

Truth or Chains



Crossing the Dateline

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6:34

Don't cross the dateline!

That's my new battle cry for all who want to live by faith, but are finding it so difficult. Not crossing the dateline has been the single most important truth the Lord has given me in the area of living by faith. It has enabled me to begin trusting Him moment-by-moment and begin living a life of faith.

What do I mean by “Don't cross the dateline.” The simple answer is to stay in the present, keep your mind dwelling on today, not tomorrow (or further out!) or yesterday (again, or further out!). Such a simple concept, yet so difficult! When the Lord opened my eyes to his command in Matthew 6:34, it was literally six weeks before I began to experience any victory at all. Why? Because all of our lives, we have been encouraged to worry about and plan for the future and when we're not doing that, we spend so much time regretting or relishing the past.

"How much time to you spend in the present?"

How much time do you spend in the present? Take a moment and think about it.

What have you been worrying about in the future? Bills, job, car, food, money, relationships, kids, war, terrorism, flying? You can probably think of quite a few more. For a lot of us, it's almost a full-time occupation, leaving little time for anything else. In fact there are some of you who actually feel guilty if you're not worrying! I know. I was one of those. As the Lord started setting me free from living in the future, there were times when I felt a little guilty, because I wasn't worrying! Like I wasn't fulfilling an obligation or showing enough concern. As if worrying can change anything.

Or maybe you've bought in to the whole “goal-setting” nonsense that's taught and promoted everywhere. You've got your long-term, mid-term and short-term goals. You're mapping your future out so that you can accomplish...accomplish what? Your plans? Your objectives?

Let's put this living in the future to rest. You already have Matthew 6:34 at the beginning of the article. It's a command! But if that's not enough, let's look at a little more of Matthew 6, verses 24-33.

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”

“Look at the birds of the air, they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

Who of you by worrying can add a single cubit to his height?”

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.”

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Crossing the Dateline (cont.)

“Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these”

“If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”

“So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"

“For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Jesus is telling us to stop worrying about our life – not even the basic necessities like food and clothing. He is saying that if he takes care of the birds, he'll surely take care of us. We're not to worry about tomorrow; in fact, we're not to worry about anything today. If you think about it, tomorrow may not even come. The Rapture could come, we could die in an automobile accident, die in a plane crash – you get the idea. Any worrying about tomorrow is useless – tomorrow might not even happen anyway.

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What we need to do is simply trust (not worry) the Lord for today (Philippians 4:6&7). Be available to Him for the day and let tomorrow take care of itself. When the Lord Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow, I believe that He simply wants us to trust Him for today, but if we decide to “cross the dateline,” we're going it alone. In other words, don't try and trust the Lord for tomorrow – if you're worrying about tomorrow, you're doing it without the Lord.

Now some of you are really going to struggle with this concept of staying in the present (I know – I certainly have!) and some of you are thinking “How does this work practically?” Let's take an example I deal with all the time. I do a lot of traveling to meet prospective clients and typically set appointments to meet with them weeks in advance.

“Isn't that crossing the date line?” you might ask. Well, it's true, I do need to set up a meeting date that's in the future and buy my ticket for a future flight, but those are things that I'm doing today that may or may not impact the future. What I shouldn't do is worry about how the meeting is going to go, whether there will be questions I can't answer, if there will be a hostile audience, etc. Once I'm finished with my activities in the present on this possible future event, I'm done with it and move on to the next activity the Lord has for me today.

Okay, so what about yesterday? It's over! Fretting, regretting, or relishing and wishing for the “old days” is again, keeping us from the present, besides being a waste of time. This is another area in which I found that I spent loads of time. I'd dream about things that had happened to me (mostly bad) and how if I could do it over, I'd come out on top this time. Some of these incidents occurred over 30 years ago! "Get over it," the Lord is telling us.

Paul tells us in Philippians 3:13-14 “...but one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” How do we press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us? We trust Him moment-by-moment in the present making ourselves available to God's direction.

So, don't cross the dateline!

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