

"Trust"
Isaiah 12; Galatians 3:1-9;
1 John 4:12-19; Matthew 6:24-34

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As we come to this particular passage, I am reminded that last week I picked up on one word out of last week's Gospel, which was "weary." If I wanted to do a bit of alliteration this week, I could pick a different word and call it "worry." Indeed the word that first struck me in this passage was worry. Jesus was talking about worry.

Again, it's one of those words I hope nobody sees as one that they can use to describe themselves. I would just as soon none of us have worry as a characteristic. I can't say that I don't. It feels like there is plenty to worry about in today's world.

Jesus, of course, points us to some of the basic stuff: food, clothing, maintaining our lifestyle. We can keep going. We can worry about other people in our lives. We can worry about our community, our nation, our world. We can pile on lots of worries if we want to. But what is worry?

One definition is the apprehension of danger or misfortune. So you might think of worry as a low-grade fear, kind of like having a low-grade fever. It feels to me like as I worry more, or something I worry about begins to happen, there's that gradation that actually turns into fear. So I think they are related, or at least part of one another.

In my life, I always try to figure out how to get rid of that worry, or what to do about that worry. One of the things that somebody told me a long time ago was that I could get a worry stone so that I could hold it and rub it when I start to worry and that maybe that would get rid of the worry or at least it would get my mind off it and help me move on. But over the years, I never found the worry stone quite enough. They always say bigger is better, right, so if the worry stone is not enough, maybe a worry rock will do the trick. Sometimes I think I need a boulder. Well, we all know that that's probably not going to work, plus a rock is not very easy to carry around. So how do we deal with our worry? If you don't have any, you don't have to worry about it.

Jesus is asking us to think about our worry. I often feel more like the Galatians. Paul calls them "you foolish Galatians." I often feel a little foolish because all I want to do is get a bigger rock. Or I look to the next best thing: the next self-help book, or what the next advertisement tells me will make my life right, or the next thing I hear. There are so many different ways I can try to deal with that worry.

I think what Jesus is calling us to recognize is that there is a way to deal with that worry, or to at least bring it to a place that it will be dealt with. When I read 1 John, what I read there is about how God loves us and that is what drives out fear. It drives out the worry. How do I get there? We have to open up to it, and we also have to recognize that it says "perfect love" drives out fear. I certainly don't have perfect love that I am able to provide, but I do believe God's love is perfect. Although, I would also note that I often

think of *perfect* as the right kind of things, all there in the right proportions. But the word “perfect” also has this sense of movement to it. It’s a goal, a place we get to. God has gotten there, perhaps, but it talks about our love being perfected as we recognize God’s love. When we notice God’s love in our lives and open up to that love, allowing it to work in our lives, then God can cast out our fear. I grew up hearing it as “driven out” but either one, whether we cast it away or have it driven out, it’s in God’s love that we have a force to deal with our worry.

That sounds great, and I think it’s true, but I think there’s a step involved. Once the love enters into our life, then it can begin to be perfected. It can begin to work that worry out. It can begin to be swept away. But there is something that I think we have to do, and it’s part of opening the door to allow that to happen. That’s the other thing each of these scriptures is getting at in their own way, and that’s about trust.

I think trust is like opening the door to allow God’s love in so that those worries can be dealt with. If you’re anything like me, the thing I keep having trouble with is trusting. Even when I’ve experienced the very love of God, do I trust the experience? There’s an invitation here to trust that love and to know that when we trust, as we believe in Jesus Christ, we will be blessed, as it says in Galatians. *Believe* and *trust* are the same word. For me, that’s something that I always work on is trusting more fully in the grace of God for it is then that love enters in and begins to change the very nature of my worries.

So I would suggest that’s what Jesus is encouraging here, and guiding us towards. The question is if we trust in God’s love and accept that love, should all our worries just be gone? Another question is if we need not have any worries, can I walk across a busy freeway and not worry about anything? I shouldn’t worry? That’s not what Jesus is saying. It’s interesting, as I re-read that last bit of the Matthew scripture, he said you have enough worries for today. He’s saying to not worry about tomorrow because you have enough worries for today. He’s not saying you don’t have any worries, he’s saying you have enough. And tomorrow, there will be enough there, so don’t pile on. Trust in God’s love so those worries can be dealt with and we can live in a life that fits and the hunger of our souls is fed. He’s not saying we don’t have any worries or anything to be concerned with, but we have a way to deal with it.

The other thing I would note is that we all recognize that we have to take some risk in life. When a child is first beginning to walk and you watch them toddle around, don’t you want to just walk behind them and make sure they don’t fall? Yet you can’t do that all the time, and you know that every now and then they will fall. It’s actually from falling that they will learn something, and they will get up and do it again and move on. We know in our own lives, particularly when we’re doing something new or different, we’ll toddle around and sometimes we make mistakes and fall, and we have to get up and try again. We have put that recognition into a little phrase: nothing ventured, nothing gained. We know we need to venture, take some risk, do things. I think that’s one of the things Jesus is saying—we can take risks because we are undergirded, as we trust in God’s love, and because of that love we can try things.

Now we're not going to do just anything, right? We're not going to go out and run across busy streets, and we're not going to jump off high buildings because we think we don't need to worry about anything. In fact, what we can do is to look to what venture Christ calls us to. He says, "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness." So there is something to do, there is something to be concerned about, a direction to go.

The thing is, we don't often use the word "kingdom" anymore, so what are some other ways of thinking about that? One is the word "domain." We don't even use that word that much, but we can think about my house as my own domain. It's the place where I live; where things happen my way. So what is it to strive for the kingdom of God? It is to strive to be in God's domain, where things happen God's way, to be part of doing things God's way. To enter into the kingdom of God and his righteousness, his right relationship with us, is to do things God's way and to accept the "rightness" of God's relationship to us.

So we have something to strive for. We have something to do. If we're going to worry about something, let's worry about that—worry in the sense of "think about." How are we going to do it, move into it, pay attention to it? We can do it, I think, in a way that moves it away from worry as we recognize God's love because it drives out fear. We can do it recognizing that it is the place that brings blessing and grace.

So I don't have to lug around a rock to be able to deal with my worries. I can trust in Jesus Christ and the grace of God and allow that love to work on my worries, to drive them out. In trusting him, we will find his blessings.

Let's pray:

Gracious God, when we come hungry, our spirits desiring something that fulfills, you are the one who can feed us. In Christ, we know we have the bread of heaven and by coming and being fed and following him, you fit us for the kind of life we might live, that we might recognize the ways, the burdens that are right for us to bear, that make life easy and light and good. And as we worry, we recognize we can come to you and in trusting you open the door to that love which will drive out that fear, and cast it away, and move us to venture towards you and into your kingdom. Lord, allow us to do that. Allow us to grow in Christ and be yours and know your blessings. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.