

“A Gloomy or Godly Future?”

Pastor Dale Campfield - February 13th, 2011

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Intro:

We’ve just finished a sermon series entitled: “I AM”.

In two weeks we’ll begin a new series entitled: “IMAGINE GREATER”

So, we’ve got two weeks in between that I’ll be sharing with you a couple of messages that God has laid upon my heart. The first is: “A Gloomy or Godly Future?”

As you know, we are living in a time when the finances of the world are completely unstable. The debt that America has right now is astronomical.

As of this last week...

US National Debt:	\$14,107,378,361,019.00 +
US Population:	312,003,682 +
Debt Per Taxpayer:	\$127,354.00 +

There are many people predicting right now that there is going to be a financial collapse of the dollar in the U.S. unlike we’ve never seen before. People are losing jobs, there is great unrest in the financial markets, etc.

On top of that, you look at the unrest in the Middle East and around the world; so much pain, hurt, fear, unbelief and turmoil around the world.

Now don’t get me wrong; I’m not a doomsday preacher – I’m a Kingdom preacher. I’m not here to plant fear into your life or anything of the sorts. But I am here to give you some hope in knowing that God is in charge of everything that is taking place around us; and we must be able to put our trust in Him. At the same time; if there is a financial collapse in America, or maybe just within your own life; i.e. the loss of a job, etc, we need to be prepared. Also, you may be financially secure, but those in your life, along the path of your life (discipleship), they may be in a financial meltdown right now. So, you can use this message to minister to them too!

LUKE 21**Signs of the End of the Age**

5Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, **6**“As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.”

7“Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

8He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. **9**When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.”

10Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

11There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

12“But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. **13**This will result in your being witnesses to them. **14**But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. **15**For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. **16**You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. **17**All men will hate you because of me. **18**But not a hair of your head will perish. **19**By standing firm you will gain life.

20“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. **21**Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. **22**For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. **23**How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. **24**They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. **26**Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. **27**At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28**When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

**You have a choice to make concerning the future: Is it “A Gloomy or Godly Future?”
The choice is yours!**

According to *The Futurist* magazine, which is the official journal of the World Future society; a group of professional people who are trend spotters and sociologists and predictors of the future as they study cultural changes were asked, "What's the number one fear of the future that you have as a professional futurologist?" The number one fear was the fear of an economic turbulence in the world that would cause another great depression.

Financial fears. You don't have to be a futurologist to have financial fears. In fact, evidently a lot of us do because *Newsweek* magazine came up with the cover, "How safe is your job? Warning

signals and how to cope." The fact is there is fear of inflation, fear of recession, fear of not keeping your job, fear that you won't have enough money in retirement. After a decade of nearly constant prosperity there's a new wind blowing that says, "Maybe I'd better tighten my belt." Uneasy markets, pessimistic talk about recession, widespread layoffs, tighter times.

It's not a new problem though. Would you agree that no matter how much money you make or how much money you save, thanks to lawsuits and doctor bills you could lose it overnight? Catastrophic illnesses could break you overnight with today's costs. How do you live in a financial world without having financial worries? If financial security is not a sure thing (and it's not) then how do you live without worry?

How do you live in the world of chaos and uncertainty?

Ecclesiastes 7:14

"Enjoy prosperity whenever you can and when hard times strike, realize God gives one as well as the other so everyone will realize that nothing is certain in this life."

Circle "nothing is certain in this life". You can be a hero one day and a zero the next day, a millionaire one day and bankrupt the next. No matter how much you make, no matter how much you save, finances are uncertain.

So how do you live without financial fears, fear of war, fear of pain, fear of the future? There are some truths you need to remember and there are some action steps you need to take. Fortunately we have the words of Jesus. Did you know that a large part of the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus taught had to do with how to not worry about finances and the future? In Matthew 6, He says I'm not to worry about finances and the future for five reasons:

- 1) It's unreasonable.
- 2) It's unnatural.
- 3) It's unhealthy.
- 4) It's unnecessary.
- 5) It's unbelieving.

Why Gloomy Should Not be an Option

1. IT'S UNREASONABLE

Matthew 6:25

"Therefore, I tell you, don't worry about your life, what you're going to eat or drink, or about your body, what you're going to wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?"

He's saying if you're going to have fears in life, there are a lot worse fears than just the fear of finances. Life is more than just the accumulation of things. Even if you go bankrupt, that's not the worst thing that could happen to you. There are a lot of things that are worse than simply not having money. If you're going to have fears, why don't you at least point them in the right direction and not worry about things that aren't as important as other things. Why worry about the future when you know God is in it? It's unreasonable to worry about the future because God is in it. He's already been there and back!

2. IT'S UNNATURAL

Matthew 6:26

"Look at the birds of the air; they don't sow. They don't reap or store away in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they?"

Underline "Are you not more valuable than they?"

He's saying, "Birds don't worry. Animals don't worry." The next verse He talks about plants. They don't worry. In fact, in all the things that God has created, there's only one thing that God made that worries about provision and the future -- humans. You don't see a bird saying, "I'd better build a bigger nest for retirement." Only human beings don't trust God to provide for them. Everything else in creation does. It's not natural to worry.

There are only two fears that you're born with: the fear of falling from high places (all babies have that) and the fear of loud noises. Every other fear that you have, you learned it. That's good news because if you learned it, then you can unlearn it.

Fear is not a natural emotion. It's something you picked up. It's something you took on board -- you need to cast it back overboard. The result when we worry about finances and the future, because we're not made to worry is, it affects our bodies. Headaches, backaches, stomachaches, etc.

3. IT'S UNHELPFUL

It's ineffective. When you worry about your finances and the future, it doesn't work anyway. Has worrying about a bill ever paid any of your bills? It doesn't work! No matter how much you worry about it, it's not going to pay it. He's saying worrying is stewing without doing. Worry does not work. It only makes you miserable.

Matthew 6:27

"Who of you can add a single hour to your life by worrying?"

None of us can.

4. IT'S UNNECESSARY

Matthew 6:30

"If that's how God clothes the grass of the field which is here today and gone tomorrow and thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

There's no reason to fear because God has promised to take care of your needs. It's unnecessary to worry about finances and the future.

When I was a child, any time I had a legitimate need, I'd simply go to my dad and say, "I've got this need" and he'd take care of it. I can honestly say that not once in my childhood did I ever worry about where he was going to get the money. God knows, my dad knows, I don't know ... but that's his business.

God says, "You're assuming responsibility I never intended for you to have when you worry about your future." Your fear comes from a misunderstanding about God. All fear comes from a misunderstanding about God and what He's promised to do for you. He's assumed responsibility for your needs. He says, "I'm your heavenly Father; I'm going to take care of your needs. You're my child." We always get into trouble when we doubt the love of God.

If God can be trusted to get me into heaven -- which is my biggest problem after I die -- then certainly He can be trusted to help me live while I'm here on earth. Does that make sense? If He's solved your biggest problem, all these other problems like taxes, wars and chaos are minor compared to your biggest problem of all.

One day a guy was driving down the road and he picks up an old guy who has a hundred pound knapsack. "Let me give you a ride, old man." He gets into the car. About ten minutes down the road, he says, "Why don't you take that backpack off and throw it in the back?" The old man says, "No. If you'll carry me, I'll carry the pack."

That's the logic of saying to God, "God, You get me into heaven and I'll handle all my financial problems." It doesn't make sense. God says, "I will take care of all your needs." It's unnecessary. In fact, the Bible says if I worry about my finances, I might as well be an atheist. It's unbelieving. I'm acting like an unbeliever. I'm acting as if God doesn't exist when I worry, Am I going to have enough? Am I going to make it?

5. IT'S UNBELIEVING

"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 the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." vs. 31-33

He's saying that if you're a nonbeliever, if you're not living the way God wants you to live, you have a reason to worry. If you're trying to figure it out, if you're trying to go all through life just on your own power, then you've got every reason in the world to worry. Like the old phrase, "If it's to be, it's up to me." That's not in the Bible. It's not always up to you. God says, "I'll help you out!"

The fact is if it really is, "If it's to be, it's up to me", then I'd better worry. There are a lot of situations that I'm not sufficient for. But He says, "I will help you out." God has promised. He says, "You guys are acting like a bunch of orphans. I'm your Heavenly Father. You're acting like I don't even exist. It's like you're not believing."

Notice it says, "*Your heavenly Father knows.*" Circle "knows". God knows. He knows it all. Does God know about that doctor bill you've got coming up? Yes. Does He know about that late payment? Yes. Does He know about that mortgage? Yes. Does He know how the economy is in a little tension right now? Yes. Does he see what's happening in the Middle East with Egypt and the surrounding nations right now? Yes. Does this surprise Him? Not in the slightest. Is He upset? Worried? Why? He knows what's going on. God knows all your needs even before you ask. He sees the outcome of the events at hand. He wants to help you out. He wants you to know that He's there with you right now!

I love the fact that God commands us to see the Kingdom of God first! When we do this, we're standing in faith believing. When we don't, it's basically unbelieving, no faith, no hope, etc.

Conclusion: Here's the deal... the future without God is bleak. The future with God is Great!

It's your choice. When you watch the news; watch your stock portfolio; watch the reports of the day; etc..... you chose if your future is gloomy or Godly.

Choose Godly. Then, you watch... you wait... you'll see!

NEXT WEEK: What if the financial world falls apart? What do we do? I'll be sharing a message from the principles of God's Word next week entitled:

"How to Avoid Financial Collapse in America".

Coming up in two weeks...

THE IMAGINE MORE SERMON SERIES