

HEBREWS: REPLACING MAN'S RITUALISM WITH CHRIST
"Part IV: Trusting Christ Over Self-Help Worry To Meet Living Needs"
(Hebrews 3:7-4:11)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

There are any number of things that either people around us or we ourselves are tempted to **worry** about these days. Here's a list:

- (1) Throngs of Albanians have worried about the devastation of a pursuing army of Serbs to such an extent that Albanian-Americans are beginning to sign up to fight in a liberation army for exiled Albanians!
- (2) Before traveling to Baltimore, Nadine and I planned and strove to provide pure drinking water, and get permission from the Ronald McDonald House to store it in our own room contrary to the usual practice of putting all food items in the kitchen area. Nadine and Connie in particular have great needs for heat distilled water as the Baltimore City water is just not overly palatable or too healthy!
- (3) While in Baltimore, I took a fast trip on foot around the area where we were staying trying to find a grocery store to buy milk, orange juice, fruit and lettuce! What a trip! I ran into the Lexington Market where you could buy whole greasy-spoon meals of all sorts, but no simple and less-expensive grocery foods! We finally had to get directions to travel several miles to a Safeway to get these foods!
- (4) While in the hospital, Connie was not always able to eat the meals brought to her because of her many allergies. Nadine had to supply foods she had brought along, so looking out for what was cooked, how and when became a concern!
- (5) Nadine had to travel between Ronald McDonald House and the Johns Hopkins Hospital in my absence. That area is a sociologically challenging one. As a result, Nadine and I found ourselves dabbling for all sorts of information on getting safe transportation between the two locations so that, in my absence, Nadine could get safely between the two buildings after dark.
- (6) Just in the last week, I have noticed that, in the Church at Nepaug, there is a general concern about how children in the public schools are being flooded with atheistic evolutionism.
- (7) Consistently, there always seems to exist the concern of a possible loss of a job, or the fear of not having enough money to take care of basic living needs in a family.

With all sorts of spicy things that we can use our time to WORRY about, how do we DEAL with them?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Whether it's finding a way to pay the bills or getting a job to bring home the bacon in the first place, whether it's trouble over leadership vacuums in the home, church or government, or dealing with problem people, I WORRY a lot! What's the SOLUTION?!"

- I. **When Israel traveled from toward Canaan, the nation worried TEN TIMES that God couldn't solve their daily provision needs:**
 - A. First, they worried that God couldn't help them escape being backed up against the Red Sea by a pursuing Egyptian army, Ex. 14:11-12.
 - B. Second, they worried that God couldn't purify bad drinking water so they could quench their thirst, Ex. 15:23-24.
 - C. Third, they worried that God couldn't provide them food, Ex. 16:2.
 - D. Fourth, they worried that God couldn't provide food the **next** day though He had given some manna the **current** day, Ex. 16:20.
 1. When God provided manna for Israel, He told the people not to leave any of it uneaten till the next day, Ex. 16:19.
 2. However, fearing God might not provide any the next day, some saved the first day's manna overnight only to see it go bad, 16:20.
 - E. Fifth, they worried that God couldn't preserve the food they collected the first day so that it would still be edible the **next** day, Ex. 16:27.
 1. Moses charged the people to save up two days' worth of manna before the Sabbath to keep from working on the Sabbath, Ex. 16:23. Those who did so had good manna the next day, 16:24-26.
 2. However, some felt God couldn't **keep** the manna fresh, so they did **not** save any and thus went hungry on the Sabbath, Ex. 16:27-28.
 - F. Sixth, they worried that God couldn't provide **any** water, Ex. 17:1-3.
 - G. Seventh, they worried that the human leader Moses whom God had raised up to lead them couldn't **finish** the job, Ex. 32:1-7.
 1. When Moses spent too much time on Mount Sinai with God, the people doubted he'd be able to finish leading them, Ex. 32:1a.c.
 2. Thus, they urged his brother, Aaron to make an alternate god and lead them in Moses' place, Ex. 32:1b, 2-7.
 - H. Eighth, they complained simply because they felt God couldn't do something to make them more happy or secure, Num. 11:1.
 - I. Ninth, they worried that God couldn't provide a diet of food that was **appealing** to them, Num. 11:4.
 - J. Tenth, they worried that God couldn't enable them to get beyond the opponents they faced in taking the land assigned to them, Num. 14:1ff!
- II. **Due to unbelief, that generation died in the desert, Num. 14:22-23.**

III. **Accordingly, the writer of Hebrews draws from this experience to WARN CHRISTIANS to TRUST God for His promises to THEM:**

- A. In Hebrews 3:7-11, the writer used Ps. 95:7-11 which speaks of Israel's unbelief and punishment in the wilderness as a warning.
- B. That warning tells God's people of ANY generation that God will discipline those believers who doubt God's promises to them:
 1. The writer of Psalm 95:7-11 warned his generation of Israel in the Promise Land not to **disbelieve** God's Word as had their wilderness forefathers. Otherwise, like their fathers, this **later** generation in Israel would not experience the "rest" of God's provisions, either!
 2. Picking up on this theme, the writer to **Christian Jews** who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews applies the **lesson** of Psalm 95:7-11 of the judged generation in the wilderness. He applied the lesson to **Christians** that *Christians* not distrust God's promises, either!
 - a. The writer of Hebrews warns that **we Christians** must **fear** an evil heart of disbelief in God on **our own** or **we** will be punished like any other generation of God's people were in the past, 3:12!
 - b. **Specifically, Heb. 3:14 urges Christians not to doubt the Christian faith. However, this warning by way of context can also apply to trusting God for daily needs so we can do God's will like Israel was to do in the wilderness, Heb. 13:5f!**
 - c. Thus, we must exhort one another daily on this lesson of trusting God's Word and promises to meet our needs, Heb. 3:13, 14-19!
- C. Accordingly, the writer of Hebrews **himself** admonishes Christians to be **afraid** of divine **punishment** for failing to trust and obey Scripture: the author of Hebrews warns us to fear not believing in God, 4:1-2.
- D. The **reason why** this lesson is applicable to **us** is clarified from Ps. 95:
 1. The initial "rest" Israel's wilderness forefathers missed was that "rest" of entering the Promised Land, cf. He. 4:3 in citing Ps. 95:11.
 2. However, though **already WITHIN** that land, the **writer** of Ps. 95 implied a "rest" **still awaited** his **own** generation of Israel, a rest from one's own carnal works to meet his needs of concern, Ps. 95:8
 3. Thus, a rest awaits **Christians today** from ritual, carnal efforts that do not trust God for salvation and/or daily provisions, He. 4:3-10!

Lesson Application: To AVOID God's discipline and ENJOY His "rest" of supplying what we need for all our needs, (1) believe on Christ to become one of His people, and (2) TRUST His Word as a WAY of LIVING. (a) This means trusting God's Word regarding the credibility of the Christian faith AND (b) God's provision of daily needs so that we can fulfill His will for our lives on this earth!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Before traveling down to Baltimore in taking Connie for her surgery at Johns Hopkins, Connie had asked that I purchase a UCONN National Championship jersey from the roadside near Wal-Mart.

The reason was important! Dr. Jon Weingart, Connie's surgeon, once played basketball for Duke University, was an avid fan of his alma mater's basketball team, and the recent UCONN defeat of Duke for the National Championship was just too good an event for Connie **not** to rub in on the dear doctor down at Johns Hopkins!

I headed up to the stand and talked to the lady at the shop. She wanted to know what I had in mind and why, so I told her about Connie, her surgeon and what was to transpire in Baltimore.

I purchased a jersey that recalled the championship although I was sad to see that they didn't have any jerseys left that promoted the final score of 77 to 74! That was a special jersey, one with a very special message that would have been ideal for Connie to show to her surgeon, but the demand was so high that it was already long sold out.

As I got back into the car, I saw the lady back at the stand wildly waving her hand at me to come back. When I did, she explained she had hidden one final jersey with the prized final score on it. Eighteen people had been in line to buy this a jersey ahead of us, and someone had returned just that morning with the jersey after having decided not to buy it. On her own, this lady, moved by my account of the upcoming surgery, and not wanting Connie to miss out on doing a number on a doctor from Duke, had decided to move Connie to the front of the pack! We could buy the jersey if we wanted it!

I of course got the jersey and headed back home, once again amazed at the Lord's nifty, gracious provision of a "little" but, nonetheless, **important** provision of great encouragement to us!

It ended up that Nadine could wear the other jersey, and give it to Joanne when she returned with Connie from Baltimore! **We learned something of God's care and provision in this event! God wants us to TRUST Him for provisional needs as we go about doing our part to live in obedience to Him. We will be disciplined if we DOUBT, but really encouraged and blessed if we TRU ST Him!**