

November 8, 2020

## Strategies for Finding Peace in a Troubled World

*"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

Matthew 6:25-34

In our modern world with its many hi-tech ways of communicating it is easy to think that everything and everyone is of equal importance. Because we can and do see and hear from all the corners of the world we think the world we actually populate is all encompassing. It is not. In truth, the world we actually populate is much, much smaller than we might think. My world and yours is really only composed of the space we actually occupy in this time. For the past thirty years my world has mostly been Anaconda, Montana and not even a very large piece of that. It's true that my world also contains my family in other places, but for the most part my world is right here in southwest Montana. If anything Covid has made that even more true.

A decorative graphic with the text "So do not worry about tomorrow" written in a cursive, handwritten style. The words are arranged in a vertical, slightly curved path.

Trying to live in and manage the huge world that social media makes me believe is my world can and does steal my peace because, frankly, there is almost nothing I can do about what is going on in that chaotic place. I cannot do much about what is happening in Asia or Africa or Europe. And I cannot do much about what is happening in Washington, DC or California or Minnesota. The truth is, I can barely manage the little world that I actually inhabit right here in Anaconda.

In his 'Sermon on the Mount' our Lord commands us not to worry about our lives and all of us are, of course, living worry free lives. NOT!. But really, why not? Well, what worries you the most? What keeps you awake at night?

I find that I do not spend much time worrying about the realities of my little portion of Southwest Montana. No, I worry about what is happening in places I have never even been to people that I will never ever know at a time that I may never even see. My worries are coming to me from a world that is much, much larger than the one I actually populate.

The things of that world worry me because I have little or no way of influencing them. I cannot feed the hungry children in Haiti. I cannot make the people of central Europe stop their fighting. I cannot even make my neighbors in Anaconda wear their masks and avoid social gatherings. In the reality of that world, I am almost powerless. So, worrying about the things of that world is very much useless.

But, in the world where I really live and function in this moment I have the capacity to influence mightily. Jesus would tell us to live in this moment, in this time, in this place and leave tomorrow to tomorrow.

One of the things I can do to rediscover peace is to, quite frankly, **shrink my world**. In this moment in time, my world is here in this church building. After a bit my world will be back at my home. While I am there my world will be contained in less than 1200 square feet and the most important thing I will need to manage will be what to have for lunch. Everything else, every other place, every other time is not mine to manage. So, why would I spend time worrying about those places and those times?

One thing I can do to find peace in this troubled world is to live in the world that actually belongs to me, the one that I populate right now. I can manage myself pretty well in this tiny world; in this small moment in time. With God's help, I've got this!

But what about tomorrow or next week or next month or next...? But what about the trouble in Washington or Moscow or...? But what about what those people, that nation, that government, those believers or nonbelievers; what about them? Jesus says, "...**your heavenly Father knows...**" All of those things in that huge, scary world are not mine to worry about. God has those perfectly managed. All of them. In truth, my only task is to manage my tiny, little piece of this world at this time and to do my best with it.

