

Trust over Worry

It's easy for us to worry. Let me tell you about something I've been worrying about this past week. This year, today, is a very special day. For the first time ever, I get to play host for the Thanksgiving holiday. My family is here today, and I'm very happy to have them here with us today in worship. But, I must confess to you all here today, when I offered to host, I didn't realize just how much planning goes into preparing that thanksgiving feast. I figured it might be a little more than my normal contributions to these family events, which usually consist of beer and bread rolls, but I didn't realize how much more I'd have to do. Last Monday, which is normally my day off, certainly did not feel like a day off. I spent the day chasing down dishware and ingredients that I never knew I'd need, and some I didn't even know existed. While I'm glad and happy that the meal is almost here, prepping for these meals put me through a lot of stress. I was worried that I wouldn't get everything right.

I'm not sure, but I'm willing to bet that I'm not the only one here today that's experienced the problem of worry. We seem to have an epidemic of worry, of stress in our world today. A recent Gallup poll by the New York Times stated that in the United States, about fifty-five percent of adults said they experience stress, compared with just thirty-five percent globally. Now that's a lot of stressed out people! I'm sure we can think of people in our lives, some of our family, friends and neighbors, who've been paralyzed by worry. Maybe even ourselves sometimes. We are a particularly stressed out and worried people.

It's easy for us to worry about the little things, and blow them out of proportion. Like that extra notch on our belts we use after some light weight gain around the

holidays. Like worrying about getting to work on time on these crowded Wake Forest streets, which seem to keep on getting busier and busier. Like making sure that the bills get paid week in and week out. These small worries can easily turn into big worries. Those relentless bills seem to keep coming, and more and more people struggle to make ends meet. Even though the streets seem to be more and more crowded, they're faces you don't recognize, and maybe you feel lost and alone. Maybe your health, which used to be good and strong, now seems set back by problem after problem, and it doesn't seem like it will get any better. It's easy for us to worry.

But Jesus in our gospel lesson for today has a different message, "Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on." Jesus' response to all of our problems is this: Don't worry about it. Don't sweat it. Trust me. Now, it's pretty easy to hear this message of gospel, of good news, and think of it as a little patronizing. We might think, really? How is trusting God going to help me pay my bills? How is trusting God going to help me put food on the table, and clothes on my back? Quite frankly we sinful creatures aren't always best at trusting. Trust between people rarely comes easy. It takes time, and hard work. But trust is everything. Relationships rarely last long without it. If trust erodes away, worry begins to find its way in.

The reality is, we can count on God with all these things. God is perfectly trustworthy. And our relationship with him is unlike any other we have. In the waters of your baptism, God claimed you as his own. God cares for you. You are his, and there's nothing that can take that gift away from you. He's claimed you as his own family, and for your inheritance, he promises you deliverance from our biggest worry, death itself.

And God's good for it. We have faith, we trust, that we will rise again someday. And this trust is found in Jesus, who loved us, and gave himself for us. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, you will too. This is the solid, sure foundation, the bedrock where our faith is found. We trust in the God who's powerful enough to raise us all from the dead someday, in someone who will accomplish this impossible thing for us. The Holy Spirit enables us to believe this, to trust in our Triune God.

And, thanks to God, we don't just trust him with the big thing, but we trust him with everything. God enables us to trust him with every aspect of our lives. From the food on our tables to the clothes on our back. As our trust in God grows, our worries become less and less. Trust wins out over worry. Granted, this is hard for us to do. Really hard. This perfect relationship is imperfect because of our sin, our shortcomings. Our sin is still in the equation at this point. But God still cares for us, despite all our sin, despite all our shortcomings, despite all our worries. Jesus in this passage tells us all about God's care for his creation: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them." God cares for every animal in his creation. When I was living up north in Wisconsin at around this time of year, I'd always see birds in huge flocks flying south for the winter. Especially geese for some reason. Maybe I noticed them just because they were loud and a bit obnoxious. But, my point is how remarkable their great seasonal journeys are, that God enabled them to travel great distances every year to get their food. It tells of the care and design that God gave them. It's remarkable! And trust that God promises to care for you and direct you in every season of your life. No matter how you feel, we trust that God is still there, present and active, working in your life.

God's care isn't limited to animals either. As our text states, "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory wasn't arrayed like one of these." It's incredible to see how these flowers transform from little seeds into some of the most beautiful things in all creation. It's like God does it just because he can. And he promises to do so much more for you, "if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown in the oven, will he not much more clothe you, oh you of little faith?" God's clothed you in his righteousness, as the prophet Isaiah says, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness." God's care for his creation is amplified in each and every one of us, his chosen people, his Christians. With God's care completely surrounding us, we are able to trust in him.

So, we trust that God, the one who created all things, is willing to provide for us everything we need. From the very air we breathe, to the food on our Thanksgiving day tables. Even when it's being hosted by someone for the first time. But, most importantly, he cared about us enough to send his Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who loves us, and gave himself for us. That we might live forever with him. It's a great thing. In Christ, we have no reason to worry. We have God enabling us all to trust in him. Amen.