

Saturday Corrie ten Boom and her sister Betsie (The Hiding Place, 1971) were imprisoned during World War II in Ravensbruck, the notorious women's extermination camp. To cope with horrendous conditions, they read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-18 from a smuggled Bible:

"Comfort the frightened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus."

"That's it, Corrie! That's His answer. 'Give thanks in all circumstances!'"

Is such faith only for devoted saints — special people who most others can't understand much less imitate?

What is the most important insight God has shown you this week?

What new thing(s) can you do to express your faith?

The Serenity Prayer by Anonymous

Quoted in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989), #459; similar wording usually attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr (1943); similar wording adopted in the 1940's by Alcoholics Anonymous

*God grant me
the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
the courage to
change the things I can,
and the wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.*

Recovering from Christian Atheism Believing But Worrying

February 5—11, 2012

In Greek and Roman mythology – there are “three fates” (or Moirae). It is these three sisters, robed in white, who decide on the length of each human's life. Old and often seen as unmerciful, they sing as they decide.

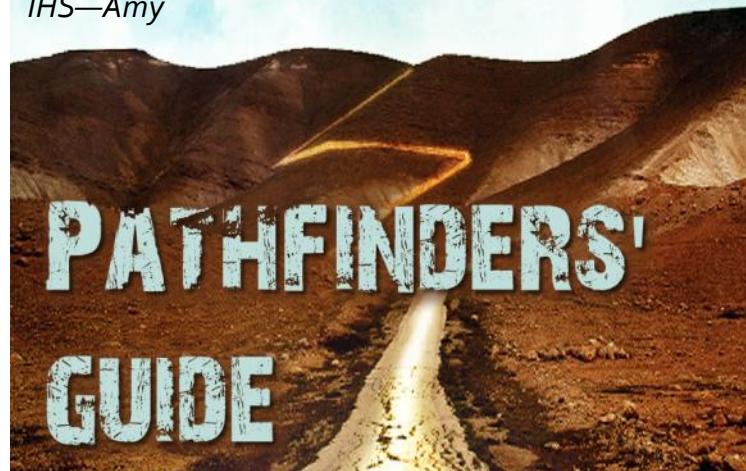
Clotho sings of things that are, Lachesis sings of the things that were, and Atropos – sings of the things that will be. Of the three, Atropos is the smallest in stature, but the most terrible and feared. Clotho spins the thread of life on her spindle, Lachesis measures the length of the thread of life and Atropos cuts the thread, ending the person's life, inevitably.

What do you worry about?

Are your worries concerning things that are happening here and now, things that occurred in your past or things that may happen tomorrow? Are you worried about where your next meal will come from? What you will wear? Or if you will outlive your financial resources? Do you fret about the details – or about the “big” things like poverty and world peace?

At the source of all of our worries – is concern for “self”. How long will I live? I don't know. Will I be provided for all the days of my life? I sure hope so. Instead of fretting over what will be, or might be – perhaps it would be good to look at what we have experienced; how God provided, comforted, strengthened and guided us in the past. Then spend some time this very day, considering what sustains, blesses and encourages us now. And then, perhaps, we might truly believe that God will take care of us tomorrow.

May God guide your steps today – and tomorrow.
IHS—Amy



Sunday

In 1988, a song by Bobby McFerrin became popular, "Don't Worry. Be

Happy." The advice sounded easy — he didn't say how — and the tune relaxing. Jesus had a different view.

Read Matthew 6:25-26

If life is more than food and the body more than clothing, then what else is life? How can that very important "thing" be nourished?

Wednesday

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus advised against worry.

Read Matthew 6:25-34

Should 21st-century people take Jesus' teaching so far as to not plan for the future (mortgage payments, loss of job, re-tirement, major illness, becoming a victim, something else)?

Monday

The Adam and Eve story has some funny passages.

Read Genesis 3:8-11

What were Adam and Eve worried about? Being literally naked, or something else?

Thursday

In the story of Mary and Martha, Martha asked Jesus if he cared about her work.

Read Luke 10:38-42

Do you think that Jesus intended to discount Martha's work as of no value? What was his point? What is the "better part"?

Tuesday

A psalmist advised not worrying about the success of others.

Read Psalm 94:16-19

On what basis did he say that people should live their lives?

Friday

Richard Carlson's best-selling book Don't Sweat the Small Stuff ... and It's

All Small Stuff (1997) has this summary idea:

Often we allow ourselves to get all worked up about things that, upon closer examination, aren't really that big a deal. We focus on little problems and blow them out of proportion. ... Whether we had to wait in line, listen to unfair criticism, or do the lion's share of the work, it pays enormous dividends if we learn not to worry about little things. So many people spend so much of their life energy "sweating the small stuff" that they completely lose touch with the magic and beauty of life.

Do you agree that it's "all small stuff"? What is magical and beautiful about life?
