

SUNDAY November 16, 2025 “Moving from Worry to Trusting in God”

Isaiah 65:17-25 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 Luke 21: 5-19

Let's see who does crosswords! What is 5 letters, two small words which means worry. While you think about this for a moment let us consider what is happening around us this mid-November day. This week we have had snow, rain, bright sunshine and dull skies, there has been cold winds and now darkness comes early. There are no planned holidays to speak of coming soon-- but oh yes Santa arrives by helicopter today to the mall. But what is it that calls us to be here in this moment right now? What drives us to say this is how I feel? And I am a little worried about what is to come?

In these last months, people have expressed many worries and anxieties for many different reasons. Some I have been privileged to hear in confidence and other matters are broadcast on the television and social media all the time. There have been words which push us to join together as Canadians and there have been reasons to celebrate who we are. Some of these worries are based on economic issues at a national or provincial level and others are what we see in higher prices at the grocery store. Yet there are people who are coping well with these matters. How? Because they have simply learned to say no to these stresses in their lives and looked outside themselves to trust the One who is in control of all things. This is important because these stressors cause much worry and anxiety and lead to nowhere. But the stresses of everyday life do not seem to slow down, or could it be we are just more aware of them as we age?

What causes you to worry? Have stress or anxiety? Is it listening to or reading the news of people dying in battles, or starvation or is it the political leaders playing? Is it the entitled people who complain about something no matter where you go? Or is the stress within you because of how you respond to all of these?

Near the end of his work, the prophet Isaiah shares an amazing vision of the new heavens and earth that God will create- someday. In this new creation there will be no weeping, long life for all, good housing and food, people will labour yes, but they will enjoy what they do. These people will be blessed by the Lord and they will live in peace. Then Isaiah writes, “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, but the serpent will eat dust. They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain. Isaiah's prophecy is also known as the peaceable kingdom. Isaiah also refers to a previous prophecy from Isaiah 11:6, which describes a future time of peace and harmony where predators and prey coexist peacefully. In

this image, it also symbolizes the coming of the Messiah- Jesus, who is both a powerful "Lion of Judah" and a sacrificial "Lamb of God". This "little child" represents the one who would be born hundreds of years later, the one whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. It is Jesus, the future leader who will bring about this peace.

We will hear more about the prophecies of Isaiah in the next few weeks as we share the Good news of Jesus as Christ the King, the Son of God and yet also the one who was to be born in Bethlehem. But it is this image of the peaceable kingdom that may call us to move from all our worries to turn to God. Edward Hicks visualized the peaceful coexistence of God's creatures, depicting animals and children in the right foreground along with a vignette in the background of William Penn's treaty with the Lenape Indigenous people. Hicks idealized the encounter between British colonists and Indigenous people, creating fictions of harmony. (Ultimately, however, the Lenape were forced out of Pennsylvania due to fraudulent land deals perpetrated by Penn's sons.) But it is the image of children and animals sitting together that grabs our attention as there is no fear in the expressions of the children nor in the way the animals sit together. Is this an ideal hope? Where people, children and animals coexist without fear, anxiety or stress? What is preventing this from occurring even today?

Several people might state that why we cannot get to this state of peace is because there are too many concerns or questions. Examples of these are: what's in it for me; or fear of what others think, or "fomo"- fear of missing out, or even lack of desire to try or willingness to do a task without receiving credit or reward. What is the incentive of trying to get along with specific people when the next person will cause different problems? This is not the attitude we are to have. But strive to work with others is what Paul tried to stress to the young church at Thessalonika.

Paul's concerns lie with idleness. That is, doing nothing and expecting everything. Paul states that this young church should be doing what Paul, Timothy and Silvanus did when they were with them. They toiled, labouring day and night; in order to eat. They taught that those who were unwilling to work should not eat. In contrast to this, some of the people were not doing anything, they were 'busybodies' but not accomplishing anything. But Paul states that all are called to do their work quietly and earn their own living. And at the same time- live as Christ's followers in faith because Jesus makes the difference in one's life. And it is important to share his message of hope, and the gift of eternal life as given through God's grace and love.

People of various ages have asked- I am so many years old, what might I do for the church. No matter how old you are- always begin with praying. ACTS -this is a method of praying I often share-- Adoration- praise God for His many blessings to you; Confession- tell God those things that you did wrong Thanksgiving -offer to God your thanks for the gift and promise of forgiveness and those situations/ relationships in which you are grateful and Supplication- pray for others- world, country, province, city, church family and family. But pray. Talk to God and know that God listens. Talk to God and know that whatever you share- worries, fears, accolades or achievements, God hears you.

The idea is not to sit idly by-- begin with prayer. And if you are able to do some physical actions there is always a place for a broom and a dustpan. An older saying- if you can lean- you can clean! But as you discern your gifts which God has given, you may also realize that there is no need to worry. If you let God be in control of your life, because of Jesus' resurrection and promise of forgiveness, there is no reason to worry. There is no reason for any of life's stresses to eat at your heart or mind and gnaw away at your integrity and willingness. You are able to look beyond what you can do through Jesus who enables change to come to those who believe in him.

Praying may also include reading scripture passages like *Psalms 94:19, "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy. Or from Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Jesus is teaching in the synagogue when he heard people speaking about the beautiful temple which was dedicated to God. He stated, " As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another, all will be thrown down. They asked him when this will occur and what would be the signs that this will take place.

Were they worried about the destruction of the temple or about their future? Were they concerned about the possible wars, earthquakes, famines and plagues. Were they fearful of being arrested and what to say? Jesus then states, You will be given the words and wisdom that others cannot contradict and you will be betrayed or hated. But in the event of any of these circumstances coming into play, trust God. Don't worry. Trust God. There may be destruction all around you, but all you need to do is trust God. You will be all right. You will be cared for and loved- just as you are in this moment. God will look after you. You just need to get rid of the

worry and trust God. In the moments of stress and panic, uncertainty and change, you need only to trust God. IF God leads you into these situations, God will lead you through them. Let go of the worry and trust.

This is because you cannot change things. Only God can.. So in those moments praying helps and leads you to a new calm and a new understanding of your relationship with God. The Serenity Prayer begins with these words: *"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."*

As people we experience many different situations and challenges, many possibilities and outcomes. But one thing is for sure if we let go of the worry- we can trust God to guide and lead our lives. We need only seek God's help as we hear the words of Isaiah's prophecy and look to Christ Jesus as the promised one who came to earth for our sakes. And we must be willing to understand who we are as God's faithful people and a part of the peaceable kingdom we each seek to attain.

As we prepare to celebrate Jesus as the King of Kings and the one who reigns in our hearts let us be mindful of our commitment to move from worry to trust. For when we trust God we may experience life filled with hope and wonder. Because God in Christ is with us. God's Spirit will lead us with love and the joy of life. But we must choose to trust God.

Let us pray:

God of love, in the midst of our stresses and panic, please open our eyes. Show us what You are doing. Remind us that You are greater than all those who are against us. Help us see where You are at work and give us Your joy and encouragement. In the Name of Jesus, we pray.
Amen