

Trust or Trauma

I Peter 5:7

I heard this past week about two men who were talking one day. The one had noticed and commented to his friend that he didn't seem to have any worries. The friend responded by saying that he had so many worries if anything went wrong that day he would have to wait two weeks to get around to worrying about it.

Maybe that's you today. The worries just precariously stack up one on top of the other like a house of cards. One more may bring the whole lot tumbling down. As a matter of fact you have so many worries that you have stopped worrying about the individual worries because you're worried about the pile of worries.

Your worries have grown from a mole hill to a mountain.

House cleaning

Dinner

Johnnie's homework

Mounds of laundry

Grocery shopping and banking

A doctor's appointment

And as the day goes on the worries grow. They seem to grow like a virus.

Before you get up, you're worried.

Before you get to work, you're worried.

Before you get to school, you're worried.

Before you get to the doctor, you're worried.

Someone has said that worry is like a rocking chair.

It will get you started, but it won't take you anywhere.

When I was in school I never liked to hear six words from the teacher:

"Take out a piece of paper."

Those six words meant a surprise quiz was coming.

One I had not studied for.

It doesn't take much for worry to begin to dog your thoughts. They hover over you like a dark cloud. At any time the thunder of worry will strike.

Arthur Roche once said that "anxiety is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained."

You get to work and there is a note on your desk. The boss wants to have a meeting with you at 11. You begin to wonder what he wants and pretty soon you're thinking worst case scenario and you start dusting off the resume, because you're convinced he's going to let you go.

Your son had a curfew to be home by 10 and it's now 10:30 and you can't reach him on his phone. You think about calling the police or the morgue. You have a biopsy on some suspicious tissue. What if it's malignant? What if it's terminal?

One worried thought leads to another and another and another and pretty soon you're consumed by it.

So what worries you? Take out a piece of paper. The back of your bulletin will do. Write down the things that you are worried about – big things, little things, anything, everything.

Jot down things from the past that worried you or still worry you.

Jot down things today that you are worried about.

Jot down things that you are worried about for the coming year.

Jot down the things you are worried about for which you have no control.

Jot down the things you are worried about that you had control over but did it to yourself.

If you don't have a writing utensil, just compile a mental list in your grey matter.

Let me give you a minute or so to think about those things and jot them down.

The reality is you don't have to think very hard or long to come up with a list.

A doctor visit
 Taxes
 Health – yours, a spouse, a child or grandchild
 Healthcare
 Getting robbed
 Leaving the oven or iron on
 Auto repairs and related expenses
 Employment
 Job deadlines
 Overtime
 Mortgage
 Insurance
 The economy
 Family
 A wayward child or grandchild

Psychologists who have studied such things estimate from their research that 80% of things people tend to worry about don't happen. We think that worrying about them was the reason they didn't happen.

We worry about things that won't happen.
 We worry about things from the past that can't be changed.
 We worry about criticism from others, most of which is untrue.
 We worry about what we think someone said about us that they never said.
 We worry about our health, which gets worse because of the stress from worrying about it.

Worry affects us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Every part of our being – mind, body, and spirit – is affected.

Now, the last time I checked worry is not a spiritual gift, so you may need to resign your membership to the worries club of America.

So, what are you worried about today?

Before we get to our main passage today, turn to Luke 10:38-42.

Some authors suggest that the terms Luke uses here imply that this is the first occasion Martha and Mary met Jesus. We don't know that for sure, but from this passage we learn a lot about these two women. Martha is the quintessential hostess, the one who is running around making sure everyone has everything they need. But she was a worrier. Did they need a refill from the punch bowl? Would they like something from the snack table? She was running frantically back and forth from the kitchen to the living room. Were the potatoes done? Did the lamb chops get overcooked? Did I make enough salad? Were the guests comfortable? Were the guests having a good time? Why isn't my sister helping me?

In exasperation and perhaps exhaustion she went to have a word with Jesus who was busy in conversation. Martha's sister, Mary, was among those who were listening to Him. Out of frustration and irritation with her sister, instead of pulling her sister aside, she went right to her guest for some help. Maybe He could convince Mary to pull her weight in helping prepare the meal.

Notice this observation about her: "Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made."

That's what worry does. It can distract from things that are of real importance. Mary sat at the Lord's feet listening while Martha was running around distracted and distraught. It's a word that means to draw the mind or attention away in another direction; to draw in a conflicting direction, to create conflict or confusion. It can even mean to drive insane, cause mental disturbance or distress.

You can be driving down the road worried about something to the point of being so distracted that you fail to observe the stop light and speed right on through it and, wham, cause an accident.

Martha was distracted by all the preparations. Her sister's lack of help grew from frustration, to irritation, then to agitation, and then to confrontation.

"Lord, tell her to get up and help out."

She was telling the Lord what to do and how to do it. Her plans were of greater importance than His plans. She expected help. She expected the Lord to say "Martha, you're right. It's not fair to you that you are doing all the work. Mary shouldn't have left her job of peeling potatoes to listen to Me. Mary, go and help your sister in the kitchen."

But what she heard from the Lord wasn't what she expected or hoped.

Verse 41-42 "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

It was a matter of priority, distraction vs. devotion, temporal vs. eternal.

So, are you a Martha or a Mary?

Now, I want you to look back at verse 40. I deliberately left something out in Martha's question. "Lord, *don't you care?*"

John MacArthur writes "To so rebuke the one who is 'compassionate and gracious' and cares for His people is one of the most foolish and graceless statements anyone ever made to Jesus."

How many times have I worried about something that I, in effect, accused the Lord of not caring because I felt that He didn't hear my plea for help? How many times have I falsely accused the Lord of not caring because He didn't answer my prayer the way I wanted?

Every time I worry I accuse the Lord of not caring. Every time I worry I chop away at the base of the tree of trust.

Every time I worry I doubt that the Lord cares.

"Lord, don't you care?"

Worry is a lack of faith.

So why do we worry?

Why do we doubt His care?

Now, turn to our passage in I Peter 5:7. "Cast all your care on Him because He cares for you."

If we are going to learn how to cast our care on the Lord, we must first go back a couple verses to get the context to understand this verse. We often just quote this verse as a standalone verse or sentence. Some translations, like the NIV treat it as such, where verse 6 ends with a period and verse 7 begins. But other translations like the KJV, the Amplified and the ESV all treat verse 7 as a continuation of verse 6 which ends with a comma. That's how it is in the Greek structure. It's not a new sentence, it's a subordinate clause, a continuation of the previous thought.

The word "cast" is not a verb but an adjective. It describes what those who are humble are to do with their worries and the reason they are to do it. Amplified "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you, casting the whole of your care (all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all) on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully."

The Old Testament equivalent to this is in Psalm 55:22 "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you."

I like that word "sustain." Say it with me – sustain. It means to keep up or support from underneath, to carry the weight of a burden.

Peter is suggesting that humility is a part of the casting. In order to cast our care on the Lord we must be humble before Him. If I'm not humble,

I'm not casting, I'm keeping. Pride is opposite of casting. Pride says I'll handle the worry. Pride keeps instead of casts. So if we are going to get rid of our worry by casting it on the Lord, we need to be humble because only in humility will I truly give it to the Lord to keep.

Pride is self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency. Pride says I can do a better job with this problem than the Lord can. How many times have we thought that? HmmHmm.

Read through the Old Testament books of Kings and Chronicles and see how many times Israel in its pride refused to humble themselves when they got into trouble instead of casting their care on the Lord. They thought they could handle the problem and it never went very well.

Pride won't listen to instruction or take advice.
 Pride thinks it needs no one else.
 Pride wants to take credit for what God does.
 Pride refuses to trust God.
 Pride makes us anxious about the future.
 Pride worries.

We humble ourselves when we cast our care on Him.
 We humble ourselves by trusting that God cares.
 Trust is the opposite of pride. Trust puts its full weight on God believing what God has said is true.

King Hezekiah received a letter from King Senacharib of Assyria. Surrender peacefully and we can avoid war. Hezekiah could have gotten all worked up and worried but instead he took the letter to the Temple and spread it out on the floor and lay down and prayed and trusted God to deliver. He humbled himself and cast His care on the Lord.

If we want to deal with the problem of anxiety we need to deal with the problem of pride. Only when we humble ourselves before God are we able to cast our cares, worries, anxieties on Him.

John Piper says that "God is the focus in both verses, and the connection is this: before you can put yourself humbly under God's mighty hand, you have to place your anxiety confidently in God's mighty hand."

So here's the question: Do you believe that God is strong enough to handle your problem?

The WebMD website had an article dated December 10, 2017 on stress. It said that stress is a normal part of life. Many events that happen to you and around you, including the things you do to yourself, put stress on the body. If you didn't know there are two kinds of stress, some are good or positive and some are bad or negative. Positive stress is called *eustress* and are things like getting a promotion, getting married, having a baby, moving to a new home.

Negative stress is when a person faces continuous challenges without relief or relaxation between challenges. It's called *distress* and things like getting let go from a job, long term sickness, an injury, divorce and so on.

Distress can bring on headaches, nausea, high blood pressure, chest pain, insomnia. Research has also shown that distress can increase the symptoms of certain diseases.

The article continues with the following statistics. 43% of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress.

75-90% of all doctor visits are stress-related ailments and complaints.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration or OSHA declared stress a hazard of the workplace costing the American industry more than \$300 billion annually.

The lifetime prevalence of an emotional disorder is more than 50%, often due to chronic, untreated stress reactions.

We are to cast our anxieties on the Lord.

The word “cast” is a once for all action. Casting is not like fishing. You have a fishing rod in one hand and at the end of the line you have a lure. You cast the lure out into the water and then using the little handle on the side of your reel begin to retrieve the line. When we cast our care on the Lord it means to throw it all at Him and let Him shoulder the worry – past, present, and future. It means to throw on someone else with no thought of taking it back.

The only other place this word is used in the Bible is in Luke 19:35 where the disciples took off their coats and cast them on the donkey so that Jesus could ride it into Jerusalem.

What worries are you carrying today – real or perceived – that you need to cast on the Lord? What joy are you being robbed of because you’re trying to handle your worries in your own strength when the Lord has invited you to cast them on Him?

Sitting in a Roman prison Paul wrote some comforting and encouraging words to the Philippian church. We find them in Philippians 4:6-7. “Do not be anxious about anything.”

In essence Paul is saying let nothing worry you. Or stop worrying! It’s a command.

What he says next is how we stop worrying about all those things you worry about. “But in *everything*, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Paul says when you are anxious about anything, pray.

When you are anxious about anything pray specifically about it.

When you are anxious about anything pray specifically about it and give thanks.

Lord, I have this test coming up and I’m worried about it. I need a good grade in this class so I’m going to thank You that You give wisdom and knowledge to do well.

Lord, I have this doctor visit coming up and I’m concerned about it because I’ve had this nagging cough and achiness and I’m going to thank You that You are the Great Physician.

Lord, I have a deadline for this project that is due on the boss’s desk so I’m going to thank You that You will help me do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Lord, I’m retired and I have a mortgage payment coming up and there was this unexpected car repair and I’m going to thank You that You will supply all my needs through Your riches in glory.

Lord, I’m going to thank you that all things work together for good to those who love you and are called according to your purpose.

When you pray, get right down to it and be specific, and don’t forget to give thanks. Paul tells us what happens when we pray specifically with thanksgiving.

“And the peace of God, which transcends or surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

God sets up a guard around your heart and mind so the worry can’t get it. For all you science fiction fans, He puts up a force field around you.

How do you know when you pray that your anxiety is going to be removed? How do you know you have God’s peace and it’s not just because you got a good night’s sleep and you feel better? Verse 7 holds the answer. You will have a peace that is beyond your ability to understand, a peace that will protect your heart from anxiety, and peace that can only come from God. It can’t be explained any other way. It is supernatural peace, not something you conjured up on your own. It’s a peace that doesn’t come from a pill or a place.

Lots of people get paid lots of money for seminars and books on how to be at peace through things like

meditation, or yoga, or positive thinking, or crystals and ointments and oils and exercise and diets.

Those things might be okay for a short while but learn from Peter, Paul and even Mary. Go to the Lord in prayer, sit at His feet and learn from Him. That's where real and lasting peace comes from.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus illustrated from nature the importance of trusting the Lord.

Matthew 6:25-34

Verse 25 – “do not worry”

Verse 31 – “do not worry”

Verse 34 – “do not worry”

The cure for worry Jesus says, is to seek after God's kingdom and righteousness.

Notice in His illustration about the birds that it is “your Father” who feeds them.

We love our puppy Blaze. He is a smart, great and fun dog, full of life and energy. We do our best to take care of him. But you would think twice about me if I took better care of him than I did of David.

Jesus is saying that if Your Father takes care of the birds, don't you think He'll take care of you so that you don't have any worries. Birds don't have any worries. They get up in the morning and they start chirping and singing.

Don't be like the pagans Jesus says, who go around worried about this and that. Trust God. Put your full weight on Him. Give Him your anxieties.

That's the essence of Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not in your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.”

Trust dispels worry.

Trust silences the doubts and fears.

George Mueller who trusted God for the care of thousands of orphans in London once said “The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the

beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.”

Which do you have – faith or fear?

In I Samuel 1 we read about Hannah. She was troubled in her spirit because she couldn't have any children. She would go to the temple and cry out to the Lord. One year Eli, the priest, saw that Hannah was quite troubled. Her demeanor made it look like she was drunk and Eli rebuked her. Hannah told him that she was pouring out her heart to God about being childless. Eli responded that she should go in peace because God had heard her. It says in verse 18 that as she went away her face was no longer downcast. She was at peace.

Then there is Daniel who is thrown into a den of lions. That's a place for worry, but not for Daniel. All night long he was at peace because the angel of the Lord was in the den with him keeping those hungry lions from making a snack out of him, but over in the palace the king couldn't sleep. The king was worried, but Daniel had peace. (Dan. 6:16-23)

Sitting in a Roman prison Paul is waiting to see if he's going to be executed when he wrote “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4) Paul had a peace from God that surpassed his comprehension.

How about Peter? He's sitting in a jail cell waiting execution in the morning. He's fast asleep. So deep was his sleep the angel sent to miraculously deliver him had to slap him on the side to wake him up. Peter was at such peace we read that he thought it was a dream until he was outside the prison walls. (Acts 12) He was at peace.

Then at the end of Acts (27) the boat taking Paul to Rome to stand trial encounters a vicious storm. The entire crew was frantic because of the storm, they worried for their lives. Paul trusted God because his angel told him in a dream that he would make it

to Rome safely so that he could testify of God to Caesar. He was at peace.
Are you? Am I?

If you are clothing yourself in the garment of anxiety, take it off and cast it on Jesus. In return He has promises to give His peace. That's quite an exchange – He takes our problems and we get His peace.

God wants to be your burden bearer. And the reason He wants to be our burden bearer is found in our text. “Cast all your anxieties on Him *because He cares for you.*”

There have been many whose faith has been shipwrecked along the craggy coast of anxiety because they doubted that God cared for them. When things didn't go the way they wanted or when their prayers weren't answered, they doubted and then disbelieved that God cares.

Dear folks, never lose sight of this important promise that God cares for you. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

When David was running from those trying to pursue him he wrote some wonderful words of encouragement. They are words for us. “I sought the Lord and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears.” (Psalm 34:4)

A few verses later he said “This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; He saved him from all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them. Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.” (Psalm 34:6-8)

The God who has invited us to cast our cares on Him because He cares for us has also said that in the middle of those things He sustains us with His grace. His grace is sufficient to carry us through those trying circumstances that we might be

strengthened by His presence and His power to handle those things that worry us leaving us instead with His prevailing peace.

When we trust that He cares for us, we can transfer our cares on Him.

Henry Ironside wrote “It is of all importance to realize God's heart is ever toward His own. He is no indifferent spectator to our suffering. He feels for us in all our afflictions and bids us cast every care upon Him, assured that He is concerned about all we have to endure.”

Therein lies our confidence – that He genuinely cares for our welfare.

Isaiah 26:3 “You (God) will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You.”

Are you experiencing God's peace from worries?

This week make a worry box or worry jar. Make it as big or little as you like. Decorate it or keep it plain, but write on it “My worries”. Every time you have a worry, write it on a piece of paper and put it in the box or jar. As you drop that piece of paper in the box or jar say a prayer transferring your worry to God. “Lord, I'm worried about... and I don't know what to do about it, but you do. It's now yours.” Every time you are tempted to worry about it, just remind yourself that you gave that worry to God. It's no longer your responsibility, it's God's. After a while empty it out and shred them or burn them because you have given them to Him. They don't belong to you anymore because you have cast those cares on Him. Now just because you gave it to the Lord doesn't mean that thing, whatever it is will automatically go away. You'll still have to go see the doctor. You'll still have to take that test. You'll still have to meet with the boss. You'll still have to pay the mortgage or your taxes. The difference will be that instead of worrying about it, you'll go armed with the peace of God. But if you don't have peace then you really haven't given it to Him.

What are you worried about today?

Give ALL your worries to God because He cares what happens to you.