

Hope for A Worried People

/ Craig Rees

On
STUMP
the

Matthew 6:25-34

pg. 971

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Worry is the key word of this entire section
(v25, vv27-28, v31, v34 [x2])

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Question: Why is worry such a big deal?

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First, Jesus was an inspirational leader who triggered people's imagination.

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“The ‘what-ifs?’ ... are the relentless stream of thoughts that can rush in and amplify a simple worry... A single worry can kindle a whole bonfire of anxiety. When the what-ifs take off, there can be no end to them. This is partially because real life offers no end to the what-ifs.”

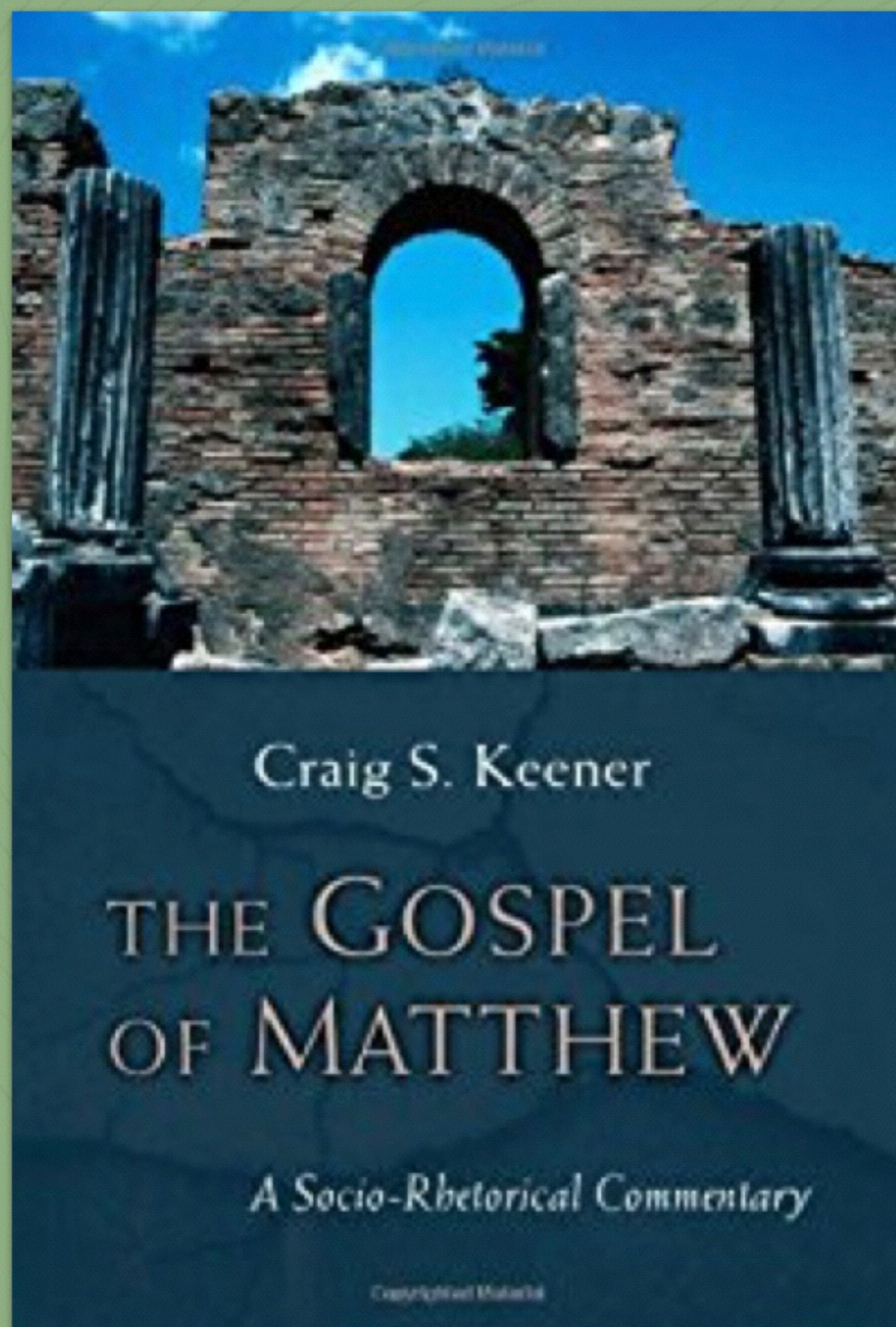
Edward Hallowell, “Worry: Hope and Help for a Common Condition.”

Second, Jesus taught about worrying because people had a lot to worry about.

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The mention of food and clothes are not general examples but real concerns.

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C.S. Keener, The Gospel of
Matthew: A Socio-
Rhetorical Commentary
(pp. 237–238)

Historians of the day, men like Tacitus and Josephus, write of severe famine.

“But seek first his kingdom and his
righteousness, and all these things will be given
to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33

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“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.”

Acts 4:32-35

In the Jesus manifesto, disciples address real concerns to stop them from becoming worries. While concern is unavoidable, worry is unwanted.

What is the difference between
concern and worry?

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WORRY

μεριμνᾶτε

to be anxious, to care for

worry *is derived from*

μέριμνα (“care”)

μερίς

“apart”

μερίζω

“to divide”

Worry is care or anxiety that pulls apart.

Concern is biblical.

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“I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare.”

Philippians 2:19-20

“Concern is appropriate when it is directed toward right things, kept within bounds, and causes us to do our proper duty.”

M.J. Wilkins, Matthew, p.296

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Concern is biblical. **Worry** is not.
Worry is concern gone astray.

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How do we stop concern from becoming worry?

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#1: Think Constructively (v27)

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“Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Matthew 6:27

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“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or
‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”

Matthew 6:31

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How do we learn to think constructively?

- 1) Examine our initial responses.
- 2) Correct our erroneous thoughts and behaviors.
- 3) Restate God's Word about our life and purpose.

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#2: Change the Emotional State (v33)

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“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33

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#3: Get Connected

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Principle: In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus doesn't seek to reassure, but to connect.

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Connectedness is being a part of something
larger than yourself.

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“22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

1 Corinthians 12:22-26

When a body is divided, whether a church or a nation, true believers in Jesus honor **the Jesus manifesto** and connect with the concerned. When we don't, the “body”, the “nation,” is pulled apart.

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“If there is one remedy I would recommend above all others in combating worry, this is it: increase connectedness in your life. In doing so you will increase your feeling of strength and power and greatly reduce your sense of vulnerability. There is strength in numbers. United we stand.”

Edward Hallowell, “Worry: Hope and Help for a Common Condition.”

Central exists to connect people to God, others
and the mission of Jesus.

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We exist to amplify hope and life,
not anxiety and despair.

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