

## 67. Keep calm and carry on

February 26, 2017

“Keep Calm and Carry On” was a motivational poster produced by the British government in 1939 in preparation for the Second World War. The poster was intended to raise the morale of the British public, threatened with widely predicted massive aerial bombing by Germans on major cities. Although 2.45 million copies were printed, and although the blitz did in fact take place, the poster was hardly ever publicly displayed and was little known until a copy was rediscovered in 2000 at Barter Books, a bookshop in Alnwick, England. It has since been revamped by a number of private companies, and has been used as the decorative theme for many different ways and products.

It is easy for the third party to say, “Keep calm, don’t worry,” until you are the one who is receiving or will receive eminent threats whether it is a physical harm, financial loss, terminal illness, or you-fill-the-blank stuff.

So far, Jesus has been speaking to the public, mainly against the Pharisees and scribes, the religious leaders who wanted to kill Him. But this time, He turned His attention to His disciples who, by now, had wide eyes and dropped jaws to the floor, because their Master Jesus was going after the Pharisees like there is no tomorrow. I am sure that fear was very much evident in their facial expressions for their unknown and not-so-stable future.

The fear and worry of unknown future are common to just about any average human beings. Of course, there are a few exceptional people who do not, or some cannot feel fear and worry. I have not met any normal person like that. Even the apostle Paul had fear, but his trust in the Lord Jesus kept him calm and carried on his assignment as an apostle. The late Corrie Ten Boom, a survivor of a Nazi concentration camp once said, “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”

I believe that the Lord is still speaking the same message to us as His disciples. The threats against the followers of Jesus have not lessened, rather intensified as the end of the world is getting near. Unless you want to tuck your spiritual tail and cower in your spiritual corner, let your fear calm down with the truth and encouragement from the Lord through this message and carry on your work for Him.

### A. THE OUTLINE OF JESUS’ MESSAGE

*Luke 12:4-5 “And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”*

*Luke 12:6-7 Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.*

Jesus, being the Master Communicator that He is, first, gives us two outlining messages that related. Then, in a typical Jewish communication style, He will elaborate in v8 through 12 what He taught them about whom they should fear in v4 and 5. On His second topic, Jesus also gives a quick sum-up of why we shouldn’t worry for our unknown future in v6 and 7, then He follows up with an everyday practical instruction of how-to-overcome our worry list.

Jesus knew the conflicts, persecutions, beatings, tortures, imprisonments, and even martyrdom were waiting for His disciples. Yes, people can hurt the body, but they cannot do anything against the soul of man and woman. Only our one true God has authority over the physical and spiritual areas. No one else.

Because of the fear from physical harms, way too often, we allow our earthly anxieties to block the view of our God and fear in us enlarges its presence in our hearts.

From "Fear Him!" in v5 to "Do not fear" in v7, our Lord Jesus has taken us from somber awe to comforted joy. Listen my brothers and sisters, the best way to conquer the fear of people and demonic attack is to fear our God. He is God Almighty who judges individual soul and give eternal life or eternal death depending on the individual's choice.

## **B. UNPARDONABLE SIN**

*Luke 12:8-12 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. 11 Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. 12 For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.*

V10 happens to be one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible. Some think that if they say anything wrong against the Third Person in the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, it becomes THE unpardonable sin against God and the person who committed that sin will end up in hell no matter how much he or she repents while that person is alive. It's a really, really bad theology.

The reason those people misunderstood or taught others wrong is that they really did not understand the role of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God not only gives spiritual gifts to believers of God to use them for His glory, but also He is the very One who opens the hearts of the unbelievers who show their willingness to hear the Gospel message so that they can understand the truth of salvation through Jesus Christ. Without the Holy Spirit, no one can come to Christ. In other words, blaspheming against the Holy Spirit is rejecting the salvation through Christ until their last breath. When they do that, those people will not be forgiven at the Judgment Seat of God and they will be sent to hell eternally.

The same group of believers who misunderstood this verse uses 2 Thessalonians as their base verse. But then again, this is another misunderstood verse.

*2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

Throughout the Book of Revelation, thousands, upon thousands of people come to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord, including 144,000 Jewish males. If the Holy Spirit is taken out of the earth, who is going to minister to them? Salvation is uniquely the work of God, not any man, correct? The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is thus assured for every born-again believer, and nowhere in Scripture is that promise rescinded. What we see in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 is that the Holy Spirit will step out of satan's way so that he can do exactly what the Lord prophesied through the apostle John in the Book of Revelation. The New Living Translation renders best:

*2 Thessalonians 2:7 For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way.*  
NLT

Listen, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven – not because it is a sin “too big” for God to forgive, but because it is an attitude of heart that cares nothing for God’s forgiveness. It may want forgiveness on its own terms, but never God’s way. That doesn’t fly with our God, because it is an absolute pride against the Lord.

Notice the second word of v11 – “When”, not “if”. Just as Jesus’ disciples faced persecutions, we, too, face and will face inevitable opposition as followers of Christ. Yet the Lord says not to worry, because the Holy Spirit will give us words to speak boldly.

### **C. NEARSIGHTED WASTED LIFE**

*Luke 12:13-21 Then one from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” 14 But He said to him, “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” 15 And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ 18 So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” ’ 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ 21 So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

Jesus refused to get involved in this man’s family problem. Why? Because He knew that no answer He gave would solve the real problem, which was covetousness in the hearts of the two brothers. Like too many people today, this man wanted Jesus to serve him, but not to save him.

Covetousness is an ungodly and unquenchable thirst for getting more and more of something we think we need in order to be truly satisfied. It may be a thirst for money or the things that money can buy, or even a thirst for position and power, or untamed sexual desires.

Christians are not immune from this monster. Why do you think twelve disciples constantly argue? Were they discussing about their lofty theological difference? No, they were coveting over their positions in the kingdom of Jesus on earth.

How would you respond to the rich farmer’s dilemma of having too much? If we say, “I certainly wish that I had that problem!” we may be revealing covetousness in our hearts. If you obtained a great deal of wealth suddenly, would it create a problem for you? Or would you simply praise God and ask Him what He wanted you to do with it?

Prosperity can bring many problems in our lives. It can choke the Word of God out of us, create snares and temptations, and give us a false sense of security.

Is it wrong to have a retirement account? Is it wrong to invest in the stock market? Absolutely not. But when those materialistic things become our masters, that is when

the problem starts. Money can be a great servant to do wonderful things for the Kingdom of God, but it becomes a master, it tries to compete with God in our hearts.

What does it mean to be “rich toward God”? It means to acknowledge gratefully that everything we have comes from God, and, then, make every effort to use what He gives us for the good of others and the glory of God. To be rich toward God means spiritual enrichment, not just personal enjoyment.

#### **D. BEWARE OF WORRYING**

*Luke 12:22-34 Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23 Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? 25 And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 26 If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? 29 And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. 30 For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. 31 But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. 32 Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

The rich farmer worried because he had too much, but the disciples might be tempted to worry because they did not have enough. When a person is living by faith because he doesn’t have a lot, that person’s faith is also tested and challenged. Some exchange their faith in God who can do all things with worry that doesn’t do a thing other than giving them ulcers.

Covetousness and worry are closely connected. Covetousness can never get enough, worry is afraid that it will never have enough – neither have their eyes on Jesus.

Worry is destructive. Worry in Greek is “Tossed like a ship at sea, to be in doubt”. Our English word ‘worry’ comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word that means “to strangle.” Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.

*2 Corinthians 4:17-18 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

People worry about unknown future – whether it is death, sickness, or anything unknown in general. Some people are paralyzed from the worry of “what if”. Over 95% of our worries never come to reality. In the meanwhile, a person cannot trust God to take care of him. Because he puts his trust in what he can do or what his money can do, God allows him to go through the bottomless pit of worry by his own choice.

The bottom line of Christian's worry is "what-if-I-don't-get-what-I-want" over God's will. Whether it is about your health, your finance, or your relationship with someone you love, worry doesn't do one good thing for you. Worry is a sin against God.

How do we win over worry? The first step is to realize that God knows our needs, we must trust Him to meet them. We are children in His family, and servants in His kingdom and He will see to it that our needs are fully met.

I am sure that many of you remember a silly song "Don't worry, be happy." Worry doesn't stop because we close our eyes, but when we remember the faithfulness, provision, and protection from our loving God, it will stop its rampage in our hearts.

The second step is putting God's kingdom as our foremost interest over ours. V31 should be our life long verse, not just Sunday morning.

### ***E. APPLICATIONS***

**1) We need to forget about what people may say or do against us, but fear God alone and obey Him.**

**2) It is not wrong to own things so long as things do not own us.**

**3) When worry starts in our hearts, the best way to defeat it is to run toward God in prayer, to remember His faithfulness, and to obey the Word of God.**