

Place: Lurgan Baptist 1:5:2011

Reading: Matthew 6:19-34

## GRAPPLING WITH THE GIANTS

### 1. THE GIANT OF WORRY

The children of Israel paid a great price to reach the land of their dreams, Canaan, but what did they find when they arrived ? **Giants**. Do you recall the unbelieving report of the ten when they returned from spying out the land ? “ *The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak.* ” ( Num 13:32 ) My .... the giants are abroad. We encounter them in the Scriptures where they are known primarily as the Anakim. These were the early inhabitants of Canaan described as “ *giants.* ”

( Deut 2:10,21, 9:2 ) Of course the Anakim aren't found in our telephone directories. The giants we face have different names.

Fear, discouragement, bitterness, worry, guilt, temptation, and doubt. Call them what you will, they are the same old giants and they have intimidated us for years. *What giant is giving you grief ?* Perhaps fear has your number. Maybe depression is harassing you. Whatever giant is bullying you, **the message of this series is that God is the greatest Giant of all, and He will be with you and He will empower you.** Isn't it about time we stand tall and

face the giants in our lives ? Perhaps today you are grappling with the giant of worry. A hotel manager in Raleigh North Carolina reports that a guest woke up everyone in the hotel screaming, “ *its in the phone book, it's in the phone book.* ” The manager got the house detective and they let themselves into the mans room, where they found him in the midst of a nightmare, “ *I was having a horrible dream,* ” the man explained when he awoke. “ *I dreamed the income tax people wanted to send me a big refund, but they had lost my address.* ”

No one can deny that we live in a world of worry. The slogan for many 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians is “ ***Why trust when you can worry ?*** ” Worry is a favourite pastime for most people. It occupies their thinking for most part of the day. However, worry is a very dangerous thing, it takes a severe toll on people. But far beyond its psychological effect is the fact that the Bible says that worry is a sin for a child of God. Worry is the equivalent of saying, “ *Lord I know you mean well by what you say, but I'm just not sure You can pull it off.* ” Worry is the sin of distrusting the promise and the providence of God, yet we do it all the time. William Inge said, “ *Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due.* ” William Ward put it this way, “ *Worry is faith in the negative, trust in the unpleasant, assurance of disaster and belief in defeat .... worry is wasting today's time to clutter up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterdays troubles.* ” Corrie Ten Boom used to recite a little couplet, “ ***Worry is an old man with bended head, carrying a load of feathers which he thinks are lead.*** ” She understood that anxiety is foolish because it concerns that which is **isn't**. ***It deals with what-ifs and could bes,***

***speculation and possibility.*** And as long as we dwell on the worst case scenario, we guarantee our own misery, for an extensive catalogue of calamity is always within the reach of the imagination. But what do we mean when we talk about worry ? Well, the worry as it appears in our English language does not appear in the text of the King James Version of the Bible. However the concept does. To convey such a thought such words as " *care, thought, and anxiety are used.*" The Greek word for worry is a combination of two words ( merimna ) the first means " ***to divide,***" and the second means " ***mind.***" Put them together and you have a definition of worry. Worry is a divided mind. To be anxious is to be divided and distracted. Worry is simply the expression of human sinfulness. My ... are worry and anxiety a part of your daily life ? Is your worry over things concerned with the present or things concerned with the future ? Is worry handling and harassing you ? Let's turn to the teaching of the Lord Jesus and notice,

### **(1) HOW WORRY IS DEVELOPED**

How it comes into existence, how it grows and develops. Quite often we find ourselves worried about matters that we need not worry about at all. I heard about the wife of a Federal District Court Judge in U.S.A. who at a closing down sale found the perfect green tie to match one of her husband's sports coats. A little later the couple were relaxing at a resort to get his mind off a complicated cocaine conspiracy case. He noticed a small round disc sewn into his tie. He thought it was suspicious and called the local F.B.I. who were equally suspicious that it might be planted by the conspiracy defendants. The agent sent

the device to F.B.I... headquarters in Washington, DC, for analysis. A few days later the Judge anxiously phoned Washington to find the results of the tests. He was told, " *We are not sure where the disc came from, but we discovered that when you press it, it plays Jingle Bells.*" Mark Twain said, " *I am old man and have known many troubles but most of them never happened.*" The University of Wisconsin found in a study that:

- \* 40% of the things we worry about never happen:
- \* 30% of our worrying is about things over and past that could not be changed by all the worry in the world:
- \* 10% Petty worries:
- \* 12% Needless health worries:
- \* 8% Real legitimate worries.

Our only quarrel with such a table is that for the trusting child of God there are no real, legitimate worries. Yet we spend most of our time on Fretful Avenue and Anxiety Street. Why ? What is the cause of worry ? Someone has said, " ***things may change but people never do.***" Worry is proof of that because Christ pointed out that people worried about the same things in His day that people worry about today. Did you notice what He said in ( 6:25 ) They were worried about the basics, and so do we. You see, worry is developed by thinking,

#### **(a) ABOUT OUR FOOD:**

You say, " *I don't worry about that. There's a supermarket on every corner. We've got so much food in our house we never think about it. What do you mean worry about food ? Who worries about that ?*" And then some prophet of

doom comes along and says we're running out of food and water in the United Kingdom, and maybe we do worry a little. Or we hit a recession like right now, and our jobs are under threat.

Then we begin to think. "*What if I lose my job ?*" You see, the very basic's of life become a matter of concern Now if you were living in Palestine in Christ's day, you might have been a little more concerned. There were times when the snows didn't come to the mountains, and as a result the streams didn't run. In the burning summer heat the streams would dry up, and there would be no water. There were also times when the crops didn't come through because a plague of locusts ate them. The result was famine ? And when there was famine there was no income, and there was no income they couldn't buy clothes. Can you imagine how shocked the people of Christ's day must have been when He said, "*Stop worrying.*" (a)

### (b) *ABOUT OUR FUTURE:*

The word "*stature,*" in ( 6:27 ) is used sometimes to mean " span of life." The Lord is really saying, "*Which of you by worrying can lengthen your life ? Which of you by worrying can add a day to your life ?*" The answer, of course is that we can't add a day, an hour, or a flickering moment. Worry divides the mind and multiplies misery. It subtracts from our happiness but it never adds. Yet we live in a day when people are in a panic to lengthen their lives. We are concerned about vitamins, health spas, and exercise. We are crazy about the "*body beautiful.*" My ... has God not determined the life of a man ? Has God not designed how long we live ? You say, "*Are you saying*

*exercise is useless ?*" No, as long as I'm going to live I would like to increase the quality of my life. If I exercise I function better, my brain works better, and I'm happier and in control. But I'm not going to kid myself that by running down the street every day I'm going to force God to let me live longer. There are people who worry about how long they are going to live because they are afraid of death.

Some people don't want to get on an airplane, some are afraid of diseases, some go from doctor to doctor, they live in constant fear about their lives and the future. I think of the great New Testament scholar, Archbishop Trench. There was a time in his life when he became obsessed with the fear that the limbs of his body were going to lose all their feeling. He worried about it all the time.

One night he was sitting at an elaborate state dinner, and all of a sudden he blurted out. "*Oh, it's finally happened. It's finally happened. I haven't got a bit of feeling in my right leg.*" The lady sitting next to him said, "*Your grace, if it's any comfort to you, it's my leg you are pinching.*" Could it be that you are taking years of your longevity with needless anxiety ? (a) (b)

### (c) *ABOUT OUR FASHION:*

Do you see what Christ says in ( 6:25 ) Some people live for clothes. The most important place in their whole world is the wardrobe. People live for clothes. It isn't so much that they are afraid they will have nothing to wear it is that they are afraid they won't be able to look their best. My ... have you made a god out of fashion ? Now I'm not

saying that one should look dowdy and tacky that is a negative distraction that will make people think you don't care for yourself. But do you recall what Peter says to Christian wives " *Let it not be that outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart.*" ( 1 Pet 3:3 ) Peter is telling the Christian wife not to major on minors. She should not major on being a fashion plate just to keep up with the crowd.

We worry we don't have enough, and don't look good enough when the Lord Jesus who owned only what He wore on His back, was the loveliest person who ever lived. My .... what is the cause of your worry ? Are you absorbed with deep concern for external, temporal, material things ? (1)

## (2) HOW WORRY IS DESCRIBED

For here in ( Matt Ch 6 ) the Lord Jesus describes worry. Notice what He says. He says,

### (a) ***WORRY IS UNBECOMING:***

It is inconsistent with your profession of faith. Look if you will at ( 6:25 ) " *Is not the life more important than food and the body more important than clothes ?*" Here is an argument from the greater to the lesser. If God has provided the greater, life, will he not provide the lesser food ? If God has provided the body will He not also provide the clothes ? Do you really suppose that God having made the life and body will be unmindful of its support ? Paul says if God has provided us with the greatest of gifts, dare we doubt that He will provide us

with lesser gifts ? " *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things ?*" ( Rom 8:32 ) My .... you believe that God can redeem you, break the shackles of Satan, give you eternal life, but you just don't think that He can give you something to eat and wear in the next couple of days. ***Isn't that pretty ridiculous ?*** We can believe God for the bigger gift, and then we stumble and can't believe Him for the lesser one. We believe God is going to take us to heaven when we die, but we don't believe He's going to provide us a meal or take care of the length of our life. You see (a)

### (b) ***WORRY IS UNNECESSARY:***

Look if you will at ( 6:26 ) It is unnecessary to worry about the basics of life and what you eat or drink or wear because of your Father. Have you forgotten who your Father is ? *For example, do your children worry about where they are going to their next meal ?* No. They don't worry about whether they are going to have clothes, a bed or something to drink. That never enters their mind because they know enough about you, their father to know you will provide for them. And believe me, you don't come close to being as faithful as God. Yet how often we fail to believe that God is going to provide for us. The Lord Jesus gave two illustrations.

### \* ***Look at the FOWLS OF THE AIR:***

Did you know that there are over 8,000 species of birds ? Who feeds them ? God ( Job 38:41 Ps 147:9 ) Yet for all their beauty and diversity, Christ did not die for

a single bird. He died for you. Will He not then take care of you ? Are you not much better than a bird ?

**\* Look at the FLOWERS IN THE FIELD:**

( 6:28 ) There is such a wondrous beauty in a flower and a God who would lavish such beauty on a flower will lavish the necessary clothing on one who is His eternal child.

*Said the robin to the sparrow,  
Friend I'd really like to know  
What makes those human beings;  
Rush about and worry so.  
Said the sparrow to the robin  
Friend, I think that it must be  
That they have no Heavenly Father  
Such as cares for you and me*

Joe was a worrier. They used to call him “**Joe the Worrier.**” One day Bill his neighbour was walking down the street when he saw his worrying friend bouncing along as merrily as you please. Joe was whistling. He looked as if he had not a care in the whole the world. Bill could hardly believe his eyes so he crossed over to see what had happened. He asked,  
“*Joe, what's happened to you ? I have never seen a happier man, you don't seem to be worried any more.*” Joe said, “*Its wonderful Bill, I have not worried for several weeks now.*” Bill continued, “*That's great Joe, but how did you manage it ?*” Well, you see said Joe,  
“*I hired a man to do all the worrying for me.*” “*You hired someone to do all the worry for you,*” said Bill.  
“*Right,*” said Joe. “*Well,*” said Bill “*that's something*

*new, tell me how much does he charge you ?*” “*A 1000 dollars a week,*” said Joe. “*A 1000 dollars a week,*” said Bill. “*How could you raise a 1,000 dollars a week to pay him ?*” Joe said, “***That's his worry.***” I mean wouldn't it be great to have someone to handle all your worries for you ? My .... you do. Do you know not realise that you have a Heavenly Father who encourages you to cast all your care upon Him, and what is best of all, it won't even cost you a penny. (a) (b) but,

**(c) WORRY IS UNPRODUCTIVE:**

Look at ( 6:27 ) or “*Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature ?*” A cubit was about eighteen inches. I mean “*who can sit back in his chair and worry himself into a few extra inches in height ?*” ***Someone has said that worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but it won't get you anywhere.*** I heard about a man who kept a little white mouse in a cage. The mouse would climb onto the inside of a big wheel, and as he ran the wheel spun round and round. The man said, “*Its fun to watch this little guy. It's as if he wakes up and says ' Must get on the wheel, must keep running. '*” We're told that the average pet mouse will run 9,000 miles on such a wheel in his lifetime and he's still inside the cage.” My .... is that not the way it is with worry ? A lifetime of frantic running with no destination ? Is there anyone here who could say that they are better off today because of yesterday's worry ? ***Worry simply pulls tomorrows clouds over today's sunshine.*** (a) (b) (c)

**(d) WORRY IS UNSPIRITUAL:**

For look at ( 6:31-32 ) Christ's point is that to worry is to be just like everyone else without God and without Christ. Worry is characteristic of unbelievers but for a Christian this is senseless and without *excuse*. " *For your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* " ( 6:32 ) Worry is one of those " *sanitized sins,*" in the Christian life. To sanitize means " *to make more acceptable by the removing of that which is unpleasant or undesirable in features.*" Is this not what we have done with worry ? Yet three times in this passage Christ says, " *Take no thought,*" stop worrying. My .... do you face life like a Christian or a pagan ? When the future is uncertain, how do we react ? I mean, does your faith affect your view of life ? (1) (2)

### (3) HOW WORRY IS DEFEATED

Is it possible to be emancipated from the 1001 pressures to which we are subjected ? Well, Christ says here " *Stop Worrying,*" and these words are an indication that He has made it possible for us to live without worry and corroding care. How ? Well, notice here there is,

#### (a) A PRINCIPLE WE NEED TO LIVE BY:

Faith. Did you notice how Christ describes worriers ? " *O ye of little faith .... ?*" ( 6:30 ) If you worry what kind of faith do you manifest ? Little faith, puny faith, inadequate faith. The sum of an attitude that worries about temporal things and life span is an attitude of little faith in God. A ship was sailing from Liverpool to New York. The Captain of the ship had his family with him. That ship ran into a terrible storm and the captain's little girl was

awakened by the storm. " *Whats the matter ?*" she asked. Her mother told her they were in a terrible storm. The little girl asked, " *Is father on the bridge ?*" " *Yes, father is on the bridge.*" The little girl then lay her head back on the pillow and went back to sleep. My .... our Father is on the bridge and when we worry we are distrusting His control and care. George Truett said " *that worry is mild form of atheism. For when we worry we are acting like there is no God.*" In those times of crisis do you take God at His Word ? Do you rest upon His promises ? Do you believe that what God has promised He is well able to perform ? (a)

#### (b) A PRIORITY WE NEED TO LIVE FOR:

What is God's priority for our lives ? " *But or rather seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.*" ( 6:33 ) Rather than worrying, rather than being like the pagans, rather than being of little faith, rather than bringing the future into the present, rather than being materialistically oriented seek the kingdom. Is this not that Paul did ? Watch him as he makes his way to Jerusalem, as he prepares to declare and defend the faith at the point of a sword. The people kept saying,

" *Don't go Paul. When you get there you are going to be in a lot of trouble. They are going to put you into prison, they might take your life.*" Do you know what Paul said, " *But none of these things move me neither count I my life dear unto myself.*" Paul was not interested in adding a year to his life, he was not concerned what he got to eat and drink and wear. He continued, " *so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the*

*Lord Jesus.*” ( Acts 20:24 ) My .... this is the priority that will make someone go to a mission field in obscurity and say goodbye to all the fashions and fancy foods of the world, to eat and dress in a very simple way, because he is not nearly so concerned about these things as he is with the advance of the kingdom. You see, the great overriding issue is priorities. ***What is most important to your heart ?*** Those who base their lives on the acquisition of things tend to be the ones saddled with anxiety. But Christ has a simple prescription. Get your priorities right. You say, “ *If I get involved in the kingdom and chasing holiness, then what happens ?*”

“ *All these things shall be added unto you.*” ( 6:33 ) ( Solomon ) Is the Lord really first in your life ? Then you have nothing to worry about for He who is your Lord will be your All-Sufficiency. (a) (b)

***(c) A PERIOD WE NEED TO LIVE IN:***

“ *Take therefore .... thereof.*” ( 6:34 ) Do not add tomorrow’s burdens to to-days. One of the things Moses learned in the midst of a busy schedule was “ *as thy days so shall thy strength be.*” ( Deut 33:25 ) There’s a beautiful matching of the strength with the day. When tomorrow’s burdens are with us, tomorrow’s grace will be there to meet them. Do not be worrying about the unknown future and the things that may never happen. Leave tomorrow alone. When that day dawns the Lord will give you the strength and grace you need for it.

***Lead Thou me on, Keep Thou my feet  
I do not ask to see the distant scene  
One step enough for me***

The Lord says to us in the verse of the poet.

**My name is I AM  
If you live in the past  
It will be very hard  
For I am not there  
My name is not I WAS**

**And if you live in the future  
It will be very hard  
For my name is not I WILL BE  
But if you live in the present  
It is not hard  
For my name is I AM**

My .... is it not time you packed your things and left Worry Street ? If yours is the tendency to sit and brood, take a pen and list all of the mercies you enjoy, then say to your despairing soul, “ *why art thou cast down, O my soul ? And why are thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God .....*” ( Ps 42:5 ) All the Lord has been He will be, until travelling days are done. With such a bountiful God, **why worry ?**