WORRY FILLED? WORRY FREE?

**DATE: 9/1/2013 am**

**TEXT: Psalm 23:2a**

***“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: …”***

**INTRODUCTION**

Are you a Worry-Wart?

The Dictionary defines a worry wart as *someone who is inclined to worry excessively*

**Ill.** One lady said that she was worried because she was not worried

That’s a Worry Wart

**Ill.** Another woman was convinced that she had an incurable liver condition, and was worrying herself sick about it? She finally went to the doctor, and after tests, the doctor said she had nothing to worry about. *“Anyway,”* the doctor said, *“You wouldn’t know if you had this condition, because it causes no discomfort of any kind.”* The lady replied, *“Oh, my goodness, those are exactly my symptoms”*

That, my friend, is a Worry Wart!

Are you someone who looks for something to worry about?

Worry is *anxiousness, fear of the unknown*

This past week I went to the internet and typed in the words *“What are we worried about?”*

I was amazed, what came up

I found web pages that dealt with Worry over …

The U.S. deficit, the ozone, global warming, air quality, education, age, credit fraud, road rage, national I.D. cards, and soil erosion (just to name a few)

**Humor:** I found one article titled “Baby Boomers—Then and Now” It goes something like this - Then: Getting out to a new, hip joint. Now: Getting a new hip joint. Then: Acid rock. Now: Acid Reflux.

Then: Being called into the principal’s office. Now: Storming into the principal’s office.

Then: Long hair. Now: Longing for hair.

Then: Passing the driving test. Now: Passing the vision test.

Then: Trying to look like Marlon Brando or Elizabeth Taylor. Now: Trying not to look like Marlon Brando or Elizabeth Taylor. Then: Worrying about no one coming to your party. Now: Worrying about no one coming to your funeral.

Name it and we Worry about it

I think of what Jesus said in **Matthew 6:27 –**

***“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”***

The words ***“taking thought”*** speak of *excessive care*

Excessive speaks of something that *is beyond what is considered acceptable, proper, usual, or necessary*

Jesus said, Worrying never added an inch to your height

Put another way, our Worrying never helped a thing

**Ill.** Worrying is like rocking in a chair. It will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere

Worry never Eliminates our problems; it only Enlarges them

It never Helps, only Hurts, Worry is Useless

As we continue looking at **Psalm 23** we are reminded that Worry is not only Useless, it is also Needless

We talk about things that are fat-free, interest-free, sugar-free, and cholesterol-free

But **v.2** tells us that we can also live - Worry- Free

Instead of living a Worry-Filled Life, we can live a Worry-Free Life

**V. 2a** says **–** ***“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures”***

How are we going to live in the Days Ahead?

***“Worry Filled or Worry Free?”***

I hope to help you answer that question

***~~~Prayer~~~***

The first thing I want us to see is -

**I. THE “DEPICTION OF A RESTFUL LIFE”**

David described a flock of sheep *lying* in green pastures

**Quote:** Phillip Keller in his book on **Psalm 23** makes an interesting observation about sheep. He writes: *“The strange thing about sheep is that because of their make-up it is almost impossible to get them to lie down unless some requirements are met. Owing to their timidity they refuse to lie down unless they are free of all fear. Whether from the outside and predators or from within the flock. If tormented by flies or parasites, sheep will not lie down; only when free of these pests can they relax. Lastly, sheep will not lie down as long as they feel in need of finding food. They must be free from hunger."*

So we see, for sheep to lie down, everything must be just right

- No strife to frighten them

- No bugs to aggravate them

- No empty stomach to remind them

Everything perfect

When we see David’s sheep lying in green pastures …

We see sheep that are –

*Undisturbed* by the things that would normally disturb them

The word ***“lie”*** means, *to couch*

It pictures the legs folded under the sheep

The picture is of the sheep lying there with their four legs folded under them, nestled in the green grass, seemingly without a care in the world

David’s sheep are a picture of a Worry-Free Life

Let me enlarge upon this picture with a couple of thoughts

First, we see these sheep -

**A. Undisturbed by the ‘Perplexities’ of Life**

When I use the term Perplexities, I’m talking about situations that are difficult to understand

They could disturb us, or make us restless

We have already heard that there are many things that can agitate the sheep, making them restless

- Conflict

- Agitation

- Unsatisfied

But when we look at the sheep described in our text …

We see them *Undisturbed* by these things

**1.** There will be Distresses

For believers, there will be opportunities to Worry

Mental suffering, hardship, physical pain, danger and difficulty

It’s inevitable, unavoidable, almost certain

I call these things the Perplexities of life

**2.** *What* do we Worry about?

We worry about …

- How we are going to make ends meet

- The house and car payment coming due

- How to pay the gas & electric bill

- If our job is going to hold out

- Our children

- Our health

- How we are going to get this and do that

The list could go on

These are the things that can cause us to Worry

3. The Distresses of Life don’t go away

Understand that this picture of the sheep lying in green pastures …

Is not suggesting that all the things that could cause them to worry have been eliminated or removed

(No, not at all)

The predators were still out there

The bugs and flies had not been put on the endangered species list

However, in our text, the sheep are not worried about these things

We see that … in their lying down (being reposed)

**4.** The phrase ***“green pastures”***

These words literally mean *pastures of tender grass*

It speaks of the first shoots of young, sweet grasses

In David’s time, there were no rolling hills of green pastures or grassy prairies stretching as far as the eye could see

David would have shepherded in the Judean wilderness

Largely a very dry and barren place

You would find a few areas of green grass here and there

**5.** Get this picture in your mind

The shepherd has led the sheep to some shady spot where the tender shoots of grass are springing up

The sheep lie there Content and Worry-Free

…Yet, all around them is a parched and barren land

But the sheep are not affected by the conditions around them! Why?

Their Shepherd has brought them there

Therefore they are Undisturbed by the conditions around them

**6.** A Worry-Free life does not mean

- We have nothing to worry about

- That worry has been eliminated

There is a lot that can cause us to worry

A Worry-Free Life means that

- We are not Disturbed by the Conditions and Situations around us

- They do not fill our life with Anxiety and Distress

A Worry-Free Life is one that, in spite of what is going on around us, we are at rest

Instead of chewing our finger-nails, we are munching on green grass

Our Perplexity is not causing us, Anxiety

**Undisturbed by the ‘Perplexities’ of Life**

Furthermore we see in this picture; sheep that are -

**B. Undisturbed by the ‘Possibilities’ of Life**

Most Worry is about something that hasn’t happened yet

*Tomorrow* is the key word in most of our Worries

**Quote:** Someone has said that worry is the interest we pay on trouble before it comes

I have met some that are paying astronomical interest rates

The simple truth is; most of what we worry about; is without any cause

When you look at these sheep lying in green pastures,

- There are many dangers they could face

- There are all kinds of situations they can find themselves in

The Possibilities are numerous

But do you see them worried about what could happen tomorrow or next week

They are **Undisturbed by the Possibilities of Life**

It is impossible to predict the future

(That’s really a blessing in disguise)

Therefore, it is useless and needless to Worry about what hasn’t happened yet (What if?)

**Quote:** Corrie ten Boom said, *“When we worry we are carrying tomorrow’s load with today’s strength; carrying two days in one.”*

We don’t know what tomorrow holds,

But we know “Who” holds tomorrow,

Therefore we do not have to Worry about the Possibilities of Life

**Undisturbed by the ‘Perplexities’ of Life**

**Undisturbed by the ‘Possibilities’ of Life**

That’s **THE “DEPICTION OF A RESTFUL LIFE”**

Notice secondly with me -

**II. THE “DELIVERANCE FROM A FRETFUL LIFE”**

When we look at these sheep lying in green pastures,

It’s obvious that they have been Delivered from a Life of Worry

They are Restful, not Fretful

However, understand that’s not their nature

**Quote:** Again Phillip Keller writes: *“It is not generally known that sheep are so timid and easily panicked that even a stray rabbit suddenly bounding from behind a bush can stampede a whole flock."*

We are a lot like sheep

It doesn’t take much to set us off

We tend to live Worry-Filled rather than a Worry-Free

**Quote:** I remember studying the life of Sir Walter Scott, famous Scottish Novelist. He had incurred a debt of 120,000 pounds, an extremely large sum in those days. He got rid of the debt, but it was with great cost to him mentally, emotionally, and physically. He worried so much about the debt that it broke his health and led to his

…death. His doctor said to him one day, *“Sir Walter, if you do not cease worrying you will die.”* Scott looked up with a sad smile and said, *“Doctor, as long as that debt is hanging over my head, I cannot help but worry. I know the worrying is killing me. But you might as well go and tell my cook to order the water in the kettle not to boil, as to command my brain not to worry.”*

I have heard Worry described as *“The Silent Killer”*

A Worry-Filled Life affects us in many ways

Studies have found that Worry is Damaging to our Health

Let me **quote** a few medical Dr.’s …

- Dr. Charles Mayo (Mayo Clinic fame) said, *“Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, and the whole nervous system.”*

- Dr. Alexis Carrel gave this warning, *“Those who do not know how to fight worry, die young.”*

- Dr. Dorothy McCoy, in an article entitled, *“Keeping Worry Under Control,”* describes how when we worry, our body starts pumping out an array of chemicals that cause a variety of physiological reactions. She described how chronic worrying can negatively affect our whole body. It can increase the risk of heart-attack and stroke by raising blood pressure and increasing blood clotting, as well as prompting the liver to produce more cholesterol. Worry increases muscle tension, which can give rise to headaches, back pain, and other body aches. It can also trigger an increase in stomach acid which leads to several stomach disorders. She even states that growing evidence suggests that chronic worry can compromise our immune systems, making us more vulnerable to bacteria, viruses, perhaps cancer.

Worry affects us Physically, Emotionally, Mentally, and especially Spiritually

Therefore, we find that when we look into God’s Word we see that …

**A. The ‘Presence of Worry is Not Condoned’**

In **Matthew 6:25** Jesus said –

***“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life”***

The phrase, ***“take no thought”*** is telling us,

Not to Worry!

Jesus is Expressing Disapproval for the Presence of Worry in a Believer’s life

Let me **quote** some famous Christian leaders of the past

- Herbert Lockyer said - *“When a Christian worries; he is living in the wrong climate, for any kind of worry is foreign to his life in Christ”*

- William G. Channon said - *“Worry is entirely unscriptural. As Christians we have taken the precepts of the Scripture for our standard of living. We look upon the Bible as our final court of appeals in all life’s details. Who can deny that within its pages no warrant is found for worrying?”*

- O. S. Hawkins was straightforward when he wrote: *“Many of us assume that God merely looks upon worry with a frown, but the fact is: He strictly forbids it in His Word”*

In short, our Worry is Wrong

It is Disapproved by God

**Romans 14:23 – *“whatsoever is not of faith is sin”***

When you consider the Effects of Worry,

We understand that it is Totally Contrary to God’s plan for our Life

Since the ‘**Presence of Worry is Condoned’**

Then we should understand that the …

**B. The ‘Absence of Worry is Commanded’**

In **Philippians 4:6** we read - ***“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”***

The words, ***“be careful for nothing,”*** are a Command not to Worry

***“careful”*** – *full of* Care and Concern

Let me put it this way

We are to be like the sheep lying in green pastures …

…We are not to Worry

Please understand that telling you not to worry is not just me preaching a sermon

It is Commanded by God’s Word

I may not be an expert when it comes to telling you the physical, emotional, and mental effects of Worry

But I can say with all authority from God’s Word that we are not to Worry

Now, I know what some of you are thinking -

*“That’s easier said than done”*

Let me say though …

… That God would never Command us to do something, if it could not be done!

If He tells us not to Worry …

… Then it’s Possible to Live a Worry-Free Life

When we look at these sheep lying in green pastures,

We see them **Delivered from a Fretful Life**

So, what is the secret to their Worry-Free Life?

Let’s see if we can find the answer

**THE “DEPICTION OF A RESTFUL LIFE”**

**THE “DELIVERANCE FROM A FRETFUL LIFE”**

Notice with me lastly -

**III. THE “DEMAND FOR A TRUSTFUL LIFE”**

How do we Keep from Worrying or Stop Worrying?

**Humor:** You could do like the owner of a small business who worried so much that he ran an advertisement in the paper to hire someone to do his worrying for him. A young man fresh out of college applied and in the interview he was told the job paid $200,000 per year. Being this was a small business …

…the young man looked at the owner and asked, *“Where are you going to get $200,000 a year to pay me?”* The owner replied, *“That’s your first worry.”*

Why were these sheep lying in green pastures?

Again our Text verse tells us that …

***“He* *maketh me to lie down in green pastures”***

My emphasis is on the pronoun ***“He”***

The tranquil conditions of the sheep were entirely the Shepherds’ doings

And we are told that ***“The LORD is my Shepherd”***

**1.** Sheep are Defenseless

They can’t protect themselves

They are unlike any other animal

When attacked; mules kick, dogs growl, bears will claw, goats will gore, bulls will charge, bees will sting, birds will flap, and snakes will strike

But sheep are Defenseless

They do not, and cannot, Defend themselves

**2.** Furthermore, sheep are Directionless

Sheep have no sense of Direction

Migratory birds have their own built in radar system

You can take an old cat and drop him off in the next county and in a few days, it will show up purring

But a sheep would get lost in the back of a pick-up

To put it very simply,

Sheep are just downright dumb

(It’s no wonder God compares us to sheep)

Because of the kind of creature they are …

There would never be a Worry-Free moment if it were not for their Shepherd

It is the Shepherd that makes them to ***“lie down in green pastures”***

He’s the one who gives them the peace of mind

All the sheep can do is trust their Shepherd

When it comes to living a Worry-Free Life

The secret is putting our trust in our Shepherd

The Lord Jesus Christ, is the Shepherd of our Souls –

**I Peter 2:25 – *“For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls”***

Let me give you 3 quick thoughts and I’m done

**Conclusion**

On our journey from earth to glory, as we Face the Days Ahead we can trust in -

**A. The Shepherds ‘Presence’**

It is ***“He”*** that makes us to lie down

***“He maketh me…”***

The Shepherd is always at the side of the sheep

We know that the Lord is always with us

**Hebrews 13:5 – *“…for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”***

He will always be there

He will never leave us nor forsake us

We have His Promise

Furthermore, we can trust in the -

**B) The Shepherds ‘Plan’**

Bringing us into the green pastures is his plan for us

He may lead us down one path and then up another

But we can rest assured that He knows what He is doing and where He is going

We may cross hills or go through valleys

But His plan always includes our Best

Regardless of what the Days Ahead may bring …

We know they are a part of God’s plan for our life

Lastly, we can trust in -

**C. The Shepherds ‘Provision’**

He will see to it there are ***“green pastures”***

No Shepherd would ever dream of letting his sheep starve

David said in **Psalm 37:25 – *“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”***

Our Lord will take care of us

Understanding all this, Why should we Worry?

With a Shepherd that is

- Always with us

- Leading us through life

- Meeting our every need

We ought to be able to say …

*“I don’t have to Worry about it anymore”*

A Worry-Free Life is much better than a Worry-Filled Life

**THE “DEPICTION OF A RESTFUL LIFE”**

**THE “DELIVERANCE FROM A FRETFUL LIFE”**

**THE “DEMAND FOR A TRUSTFUL LIFE”**