

## Crossroads Community Church

Sunday September 21st, 2014

This week Pastor Don began our Adult Sunday School at 9:15, we are truly excited to learn more about the Lord! The Children also began their own Sunday School by making Candle holders to mark the start of a New Year.

We were blessed with another joyful Sunday as we joined our voices to praise the Lord. Worship was uplifting and heartfelt, Pastor Don shared announcements and prayed, "Dear Heavenly Father we thank you for your wisdom and authority, we know that all things are controlled by your mighty hand. When we feel worry and doubt creep up we ask that you increase our faith as we turn towards you, in Jesus name Amen."

These past few weeks we have been learning to win the battle over anxiety, we examined verses such as Philippians 4:6 urging us to rely on God and be grateful instead of being anxious, we also learned that God is with us wherever we go and He commands us to be strong and courageous in Joshua 1:9. Today we will examine Matthew 6:25-34. We can all agree that life is full of stressful situations and that worrying about them only serves to increase that stress. The storms of life come and go and sometimes God calms the storm, and other times He calms us through the storm.

In the Bible we meet many faith filled people who went through such events and we can learn a great deal from their faith. Abraham was asked to sacrifice his only son, Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers to later become second in command over Egypt, Moses faced Pharaoh and led the Israelites out of Egypt, David defeated a Giant, Daniel took a nap among Lions, and the Apostle Paul was beaten and thrown in jail all the while writing 2/3rds of the New testament, do you think maybe they had a reason to stress? Jesus warned us that life would not be easy but he also assured us of God's protection and told us not to worry about our everyday needs, in Matthew 6:25-34, "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing?" This is a key for our spiritual growth, when we focus on trusting God all we be provided in His time. Jesus also wants the Kingdom of God to be our utmost desire in verse 33, "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."

We can be sure that when life is uncertain, God is certain. Life has its ups and downs and some situations are too heavy to bare but we ought to seek God's strength to help us carry on for He wants what is best for us all the while increase our faith, (Psalms 55:22, 1 Peter 5:7). Some may argue, "Oh you have no idea what I am up against" and they choose to worry. However worrying doesn't change anything, it has no power over past, present or future events. More often than none worry unrealistically inflates the truth of a problem. Worry and stress go hand in hand and doctors will even tell you that it contributes greatly to high blood pressure, heart problems, and countless stomach troubles and leads to depression; in the end worry only robs us of today's joy and tomorrow's peace.

We were not born worrying, it is a learned behavior, it is a choice to worry or trust God. Jesus taught us that worrying has no value, we ought to be concerned enough for today, and leave tomorrow to the Lord, after all time is in His hands and He sees the future. We can make plans for tomorrow based on what we know today and that is time well spent but worrying about negative outcomes of the unknown is a waste of time. When we rely on God's strength and cultivate being in His presence we will have a cheerful approach to life. Even when life gets hard, an optimistic outlook based on who God is will make it possible to get through it. God is our refuge and strength, (Psalms 62:8).

Beloved when our faith is based on the goodness of Jesus He will shed light on our situations, and our countenance will be full of light, but worry will only cast darkness. (Matthew 6:22-24). We are better off thinking about pure things as Paul instructs and be filled with the joy of the Lord, (Philippians 4:4,8-9). When we persevere in faith looking up to the Lord for strength and encouragement all the worries of this life will grow dim, (Psalms 121:1,2). Jesus tenderly calls us to come to him with our burdens and take on His yoke so He can carry our heavy load. Jesus said that in this world there would be trouble, but also that He overcame the world so let us take heart, God is bigger than any problem, there isn't anything He cannot handle and nothing is out of His control. Finally Jesus lovingly says this; "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid! Asherey Shalom!"

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