

Sunday, November 13, 2016

Isaiah 65:17-25

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Luke 21:5-19

Don't Worry- Trust

To aid psychiatrists in diagnosing certain symptoms, disorders and psychological problems mnemonic phrases with key words are often memorized. There are different kinds of disorders when it comes to anxieties. One such disorder is when a person has general anxiety over everything. They are called worry WARTS because they are W wound up and worn out; A Absent minded; R Restless, T Touchy and S Sleepless. There are many people who experience this disorder because they worry about everything.- from food in the cupboard expiring too soon, to bugs in fresh food, to hurricanes hitting, rainstorms dumping in deserts... anything and everything even though the possibility of their logic are impossible to track or are so far removed from them politically, geographically or mentally These people tend to worry about running out of soap- and so buy several containers ahead of time. Yet they may not focus on what the soap is to clean- but that is another disorder!

Worry- yes we all do this. But why worry when you don't have any control over the situation at all? Why worry when in each day you have received, you have many blessings and wonders to experience. Worrying won't help anything.

Isaiah writes many years before Jesus speaks to his followers yet each speak of something so profound that it is foundational to our faith in God and His plan for us all. Isaiah writes of a time when God will create a new heaven and a new earth. In this new earth and heaven- former things will be forgotten and Jerusalem will be a delight as people will rejoice always. God will take delight in his people and there will no crying or weeping. People will live full lives and have their own crops and homes. They will work hard and be blessed by God. Before they call to God, they will receive his response for they will live in peace and harmony for this is God's new creation. God will create joy and delight and all will be different as former enemies and predator/prey will lie together in peace. What is difficult is that this is difficult to fathom when there seems to be so many challenges of power and for what? Killing and death. Yet, if there is faith, all will be led by God to something and somewhere better.

Many years later Jesus is speaking to the time which has not yet occurred as he points out the signs of the end of the age. Jesus states that nations will rise against nations, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes, famines and pestilences in a various places, and there will be fearful events and great signs from heaven. And yet before this happens all who follow him will be tested, persecuted and brought before kings and governors on Jesus' account. But there is no reason to worry because Jesus will "give the words and wisdom that none of the adversaries will be able to resist or contradict." People will be betrayed and some followers will be killed. Many will hate those who follow Him, but Jesus says "not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm in faith you will gain life."

How are we to gain life? How is it that we need not worry?

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale once told of encountering a hurricane while on a cruise in the Atlantic. After the captain managed to sail around the danger, he and Dr. Peale were visiting with one another. The captain said he had always lived by a simple philosophy namely that if the sea is smooth, it will get rough; and if it is rough, it will get smooth. He added something worth remembering: "But with a good ship," the Captain said, "you can always ride it out."

Our ship is our faith in Jesus Christ. With a good ship, you can always ride it out. Life is unpredictable—we do not know what will happen from one day to the next. But by having faith in God we are not alone in whatever comes our way. God is with us and not a hair on our head will perish.

We don't need to worry because God is handling everything for us but this does not mean we sit around and do nothing. For as Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he warns them about being idle and not living according to the teachings they shared with them. He told them to work and gave them this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." And in contrast to those who are idle are those who are busy but not working. They are the busy bodies not doing what they should or earning their keep, but scurrying around and not doing much more.

When Jesus spoke about signs of the end of times, those who heard thought this would unfold within a short time. This is what happened after Paul established the church at Thessalonica where people were so caught up in

expecting Jesus' return that they stopped working and degenerated into idle busybodies who prattled only about the future. Paul rebuked this tendency to let an over-interest in what they could not predict, "last things" to what they should be doing "the first things" which would divert them from faithfulness.

An example of this is the story of a warrior who was struck by a poisonous arrow. This man happened to be a speculative sort of person, so as he lay on the ground he mused to himself: "I wonder what kind of wood this arrow is made of? What sort of birds, do you suppose, the feathers come from? I wonder what type of man shot this arrow - tall or short, dark or light." His comrades, who saw his plight, could bear it no longer, but cried out in frustration: "For God's sake stop speculating and pull out the arrow!"

Sometimes we too worry about the least important things- especially notions like: what do the other people might think; what if what we are doing does not work or even what if what we are doing does work and surpasses expectations. Sometimes we worry just to have something to do.

Well there are many more things to do than worry. One of which is simply pray to God and put your trust in him. Can you imagine if all the 'worry' in the world at one given moment were stacked up in one spot—how much that would be? What if we were to change that worry to trust? What a difference it would make! Putting your trust in God is what we said we would do when we first believe and commit our lives to him. This is our whole self being committed including the thinking and worry parts too. We need to be reminded of this as we seek God's love and direction for our lives now and in the future. We need to fully trust Him because God will give us words and wisdom to support us as we face different situations and are challenged by them. We need to read again Isaiah's words which leads us to fully trust God. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox and dust will be the food of the serpent. And they will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain. All will live in peace and we will know that God is there no matter the situation, experience or challenge. God is with us. We are not alone. God is there.