



Worrying Less in Strange Times!

1 Peter 5:5-14

Sermon given on May 24, 2020

@Hawk Ranch – Practice service for reopening church after COVID-19 quarantine



Sunday Morning Service

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Worrying Less in Strange Times!

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Opening Comments

- Welcome to CCFV's online worship service
- We are coming to you live from Hawk Ranch in Murrieta
- Last week I shared that we would reopen the church on May 31st
- We are doing the service here today to make sure we have everything ready for you next weekend
- We hope that you will plan on joining us, if you are able to do so
- Before you do so though go to CCFV.life and read the post about preparing to return to church
- We are not just throwing the doors open
- We want you and your family to be blessed and safe as we gather
- While we are here at Hawk Ranch, services will not be the same as we are accustomed to – we are following CDC and Riverside County guidelines – including social distancing
- We are living in strange times and church services are going to be a little strange for a while too
- But, I don't know about you, I am okay with it being a little strange if we can be together
- Again, go to CCFV.life so that you know what to expect when you get here next Sunday
- This are strange times
- One hundred years ago the H1N1 virus infected about a third of the world's population and resulted in 50 million deaths – 675,000 in the United States
- COVID-19 has not reached those kinds of proportions – thankfully
- But it is still affecting the whole world
- A hundred years ago there wasn't a cure and treatment options were limited
- Back then, the biggest worry was catching and dying from the virus
- Today, most people aren't worried about dying from COVID-19

- Nobody wants to catch it, but unless you are in one of the high-risk categories, you are not worried about dying
- It is more likely that people are dealing with other worries today
- What happens if my company doesn't reopen soon, or ever?
- How do I cope with having my kids cooped up in the house and trying to school them?
- How am I going to pay my bills?
- How long is all this going to last?
- Can my relationship survive this crisis?
- How do I take care of my elderly parent?
- How do I deal the depression I, or my spouse, or child is experiencing because of this disruption to their life?
- COVID-19 has disrupted most of the world
- People are worried about what is happening or about what the future might hold
- And I am guessing that some of you here or watching this message might have some of those worries or others I haven't mentioned
- Life, right now, seems to be filled with strange things we can be worried about
- In reality, there is always something that we can be worried about
- In this world and in this life, there will be things like COVID-19 and the disruptions it has caused to our lives **John 16:33**

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

- And then Jesus also taught us **Matthew 6:34**

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

- But as long as we are in this world and in this flesh, we will tend toward worry
- But as we grow in our faith, as we become more like Christ, we will worry less – even in strange times like these
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Worrying Less in Strange Times!**
- Turn to **1 Peter 5**

- Jesus told us in Matthew 6:34 ‘do not worry about tomorrow’
- He wouldn’t tell us not to do something if we weren’t capable of not doing it
- Jesus makes it clear in that verse that worrying is a matter of choice, it is about faith and obedience
- The Holy Spirit will enable us to obey everything God calls us to do – if we believe
- My goal this morning is to share some practical things you can do to worry less in these strange times
- One of the things this quarantine has made abundantly clear was just how much we need each other
- The longer people are separated from one another, the more they are struggling in all areas of their lives – we need each other – together!
- Peter points to three categories of relationships that a healthy community of believers ought to be living in
- **1 Peter 5:5a**
- The first category of relationships that Peter mentions is **Spiritual Leadership**
- Peter is speaking to ‘younger people’ here
- While the literal interpretation is people who are younger in age than the elders, this also applies to people who are spiritually younger
- When you find yourself worrying about something, you need someone in your life who can help you to process through it
- I am very thankful that I have men in my life who are wiser and more mature in the faith than I am
- Peter tells his readers – ‘submit yourselves’
- That means – put yourself under the authority of a spiritual leader
- If you want to worry less, you need to choose to let a spiritual leader lead you
- Within this category there are three types of spiritual leadership
- The first is **Regular Supplements**
- We take supplements/vitamins because our regular diet is lacking in the things our body needs to be healthy
- The same thing is true spiritually

- Spiritually, your regular diet is prayer, reading the Bible, and other spiritual disciplines
- If you are doing that regularly, that is good, but it is not enough
- Regular supplements are needed – that is sitting under a Bible teacher, attending a weekly Bible study
- And just like vitamins, the more consistent you are with them, the better they work
- The second type of spiritual leadership we need is **Pain Relief**
- When I have a headache, I take Ibuprofen to relieve the pain
- When we experience a point of pain in our lives and we are unable to relieve the pain ourselves – a spiritual leader can help us
- That is the purpose of counseling
- It is a temporary relationship – until the pain is relieved
- If there is worry in your marriage – let a spiritual leader help you
- The third type of spiritual leader we need is **Corrective Medicine**
- There are times in life when vitamins and pain relievers are not enough
- By the grace of God, I am not currently taking any medications
- But I know many people do – and without those medications they would have serious health problems
- When you go to the doctor and he diagnoses you with diabetes – he/she will prescribe a medication to manage it
- If you take it regularly you will minimize the risks and physical impact of the diabetes
- Spiritually, this is what discipleship does for us
- Discipleship is a term we use for a spiritual leader helping someone to become more like Christ through a regular Bible-based conversation
- You might be familiar with terms like mentoring or life-coaching = same, except it focuses on the spiritual realities that impact our life, thoughts, and behaviors
- If you willingly put yourself under the authority of a spiritual leader in these three areas, the result is going to be that you will worry less
- Don't and you will have to find your own way through the darkness
- As a pastor, the thought of that grieves my heart **Matthew 9:36**
But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

- I know a few of the ‘weary and scattered’ – won’t submit to spiritual authority – makes me sad – worry is going to ever-present in their lives
- The first type of relationship we need to worry less during strange times is **Spiritual Leadership**
- The second type – **Christian Community**
- **1 Peter 5:5b**
- The fact is – the more isolated we are from Christian Community – the more we will weaken and struggle in our faith
- The writer to the Hebrews exhorted us **Hebrews 10:24-25**
And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
- We all know the saying, ‘Out of sight – out of mind!’
- It is much more challenging to stir up love and good works in one another when we are isolated
- I participate in numerous Zoom meetings throughout the week, but it is just not the same as being with someone
- Social media could have a place in Christian Community, if done correctly
- Texts and emails lack the nuances of personal interaction
- Phone calls and video calls are better
- But nothing can substitute face-to-face community
- Be deliberate – initiate contact – don’t wait for them
- You need them – God put someone in your life for you to connect to
- They have something you need, but they might not know it
- Real, life-giving Christian Community will help you to worry less
- One great way to develop that is to find a place of service whether in the church or out in the world
- We can find ways of doing that and be safe
- The third type of relationship to worry less is **Divine Leadership**
- **1 Peter 5:6-7**
- Someone might be thinking, I am a Christian – I have this one covered
- Not necessarily! Notice Peter says, ‘humble yourselves under’
- This is calling for a deliberate act of the will

- First to humble yourself, and second to cast your care upon Him
- There are lots of reasons why people worry
- God is the answer for all those reasons
- We worry because we don't know what the future will bring
- God exists in the eternal now – He is already in the future we are worrying about **Isaiah 46:10**

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *things* that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure...'

- When I get to the future that I am worrying about, God is already there and has a plan to work things out for our good and His glory
- For others it is an issue of control – they have no control over their circumstances – like being laid off because your company closed due to a pandemic
- Or a friend or family member is making poor choices and you are being affected by the consequences
- Imagining that you have any control is an illusion
- It is like a mirage in the desert
- It looks like there is water ahead, and yet no matter how hard to work to reach, it is always just out of reach
- God is always in control – what you are trying to control, He is controlling, and doing it perfectly
- Even if that doesn't seem to be true to you
- When you are worrying about something that is out of your control
- Take it to God – Remind yourself of His mighty hand – admit to Him that you have imagined that you have any control – ask Him to exercise His sovereign control on your behalf – then lay that care at the foot of the cross – then lay back into the loving, caring arms of your heavenly Father and trust Him
- You should have noticed a recurring theme in these three types or relationship – a call to submit and humble yourself
- Something I learned early in my faith was that the more I surrendered myself to the will of God, the easier things were for me
- Not that things were easy, they just didn't rattle me like they had before
- The Apostle Paul was not unaccustomed to difficult things in his life

- In Acts 20 he was on his way to Jerusalem – he had been warned that trouble awaited him there – was going anyway, because that was what God had told him to do
- Could have been worried about that – instead **Acts 20:24**
But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.
- There are a lot of things in this world and our lives that we can be worried about – there always will be
- But God has given us everything we need so that we could worry less
- **Spiritual Leadership – Christian Community – Divine Leadership**
- Surrender yourself to God's will in these three areas and you will worry less, no matter how strange the times become
- Peter gives us a warning, which we look at and then end the service
- **1 Peter 5:8-9**
- The devil wants you to be worrying
- A worrying Christian is a powerless Christian
- Peter tells us to resist the Devil, but not in your power – you don't have any power to resist the Devil 'humble yourself under the mighty hand of God' – let God deal with the Devil **Ephesians 6:11-12**
Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- There will always be things we can be worrying about
- But if you surrender yourself to the will of God and develop the relationships God can use to help you, you will worry less
- And your life, no matter how strange the world gets around us, will be better, filled with joy, peace, and the blessings and love of God.
- **Pray**