

## Article: Why Do We Waste So Much Time Worrying?

We tend to worry about things like food, clothing, shelter, and money. Why? Well, we humans have a deep-rooted survival instinct that drives us to fear not having enough to make it. Furthermore, we all know that when resources are limited, people get competitive—things can become intense when everyone begins to grab resources for themselves. Ultimately, we worry because we want to be prepared for unexpected events. We want to be ready for any threats that come our way. And so, we worry about things like food, clothing, shelter, and money. In fact, we can stockpile stuff like money, food, and clothes, giving way to hoarding. Yes, hoarders often have a deep-seated fear of losing control, being unprepared, or thinking that they may not have what they need in the future. The point is that we often live with insecurity in this life because life is, well... hostile. Disasters happen, resources are limited, and struggles occur. Don't believe me? Think back several years during Covid. Remember how people panicked with COVID-19 and bought up all the toilet paper and hand sanitisers! These panic purchases resulted in temporary shortages, creating even more fear and stress.

Now, is it wrong to do such things? Well, it depends. If you and I clamour, demand, and crave these things with fear running through our veins, then yes, we are sinning. We are functioning no different than pagans. You see, pagans function in this world as if there is no God. They operate as if there is no hope beyond what they can see, touch, and feel. And so, they will often put all their time and energy into acquiring as much clothing, shelter, money, and food as possible. But here is a little secret: they will never feel secure in this world, no matter how much they gather or stockpile. They will never feel confident or protected in this life. No amount of money, no amount of stockpiled food, and no amount of security cameras will grant a person security and confidence in this life. It doesn't work. Possessions will never bring complete confidence to you, me, or the pagans in this world.

So, if this is the case, what does bring us confidence and assurance in this world? In a word, the promises of God.

Consider our First Reading today from 1 Kings. Notice that the woman in the reading exists during a terrible famine in the land. She had absolutely nothing except a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive-oil in a jug. Long story short, when Elijah the prophet came to her, he asked the woman to bring him something to eat. Now, remember that all the woman had was a handful of bread and some oil. And so, she responded to Elijah, saying that she was in the process of gathering some sticks so that she could prepare her last meal with her son so that they could eat and then die. Elijah, though, responded to her and said, "*Do not be afraid! Go and do as you have said! However, make me a little cake from it first and bring it out to me! After that you may make something for yourself and your son.*"<sup>14</sup> For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, has said: "*The jar of flour will not be used up, and the jug of olive-oil will not run dry until the day when the LORD sends rain on the land*" (1 Kings 17:13-14).

And so, while having nothing, Elijah tells the woman not to fear and then gives her a promise from God. And with a faith that would scarcely have been found in Israel, she did just as Elijah asked. Despite having no resources and food amid a severe famine, she trusted in God's Word. She made the food for Elijah and trusted in God's word of promise.

It is extremely important to stress what we hear from 1 Kings because the point is that you and I should not put our heart's comfort and trust in food, clothing, shelter, and money—as if these are the things that will ultimately sustain you and me. Remember, the woman made the morsel of bread for Elijah precisely because she had a greater promise from God Himself. Again, the point is that we hold lightly to possessions such as food, clothing, money, and shelter, but we hold firmly to that which does not perish—the promises of God.

We belong to the Lord God. He cares for us more than you can ever care for yourself. The proof of His care is found in the cross of Christ and His Holy Word spoken to you. And so, today, it is pretty simple – why would you and I waste so much time engaging our attention and energy into worrying so much about food, clothing, shelter, and money, as if our worrying can add years to our lives? Why not leave these matters to God's providence and trust in what the Lord God has already promised and given to you and me?

But we may protest and say, "Time are tough. It has never been this bad before! Inflation is out of hand, war is around the corner, and evil is out of hand!"

Well, just think, "In times like these, we must remember that *there have always been times like these.*" In other words, the Lord God is in control. You belong to Him. Remember that the Lord has fed you all these years. He has sheltered you all these days. You have clothes on your body and safety right now. Indeed, the Lord has given you food, drink, clothing, shoes, a house, home, land, animals, money, goods, family, co-workers, judges, police, firefighters, good weather, peace, friends, pastors, and neighbours – to name a few. Furthermore, and most importantly, Christ has redeemed you from sin, death, and the devil. Christ has gone to prepare a place for you. He will not forsake you in death but will raise you on the last day. In the meantime, He has given you His Holy Word full of promises to grant you assurance to this day. He has invited you to His table to strengthen your faith. He has done all this and more for you, even without your prayers. Why? Because He knows what you need, and you are more precious to him than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. And so, you do not need to worry because God has given you His kingdom through His Son, Jesus Christ, and that is what really matters. Do not fear. Take comfort in the promises of God that are for you.