

Community Church of Issaquah

June 8, 2025

## Who Said Don't Worry? Part Two

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Last Sunday we shared a message from Matthew's Gospel that Jesus told his followers in what we call the Sermon On the Mount. The subject of the message was the commandment that we should not worry. If you remember, we had passages from the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew as a starting place for our journey. Though that was not the passage Woody read for us this morning, let me refresh your memories with just a few of the verses from last week, These are the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:25–34:

*Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Which of you by worrying can add one inch to your stature? So why do you worry. O you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

There you have it: Jesus said, not just once, but three times, "Do not worry." If Jesus tells us multiple times not to worry, then worry might indeed be outside what Jesus wants for us. That's bad news. But there's also good news.

Jesus died on the cross to pay for the ways we have chosen not to follow His commandments, and one of those is our choice to worry. He rose from the grave to give us victory over that breaking his commandment. The beautiful message of Jesus is not just that you do not have to worry, but that He will give you His power day by day to deliver you from worry. He wants to take worry from you. The question is, who is it exactly that forgives us for worrying and takes care of the things we have been worrying about? Would you guess God through the Holy Spirit?

It's ironic that the message about worrying has turned to directing the conversation to the Holy Spirit today. You might not be aware of it, but today in the Christian faith is what we call Pentecost, the day we believe marks the appearance of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. Let me give you a short tutorial about this special commemoration in our faith tradition. Perhaps it will help us to understand why we rely on God's Holy Spirit to give us comfort and hope.

We wouldn't think that those who chose to believe in Jesus as the Promised Messiah would still cling to many of their old Jewish traditions, but we would be wrong. Jesus hosting the Last Supper as a part of the Jewish celebration of Passover was a continuation of his following what he had known and taught all his life. Following His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, the disciples did not choose to abandon all the teachings they had known before Jesus and as a part of his teachings. With that in mind, here's the short story about Pentecost.

The Jewish tradition has many unique celebrations related to their history. When Jesus went to Jerusalem for the last time, he was following the requirements of Jewish men who must go to Jerusalem three times each year. His journey on the last week of his earthly life was to observe the celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or Passover. This recognized the escape of the Jewish people from captivity in Egypt. His being in Jerusalem was not casual but intended.

Then 50 days after Passover, the Jewish people observed the first harvest after the previous. That is where the word “Pentecost” is noted in the Old Testament and New. It simply means fifty, the number of days from Passover to the first harvest. It was in observance of that Jewish tradition that the disciples were gathered again in Jerusalem. Some believe their gathering took place in the upper room as Passover did, but no one is certain.

The new meaning of Pentecost for the Christian faith came from the coming of God’s Holy Spirit as had been promised. There in that upper room, the disciples experienced something most unique. The spirit of God that was poured out on them caused them to speak in different tongues or languages. There are many theories about that part of the event, so we won’t go there. We can simply say that God made life for His believers dramatically different than they had experienced before. The Holy Spirit completed the promises of God’s care for His people. And there is a connection to what we have been talking about regarding worrying and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said not to worry about your life or your body. Who gave life to you? God did. Who made your body? God did. So, if God gave life to you, He's going to be faithful to sustain your life. And if God made your body, He's going to faithfully provide to take care of your body. How does God do that? Through the Holy Spirit. When we pray asking God's help, we often forget that the help we seek comes from the Holy Spirit. Yes, we most often say, "Please, God, help me." What we fail to understand is that God ministers to us through His Holy Spirit that was given to us to fulfill all the work begun by His Son, Jesus Christ.

Continual worry is really a rejection of faith. When you ask God to save us, you ask in faith, believing. The Bible says that we are saved by faith when we realize our transgressions and confess them to God. We realize we cannot save ourselves, so we trust the work of Jesus Christ to save us. If you are saved, then you have trusted your very soul to Jesus. Trusting Jesus for eternal salvation means also having faith in Him to care for you day by day. How can Jesus do that if he is not still in his earthly body? That is where God's Holy Spirit comes into our lives. As Christians, we believe in the Holy Trinity – God, Jesus, Holy Spirit. So, whether we are praying for God to help us or for Jesus to help us, that help comes through the Holy Spirit. Can you see the connection here? If we seek help for those things we worry about, God will provide that assistance through His Holy Spirit.

Did you hear what Woody read for us in our Scriptures this morning? Let me share a couple of those verses again.

*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.*

*Or these words from the Psalms:*

*Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

*Or these words from Peter's first letter:*

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

The message is clear. When we are in need of God's help, all we need to do is ask and wait. But that, for most of us, is the problem. We don't want to wait. We want the Holy Spirit to get busy immediately and solve the problem. That challenges our faith, however. If our faith and trust is in God, we must wait for God's hand of mercy and grace. Like some of you, I have sat impatiently waiting for something to happen – anything. And when it doesn't happen on my own time, I find myself having moved from positive expectations to negative despair. Shamefully, I will at times mutter, "Why bother? Nothing's going to happen." I hope you are never in that place.

I have to remind myself that absolutely everything we need for salvation and for our physical life is found in Jesus through the Holy Spirit. He will feed you with His faithfulness. He will sustain you with His goodness. So, trust God, and enjoy the security of His promise to care for

your needs. Our testimony for our faith in Christ is how well we live out the promise that God will provide for all our needs when we stop worrying and start praying and believing His Word.

Don't let worry make your testimony for Jesus Christ ineffective. Instead, let faith protect your testimony so that others will be drawn to your Helper: Jesus. The words of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 are often quoted:

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

I learned Matthew 6:33 by singing a little chorus with those words. Do you know it? Most of the time when people quote or sing that verse, they leave out the first word: But.

That word is so very important! The word 'but' here means 'instead of.' Jesus is saying, "Instead of worrying, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Rather than worrying about all of those things that God knows you need and has promised to provide, the number one priority in your life should be this: seeking God's kingdom. We seek God's kingdom by striving to make Jesus Christ the King and Lord of every part of our lives. Seeking God's kingdom means that righteous, faith-filled living that pleases God becomes our highest priority.

God knows every worrisome detail of your life. Jesus Christ, through His Word, says to you right now, "Do not worry. I died on the cross to pay the full price for all of your sins, including your worry. I rose from the grave to give you victory over every sin, including worry. So let go of your worry, trust Me. I will take care of you." Pray to our Holy Spirit and wait. God won't let you down. He promises.