

DO NOT WORRY

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page_id=3567

Living in a society where time is more precious than either gold or silver, taking time to be holy tends to be one of those commands that is truly forgotten. While most Canadians have their basic needs met most of our society still feel like they live a life of poverty. Until we have acquired what the general populace has we tend to feel like we are destitute and poor. To satisfy the cravings of what our eyes see we borrow vast sums of money so that we can buy the lifestyle that we covet. Ironically, our debts are so vast that rarely do we get time to enjoy the things we have purchased. When God comes knocking at our door and asks us to spend time with Him our response is to give Him a few hours a week and foolishly claim it a living sacrifice unto God. This sermon will explore how much better our walk with God would be if only we would seek first the kingdom of God, stop coveting and leave Him responsible to provide for our basic needs.

ILLUSTRATION #1

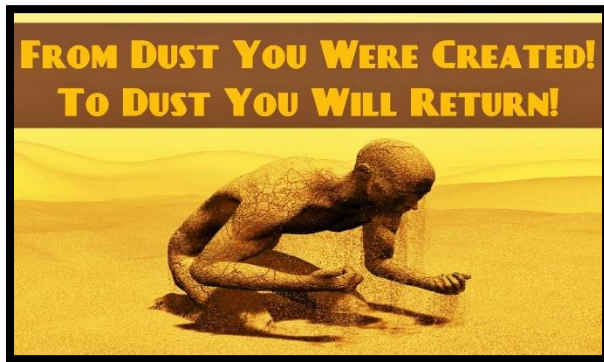
To start off this sermon I had two ladies perform what I would like to call the “Frantic Worrier Skit.” They both entered the sanctuary with curlers in their hair and clothing that looked like it was taken right out of the dryer and thrown onto their bodies with little thought. As they enter the sanctuary the song Crazy Frog Axel F played in the background to set the “I am too busy” tone. As both ladies hurried up the aisle they frantically talked about their insane schedules and how they are sinking fast! When they arrive at the front of the church they sat at a table. They were waiting for others to arrive for the church Business meeting. The longer they waited the more they talked about their schedules and the more frantic they became. They got so flustered that they both agreed to skip the church meeting and on the way out the door they justified their leaving by saying that God wanted them to catch up anyways.

WORRYING LEADS AND A FRANTIC LIFE

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”

Matthew 6:25, NIV

While this skit was humorous and very entertaining the main reason for including it in the sermon was to accentuate the point that



busyness is often the by-product of fear for one's very life. Every Christian is painfully aware of the curse "from dust you are, dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). From the first time one skinned one's knee, had a tooth fall out, got sick or had to bury a family member; one soon came to realize that God's curse was not just words but reality. The body is frail and without the necessities of life of food, water, shelter and clothing; we know

the it will perish. Abraham Maslow states that until we fully feel like these basic needs are met then every ounce of our effort will be devoted to our physical survival.

The good news is that most people living in Canada have their basic needs met. While there are places such as Chad, Haiti, Liberia, Congo, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Zimbabwe have poverty levels ranging from 68 to 80% of the population, here in Canada the poverty level is only about 9%.¹ While this number is significant,



one must be careful in how one defines poverty. For instance, the poverty threshold for the U.S. for a family of two adults and two children is an annual income of less than \$24,339² whereas in India it is \$20,000 rupees³ which is the equivalent of about \$400 Canadian dollars. Furthermore, having to dig through the garbage heaps of Calcutta to be fed is certainly different than going to a food bank here in Canada. This country has been truly blessed with social assistance programs

that make sure the basic necessities of life are provided to the populace.

¹ Taken from the following website: <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?v=69>

² Taken from the following website: <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html>

³ Taken from the following website: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Below_Poverty_Line_\(India\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Below_Poverty_Line_(India))

So, does this mean that Jesus' command to not worry about the necessities of life does not relate to Canadians because they have what they need to survive? Due to our desire to



acquire a comparative lifestyle to those around us most people in Canada are swimming in enormous amount of debt. The average Canadian has about \$21,348 in debt. Each family has a 165 % debt to income ratio.⁴ This has put incredible pressure on the family unit to have both spouses working full time. The number of dual income families has risen from 38 % in 1976 to 70 % in 2015.⁵ Most Canadians literally live from one paycheck to the next! Canadians still worry about the basic necessities of life because they know if

one person in the household should lose their job for any length of time, their pyramid of debt would come crashing down around them making buying food and clothing extremely difficult.

Going back to the “Frantic Worrier Skit,” the two ladies personified what it is often like to be a Canadian. Due coveting beautiful homes, fancy cars, and exotic vacations of others; we



get into debt so that we might acquire the lifestyles of those around us. Ironically, we rarely ever get to enjoy any of our newly acquired stuff because we are too busy working to keep up with our payments! What precious little time we have left over after the work day is spent cleaning the house, buying groceries, cooking meals and driving our children from one event to the next. I believe that “BUSY” is an acronym for Being Under Satan’s Yoke for two reasons. First, coveting our neighbor’s lifestyle is one of the “Do Nots” in the Ten Commandments. And

second, is it not a sin to make lifestyle choices that indicate that you truly love this world more than God (1 John 2:15)?

⁴ Taken from the following website: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/transunion-debt-report-1.3587197>

⁵ Taken from Statistics Canada website: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2016005-eng.htm>

Jesus' message in Scripture is clear: do not covet the things of this world and stop worrying about your physical survival. To convince us that God will provide for our basic



needs, Jesus uses two examples of how the Father takes care of creation. First, Jesus tells us to “look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father provides for them! Are you not much more valuable than them (verses 26-27)?” Second, Jesus tells us to look at the flowers of the field. Even though they do not

labor or spin, they have been clothed by God in splendor much greater than any king! If God cloths the flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, then how much more will He clothe us (verses 28-30)? The issue is that we lack faith that a sovereign God can provide for us better than we can! Instead of worrying, have gratitude for all the rich blessings that we have already received.

ILLUSTRATION #2

The second illustration I would like to call “Living the Life of Leisure.” Myself and my wife dressed up in “colorful” sun attire and walked down the aisle of the church to the song “Don’t Worry be Happy.” What made this comical was the fact that we pretended to be two of the members of our church that are currently in Florida. When we got to the front of the church we sat down on lawn chairs under the shade of a huge sun umbrella. As we sat in the “sun” we both discussed how glad we were to not be in New Brunswick with all the snow and freezing rain. The only worry we faced in Florida was where to find shade in the 90 plus degree temperatures. The busy life was far behind both of us whose only task now was to rest, relax and do nothing! As we left the sanctuary we praised God for our time of rest and the blessing of no longer being at home and having to run the “rat race.”

WORRYING MEANS LESS TIME FOR GOD

After having worked, slept, ate food, done household chores and driven our children to numerous events; we dedicate what is left over to God. In a study done by Barna Research Group it was found that out of those who claim to be Christian only 50 % of them actively go to church.⁶ While 75 % of Christians claim to pray once a week, only 11 % read their Bible every day.⁷ Even if one manages to carve out two hours a week to go to church, pray and read the

⁶ Taken from the following website: <https://www.barna.com/research/state-church-2016/>

⁷ Taken from the following website: <http://everydayfaith.ca/?p=2997>



Bible, that represents less than 2 % of one's total time! To make matters worse, those who come to church are often so tired that their true heart's desire is not to meet God but to rest as if they were on the beach with the couple in Florida. The modern-day Christian is so busy paying off the debts of their coveted stuff that are just too busy to spend any time with God!

³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:31-33, NIV

What if Jesus was too busy to empty Himself and live amongst us (Philippians 2:7)? Where would we be if Jesus said, He was too busy to die on the cross for us? We who have been bought at a price (1 Corinthians 6:20), should we not want to serve our sovereign God with all



our heart, mind, soul and strength (Matthew 22:37)? Yes, we certainly should! The ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) and royal priests (1 Peter 2:9) of Christ should see serving in God's kingdom an honor, not a duty to be avoided! We are to love Jesus because He first loved us. He created this world (Colossians 1:16) and has given each of us the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12) to do miracles in His kingdom greater than He ever did while here on this earth (John 14:12). What will you say

when you die and meet Christ? Sorry, I know I had every opportunity to serve in Your kingdom but I was too busy running in Satan's? I don't know about you but I would rather be like Paul and run the race to gain the crowns of righteousness!

Jesus's solution to spiritual indifference is to focus on the kingdom of God rather than the things of this world. Being holy begins with keeping one's eyes fixed on Jesus by praying



without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer should be as natural as breathing for it is the “central avenue which God uses to transform us.”⁸ Even when Jesus was in the height of His ministry He took time to pray with God the Father in heaven (Luke 5:16). Being holy also requires one to allow the furrows of one's heart to be plowed and transformed (Romans 12:2) by His word (Hebrews 4:12). To keep from living like the pagans (1 Peter 4:3) we must allow His word to teach, rebuke, correct and train us in the ways of righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). While these spiritual disciplines take time, Jesus says

do not worry for when you seek first the kingdom of God He will automatically give you the necessities of life! Praise be to God for His mercy, generosity and love!

CONCLUSION

Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be as well. Because we focus on coveting the things of this world we simply have no time left to spend with God. Taking an hour or two a week to spend with God by sleeping in a pew does not fulfill the command to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice! The problem is that we covet the things of this world more than we want to spend time with God. We feel that “stuff” can give us more pleasure than a holy embrace from our Creator. We are so debt ridden that we tend to worry from one pay check to the next as to how we will feed, clothe and house ourselves. If only we seek first the kingdom of God we would be able to enjoy the glorious blessings of His grace!

⁸ Peter Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 33.