

## IN THE STORM: "Only Atheists Worry"

Matthew 6:31-34

For the week of April 26, 2020

An atheist is defined as a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God. A Christian is a person who has put their faith and trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ, including His death on the cross as payment for sins and His resurrection on the third day. A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ.

### Startup Question

Are the following two statements true or false? Why or why not? Discuss and give your reasoning in your community group.

**Statement #1:** "If atheists really lived what they believed, the world would be a much scarier and miserable place. Fortunately, most atheists don't fully live what they believe."

**Statement #2:** "If Christians really lived what they believed, the world would be a much better and happier place. Unfortunately, most Christians don't fully live what they believe and one key reason is worry."

### The Passage

→→Read Matthew 6:25-34. Our focus this week is verses 31-34.

#### I. **Worry reveals our practical atheism.**

Reread verse 31 and then compare to verse 25. What is Jesus specifically telling us not to worry about? How is Jesus' commandment applicable today when we live in a culture with an abundance of food, clothes, and modern homes?

"*For the Gentiles seek after all these things*" (verse 32) highlights that the Gentiles believed in weak, petty narcissistic gods who didn't really care about them. If anyone was going to look after them, it was going to be them, not their gods. They were practical atheists. Do we, as followers of Christ, often live as practical atheists? Before you answer, take a look at some ways Christians act:

- We say prayer is important and changes things, but we often forget to pray or pray as an afterthought.
- We say God owns everything and we're just stewards, but we give little financially to the church and mission work.
- We say "*forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*" but we still hold grudges.
- We say to love God is to love others, but only when we feel like it.
- We say it is more blessed to give than to receive, but we invest little time serving.
- We say Jesus is the only way, but we do very little to make Him known.
- We say that God promises to meet our needs, but we still worry about the future.

How does God help you overcome these potential pitfalls? Share in your community group.

## II. **Worry is inconsistent with trust in a Heavenly Father.**

We cannot trust someone we don't know, and this is the key of learning to trust God. The main reason we trust God is that He is worthy of our trust; He never lies; never fails to fulfill His promises. Read the following passages and share your thoughts of your trust of God in your community group:

Numbers 23:19; Psalm 89:34, 100:5; Isaiah 14:24, 25:1; 1 Kings 8:56

## III. **"Worry" about kingdom priorities.**

In verse 33 Jesus commands us to "*seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*" This command impacts every follower of Christ. Consider just two results of this passage:

- We are to submit to His rule and mission. How does this impact your day-to-day life? How have you accomplished His mission in your everyday life?
- We are to look forward to His return. Why should we look forward to this? What will occur when Jesus returns (see Revelation 19:11-16)?

## IV. **God promises to "worry" about our worries.**

Verse 33 ends with "*and all these things will be added to you.*" This is a promise to meet all of our needs and not all of our wants. Why would God not meet all of our wants? Why is this wise? Does God meet all of your needs? How about your wants? Share with your community group.

## V. **Worry is always best procrastinated.**

Our passage ends in verse 34 where Jesus attaches our worry to a timeframe. We can't worry about the past (although many do). We rarely worry about the present. Most of what we worry about is the future and studies show that 85% of worry about future "things" never happens.

So a practical way to handle worry is to procrastinate. Yes procrastinate! Your final question: How can procrastination solve your worry?

## **Final Thought**

You can't travel through time and work in the future. Worry is all about playing out scenarios and conversations in your head that won't happen for days, weeks, months, or years. The best thing to do is to stop playing out the scenarios in your head; instead procrastinate that worry until tomorrow and ask, "What can I do today to make a difference with what I am worried about tomorrow?" If the answer is nothing, then you drop it, and enjoy the rest of today!