

## **“TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR YOUR LIFE”**

**Mt.6:25-34**

**Ed Dye**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The “therefore” of V.25 introduces the concluding thought of Jesus’ argument respecting the unity of the aim, of the purpose, of the object, of the life, that he has been earnestly urging on his disciples in the preceding verses.
2. This text contains the following main points:
  - a. A Divine Prohibition: “Take no thought for your life”
  - b. Jesus’ Specific Reasons for Such a Prohibition, Vv.25-32
  - c. The Positive Enforcement of His Divine Prohibition, Vv. 33,34 – wherein we are taught:
    - (1) That “seeking the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” must be our chief aim, V.33a.
    - (2) That this seeking shall be rewarded, V.33b.
    - (3) To live life one day at a time, borrowing no trouble from the future, V.34.

### **II. DISCUSSION**

#### **A. WHAT IS MEANT BY “TAKE NO THOUGHT”?**

1. Thayer, 400: “to be anxious; to be troubled with care.”
2. Arndt & Gingrich, 506: “have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned”
3. The original Greek carries the idea of being drawn in two directions at the same time; to be distracted, resulting in anxiety or being troubled, worried, or experiencing “undue secular anxiety” – in this case, over life and or the things of this earthly life.

#### **B. PROPERLY DEFINED, THIS TEXT, WHICH SAYS, “TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR,” DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN THINKING AND WORRYING OR BEING OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT LIFE.**

1. The following statements by Harold B. Walker express well this distinction:

You can think about your problems or you worry about them, and there is a vast difference between the two. Worry is thinking that has turned toxic. It is jarring music that goes around and around and never comes to either climax or conclusion.

Thinking works its way through problems to conclusions or decisions, whereas worry leaves you in a state of tensely suspended animation. When you worry, you go over the same ground endlessly and come out of the same place you started.

Thinking makes progress from one place to another; worry remains static. The problem of life is to change worry into thinking and anxiety into creative action.

-from Words of Life, Vol. XIV, Oct-Dec 2006, No.4, editor, Sunday Ayandare

2. Other N.T. texts prove Jesus in this text did not condemn thinking or thoughtful concern for life's necessities, one's own or those of others.
  - a. According to 2Cor.12:14 the thoughtful concern of conscientious parents providing for the future needs of their children is both commanded and commended.
  - b. According to 1Tim.5:8 if one does not provide for the physical necessities of his own – those for whom he is responsible – “he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”
  - c. Also, Paul, in 2Cor.11:28, speaks of things which come upon him daily, including “the care of all the churches.”
  - d. In Phil.2:20 Timothy is said to have had genuine care and concern for the Philippians, whom Paul hopes to send to them, that he may learn of their state, which will bring comfort to Paul because of his concern for them (V.19).
  - e. Moreover, we are taught to work to supply our own material necessities, and even those of others, 1Th.4:11,12; Eph.4:28.

**C. THE EVIL JESUS IS WARNING AGAINST AND WHY, AND OR THE PROPER LIMITS OF HUMAN ANXIETY.**

1. The evil being warned against is vexatious, annoying or distressing anxiety – “undue secular anxiety.”
  - a. If, after we have done all that is in our power in righteous endeavors, we fret ourselves with vague expectations or foreboding of trouble or evil; or if, in the midst of our efforts, we let care about its issue take possession of our minds, we make the mistake Jesus expresses strong disapproval of.
  - b. Think of the uncertainty of almost everything we have – life, health, friendships, domestic relationships and affections, riches, commerce, etc.
  - c. Life has many sad surprises and disappointments we can do nothing about. There is abundant cause for anxiety.
  - d. In this text Jesus reminds us of a truth that should put our earthly care and undue secular anxiety into strict and proper limitations.
  - e. We have a God and Father in heaven who is actually and effectively concerned in securing the constant and highest well being of his children; in fact: all of his creation.
  - f. Therefore, his children ought to have proper children’s anxieties, but they should not take upon themselves the cares that belong to their God and Father in heaven, who “knoweth what things they have need of, before they ask him (6:8),” V.32.
  - g. “Taking thought” of this text is but an older form of our idea of “worrying,” which is “anxiety overdone,” or “undue secular anxiety.”
  - h. What the Lord bids us guard against is conjectural or speculative brooding over the possible necessities of the future, and our possible lack of the resources required for their supply.
  - i. The truly spiritual person should always be “using the world, never abusing it.”
2. The evil strongly disapproved is being overly concerned with bodily needs.
  - a. The earthly life, both present and future, the food, the raiment, etc.
  - b. The idea is of one being absorbed or preoccupied with deep concern for these temporal and external things.

3. The evil of anxiety – undue secular anxiety – hinders or even prevents ones proper concern for higher, eternal interests and duties.
  - a. Here is its greatest condemnation, not simply that it pains us physically and mentally, but that it injures us spiritually.
  - b. Jesus does not simply advise freedom from anxiety merely on its own account in order that we may have the satisfaction of being at peace.
  - c. He does so because he sees that worldly anxiety fills the mind with that which robs it of the real purpose of life.
  - d. “The cares of this world” are tares that choke the Word and prevent spiritual fruit-bearing, as taught in the Parable of the Sower (Mt.13:22), and prevent one from “seeking first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness
4. Worry or anxiety is worldliness, which is sin. Cf. 1Jno.2:15-17; Jas.4:4; Mt.6:19-21; 19:22; 1Tim.6:17.
  - a. The anxiety or worry of our text is a subtle but real form of worldliness.
  - b. Worldliness by its very nature involves devotion to this world and its pursuits rather than to God.
  - c. And the worldliness of worry is present when our minds are unduly set on or concerned with things rather on God and things spiritual in nature.
  - d. This is the case when we allow our fears as well as our passions to dwell on and consume our energies, dominate our lives, and steal our hearts away from God; which we may do while at the same time professing our faith in and our devotion to God!
  - e. This is exactly what Jesus is warning his disciples about and prohibiting in Mt.6:25-34.
  - f. The rich often worry because they have so much, as the rich farmer of Lk.12:17; while the poor worry because they have so little; according to Eccl.1:18, the worldly educated elite worries because he knows so much (Cf. 7:16); while the ignoramus worries because of knowing so little.
  - g. Some worry because of the past, others worry because of the future – the fear of the unknown; the youth worries

- because he is young – can't wait to grow up; while the old bemoans "the good old days."
- h. Whichever way – whether we are consumed by greed or obsessed by worry, Satan is happy because our minds are occupied with things rather than with God.
  - i. This is stark worldliness! – Which, I repeat, is sin.
5. The worry or anxiety of our text betrays an obvious weakness of faith in God and his promises.
- a. In this text Jesus plainly hinges his teaching about not being unduly concerned for our lives, either present or future, on the fact that we have a God and a heavenly Father who, without fail, feeds the birds of the air, adorns the lilies of field in all their beauty, and clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; and on the fact that this same God and Father in heaven knows our needs and will care for us!
  - b. Or, are we, as was Peter in Mt.14:29-31, "of little faith"?
  - c. Never forget, nor lose faith in the comforting words of Psa.23:1,4 and of 1Pet.5:7.

**D. NEEDLESS WORRY CAUSES DEPRESSION, Prov.12:25.**

**E. NEEDLESS WORRY IS USELESS, UNPRODUCTIVE, EVEN COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, Mt.6:27.**

- 1. "Which of you however much you worry can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?" (ASV). "But which of you with all his worry can add a single hour to his life?" (Goodspeed)
- 2. Complaining and worrying about what we do not have or can't do will not give us more. Aspiration in excess of ability is counterproductive, making life gloomy and hopeless.
  - a. Leroy Brownlow, "Greatest Questions," p.16, offers two suggestions about which one should not worry:
    - (1) "First, nobody should worry about that which he cannot help. If the difficulty cannot be remedied, accept without fretting."
    - (2) "Second, no person should worry about that which he can help. Instead, he should get busy and remove the cause of his anxiety."

3. Eccl.9:10 says, “Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with thy might...”

**F. HOW TO OVERCOME WORRY OR UNDUE SECULAR ANXIETY.**

1. Jesus tells us plainly in the final two verses of the chapter.
  - a. Mt.6:33, Make the kingdom of God and his righteousness your chief aim or purpose in life.
  - b. Mt.6:34, Do not try to live life in the lump, but live it one day at a time, borrowing no trouble from the future.
    - (1) What the Lord condemns here is NOT preparation for the future, but rather being unduly concerned about the things of this life, either present or future
    - (2) After all, the best preparation we can make for the future is to do well what we are required to do today in service to God.
    - (3) Then do the same thing about tomorrow when and if it comes!
    - (4) Too often too many people are influenced to commit suicide by anxiety over what tomorrow may bring!
2. Maintain trust in the Lord and always count your blessings. Cf. Psa.3:5; Phil.4:4-9.

**III. CONCLUSION**

1. Final reminders of some helpful thoughts to overcome distrustful anxiety.
  - a. Never be anxious or unduly concerned about things for the body since life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.
  - b. Surely, God, who feeds the fowls of the air, and clothes the grass of the field, will certainly provide for his own children made in his own image.
  - c. To be anxiously seeking the things of this earthly life it to ape the fault of the Gentiles who know not God.
  - d. Christians are neither fatherless, nor is their Father unmindful of, nor unable to supply, their earthly needs.
  - e. Such earthly blessings are promised to disciples on the basis of their making “the kingdom of God and his righteousness” their chief aim or pursuit. And God is faithful who promised.