

# St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 25<sup>th</sup> January 2009

## Good News – for those who worry about money Matt 6:25-35



### Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

The bible tells us that God will not provide Christians with a 'get out' clause when it comes to financial security and that none of us will face financial difficulties. What God does ask is that we trust him. Often it is in times of personal crisis that we learn to lean more on God and discover a deeper trust in our Lord ("The Lord is my shepherd ... I shall not want!").

#### Worrying Times

This week is an opportunity to re-appraise our outlook and attitude to worries about money. Many of us are, and will experience difficulties. It is legitimate to be wary and watchful, but not worry-full!

#### What Matthew 6 does NOT tell us ...

That God is the ultimate financial insurance policy and that he will look after us ... whatever! Christians are not a protected species and that the bible does not promise "good" Christians won't have financial difficulties (this is despite some of the so-called "prosperity teaching" that emanates from the USA).

#### What this passages DOES tell us ...

That worry is linked to the FOCUS of our mind. Worry is linked to trust, and worry is bred when we become preoccupied with the wrong things.

#### How does the bible define worry?

The biblical definition of "worry" is a compound of two words which gives us "a divided mind" (a house divided against itself will not stand!) and a mind that is wavering will tend towards worry. Anxiety prevails when our mind is split between today's concerns and tomorrow's problems.

#### How are we to view the concerns of today and of tomorrow?

"God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes." (Message Matt 6:35). We will find grace "when we need it" (Heb 4:16). God's grace is promised on a "just in time" basis. So God's way of working is day by day, and step by step – Remember the children of Israel, they collected "manna" for each day. We have to work with God "when the time comes". This is not easy but we have to trust God step by step as we walk with him. HE PROMISES A LAMP UNTO OUR FEET ... NOT A CRYSTAL BALL!

#### Some practical help

- We have to change our outlook and our expectations. Remember, "Where your treasure is, there your heart is also" (Matt 6: 21) and "Life is not defined by what you have, even if you have a lot" (Luke 12:15) ... Are we sometimes worrying about keeping up with the Jones more than our basic needs?
- Can we use this time to discover a new joy in simplicity? ... The best things in life are free. We have to beware that our worries are not driven by a love of money and a lack of contentment (see Hebrews 13:5)
- Don't go it alone. We are called to share our burdens and live a life of honesty and transparency. It is not a failure to experience difficulties, but God's grace can only enter into a place of humility rather than pride.
- Travel light – many of us are carrying burdens we were never meant to bear and carrying excess luggage of trying to fulfil wrong expectations and shape our lives around values that are simply not of God and which will drag us down (on this theme I can thoroughly recommend a book by Max Lucado called Travelling Light, in particular chapters 3, 4 and 6.)



### Witness: questions to discuss

1. Ice Breaker/Welcome: As a group or working in pairs come up with a definition of worry using the letters W O R R Y! For example, When Overwhelming Responsibilities Riddle You!
2. The biblical definition of "worry" suggests a divided mind. Have you experienced a sense of a divided mind split between today and tomorrow, between God's priorities and us simply being consumed by the wrong stuff? What worries the most, most often?
3. We are called to trust God day by day and his grace is promised in a timely manner. Can anyone share from their own experience how God has stepped in, or has provided you with the strength to cope "at the right time", often testing us to the very brink.
4. If we are honest, do we think that much of our worry comes from false expectations and wrong perspectives? How can we overcome this?
5. Too often we go it alone and grace can't operate in a place of pride. How might we cultivate greater openness and sharing amongst us?
6. Can anyone share how they have prayed with and/or shared their burdens with a Christian friend and have prayerfully worked through the worries of finance, job security or major change of circumstances?
7. What "excess baggage" do you feel you are carrying? What are the worries and burdens you are inclined to carry around with you? Share these and give time as a group to give them to God and allow him to take them and release us from these worries and find a new place of day to day trust.