

## **LOOK AND CONSIDER**

***Look at the birds, they don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your Heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to Him than they are?***

### ***Matthew 6: 26***

The number of cases of COVID-19 are on the rise in Ontario. A few weeks ago, we had days where the number of cases were under 100. As of September 14, 2020, the number of cases has risen to 315. The Premier of Ontario is worried about the rising numbers. The hospitals are not being overrun with the rise in new cases. The majority of these cases are in people 39 years of age and younger. A lot of these cases amongst this age group are a result of them attending large gatherings and not social distancing. If this rise in case numbers continues, the Premier of Ontario is worried it will be the start of the second wave of the virus that has occurred in other countries. The first wave of this pandemic brought enough concerns for all of us. The possibility of a second wave occurring keeps these concerns lingering.

It has been hard living with these on-going worries. Jesus knew worries would be a part of our lives. While He did not address the worries associated with a pandemic, His advice during His teaching in the Sermon on The Mount are very helpful as we continue through this season of worries in our lives.

As I read Jesus' advice about worry in *Matthew 6: 25-34*, I was reminded of the two commands that He gave in His message – “LOOK” AND “CONSIDER”. After telling the people not to worry about everyday life, He said “Look at the birds”. As the people did this, He wanted them to “consider” the following:

- 1) What? (They don't plant or store food – yet they are fed),
- 2) By whom? (Your Heavenly Father),
- 3) Why? (They are valuable to Him),
- 4) Implication for you: (Why worry because You are more valuable to Him than they are).

Jesus gave the same commands when it came to the lilies in the fields – “LOOK” AND “CONSIDER”:

- 1) What? (The lilies grow and become beautiful),
- 2) By whom? (Your Heavenly Father),
- 3) Why? (He cares for them),
- 4) Implication for you: (He cares more for you so why worry).

Jesus' advice or command is the same in both examples: "Look" and "Consider". In this time of worry for us, Jesus' commands are the same: "LOOK" AND "CONSIDER".

- 1) LOOK at what we have gone through to this point and learned about the virus. Look at what all our efforts have accomplished. Look at how *most* people are obeying social distancing rules.
- 2) CONSIDER how God has helped us up until this point. LOOK at how God has cared and provided for us physically, emotionally, and spiritually up until now. CONSIDER how God's faithful care for us will not change even if there is a second wave.
- 3) CONSIDER why we are worrying still despite what God has faithfully done for us through this crisis.
- 4) CONSIDER how much more valuable we are to God than the birds or the lilies, and how much He cares for them.

Worry has a way of dominating our thoughts. Worries concerning COVID-19 have been dominating our thoughts for over 6 months now. Worry is something that dominates the thoughts of unbelievers according to Jesus in Matthew 6:32. As believers, Jesus does not want us to be burdened by our worries. That is why He tells us to "Look" and "Consider" before we let worry dominate our thoughts. By "Looking" and "Considering" our thoughts should be on:

- 1) Seeking the Kingdom of God Above All Else,
- 2) Living Righteously,
- 3) Believing God will give us everything we need.

If our thoughts are focused on these things, worry is the last thing that will be on our minds.

Jesus finished His teaching on worry by saying,

***"SO, DON'T WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW, FOR TOMORROW WILL BRING ITS OWN WORRIES. TODAY'S TROUBLE IS ENOUGH FOR TODAY".***

Today's rising COVID-19 numbers has a lot of people worried about tomorrow. Whether a second wave happens or not, Jesus' advice is exactly what we need not to be living with fear and worry today or tomorrow. "LOOK" and "CONSIDER" the birds during this season and the flowers still blooming, too. As we look and consider we will be reminded that we have nothing to worry about because God is Good.

Keep safe and God bless

Pastor Dean