do you just give up and say whatever. Or do you overreact and trouble your entire being obsessed with it. Jesus shows us to trust in God, to use the gifts that God has given us to the best of ability, just as the flowers are beautifully clothes and the birds are fed, God will give you a way to be secure in him.

This even happens at the congregational level. Today we meet as a congregation after worship to discuss our past history, our current situation and even possible future plans of this church. We have hard decisions we need to make to continue being St. Mark. For several years our budget has been much bigger than what our contributions can support. We can easily turn a blind eye to it and not worry about tomorrow. Keep cashing CD's and spending savings thinking that eventually it will all work out. We can be lackadaisical about it and not care, many of you may not even be here for the meeting, choosing to instead leave for other things. But where does that get us. Like that fourth graduate we will eventually be lost. Or we can panic and overreact, worrying to much about our finances and building doing everything for them and forget about the ministry of caring and sharing the Word and love of God to all.

But what we learn today in this reading is that we need to be trusting in the Lord, to use the gifts he has given us of time, talents, and resources, our brains and our commitments, to achieve today and tomorrow what he has lined out for us. To be his people to the best we can be in this time and place. Just as he has provided for the birds of the air and the flowers of the fields, God has given us the gifts we need to do the work we need to do, to live as his people, to be secure in his arms now and always. Do not be overanxious, do not be underanxious, Trust in God and follow his ways. Amen.

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May the peace and Grace of God be with you this day and throughout the week to come. AMEN.

