



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Jump Start # 2191

Matthew 6:34 "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Today and tomorrow-those are the very things that fill our schedules. Today I have to do this. Tomorrow I have this to do. Today and tomorrow find their ways into Jesus' discourse about worry. Several times in this section Jesus tells the multitudes do not be anxious, or worry. Don't do it, but we do. We worry.

We worry about what might happen. We worry about the weather. We worry about what people think about us. And all that worrying doesn't make us more productive, better rested or even more peaceful. It does just the opposite. We toss and turn all night long worrying about stuff. We lose our appetite because we are bothered about things. And once worry gets a good foot hold into our minds, we can't seem to shake it. We think about it all the time.

Our verse today closes this section on being anxious. Jesus has already told the crowds not to worry about eating, drinking or clothing, what we'd call the necessities of life. Now, there is one more dimension that Jesus adds to the "No Worry" list, do not be anxious about tomorrow.

That statement must be considered carefully.

We must plan for tomorrow. We make appointments, all kinds of appointments for the future. Churches plan meetings, VBS, and a host of activities in the future. Financially, if we do not plan for the future, we'll end up broke and in all kinds of trouble. What the college student studies this semester is part of a bigger plan that leads to graduating in the future. So, we must look into tomorrow and make plans.

We do not know what will happen tomorrow. James said, "Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow" (James 4:14). We think we do. We make plans with the expectation of what tomorrow will be like, but we don't know for sure. Things happen. We wake up not feeling well, and that changes our plans. We grab all of our stuff and get ready to head out and the car won't start. That changes our plans. One of the kids gets sick, or something breaks in the house and that calls for your immediate attention. We often go to bed thinking of all the things we must do the next day, and then that all changes.

What the Lord is driving at in our passage is to not add worry to the list of things you must do tomorrow. Worry only burdens today. And, in this we find three simply truths.

(OVER)

First, do not be anxious for tomorrow. This is the running theme in this section. Do not be anxious. Rather than worry, pray. Rather than worry, trust the Lord. Rather than getting agitated and upset, cast your anxious thoughts to the Lord, as Peter tells us. The Lord cares for you. Make your plans for tomorrow, but put your focus upon getting through today.

Second, tomorrow will care for itself. Things may take a turn and what you were worrying about may not even be there tomorrow. You can't live in tomorrow. Today is the day of choices, decisions, and action. What you do today can impact tomorrow, but for now focus upon this day. And, tomorrow is more than simply the next day. It may well be the next week, the next year or beyond that. There was a story I used to use in sermons that said:

I was dying to get out of high school, so I could go to college
I was dying to get out of college so I could get my own place
I was dying to get out of my apartment and get a house
I was dying to get married and start a family
I was dying for my kids to start school
I was dying for my kids to move out
And, today, I found out that I am dying, and I never have lived.

Tomorrow will care for itself.

Third, Today has enough trouble of its own. No one says, "There's not enough trouble today, I want to borrow some from tomorrow." No, it's just the opposite. We'd like to transfer some of today's woes into another day. There is enough trouble today. There are so many things to pray about today. You know folks who are not Christians and you need to pray that their hearts and eyes will be opened. There are congregations that are struggling and they need prayers. There are members that you know that have grown lukewarm and they need prayers. There are people that you know that are sick and they need prayers. Then there is this country and all the mess that it is in. Prayers are needed.

And, it's not just prayers, it's navigating through all this trouble today and not losing our minds, our faith and our cool. Toxic work environments, stressful family issues, health problems, and our personal battles against temptation and the flesh. Right choices must be made today. Wise choices must be made today. We must do as Christ would want us to do. We must let our lights shine today. Our families need us today. Our church needs us today. There are good deeds that we can do today. And, we must fight the urge to do nothing. We must fight the selfish side in us that rises to the top so often.

There is a big battle in Washington today about the Supreme Court nominee. However, there is a bigger battle taking place in each of our hearts today. The battle to walk like the world and be like the world or the battle to stand with Christ. Will we put on the full armor today, or lay it aside? Will we walk by faith today or by sight? Will we be anxious about tomorrow or will we let tomorrow take care of itself? There's enough stuff today to keep us busy.

Today and tomorrow-how we handle these or how they handle us is a matter of faith and trust in the Lord.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
