**HAKUNA MATATA**

In 1994 my three children were 11, 9 and 6 when I took them to see Disney’s hit movie *The Lion King*. While there were several hit songs that came out of that animated classic (*The Circle of Life, Can You Feel The Love Tonight, I Just Can’t Wait To Be King*, *The Lion Sleeps Tonight –* which, by the way, was sung so much better by The Tokens in 1961 when I was a kid), the one sung by Timon and Pumbaa to their new friend Simba was my favorite. The warthog and meerkat instructed the young lion cub their philosophy of life, which they called Hakuna Matata. Simba was fretting over his future, so these two from the African Serengeti instructed him in a better way to look at life.

Hakuna Matata! What a wonderful phrase. Hakuna Matata! Ain't no passing craze.

It means no worries for the rest of your days. It's our problem-free philosophy.
Hakuna Matata!

Hakuna Matata is taken from the East African language of Swahili. Hakuna means “there – is not here,” and Matata means “troubles or problems.” Put together the phrase means my troubles or problems are not here, they are over there, so don’t worry about them. While they probably would never admit it I think the writers of that song borrowed heavily from the old Bobby McFerrin song, *Don’t Worry – Be Happy*. His opening lines went like this,

Here's a little song I wrote, You might want to sing it note for note.
Don't worry, be happy
In every life we have some trouble, But when you worry you make it double.
Don't worry, be happy

But my own personal philosophy I latched onto and have tried to live throughout my life goes back to my childhood when my parents took me to see Disney’s *Song of the South*. I still remember Uncle Remus (played by James Baskett – who by the way, was the first black male performer to ever receive an Oscar for his performance in that movie), sang the song I still love to sing:

Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay; My, oh, my, what a wonderful day.
Plenty of sunshine headin’ my way, Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay.
Mister Bluebird’s on my shoulder, It’s the truth, It’s factual, Everything is satisfach’ll”

Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay; Wonderful feeling, wonderful day! Yes sir!

Hakuna Matata. Don’t worry, be happy. Zip-a-dee-doo-dah. Are these lyrics implying we should just go through life acting as if bad things never happen to good people? No student of the Bible would be so foolish as to think that. Job, who was no stranger to trouble, spoke the truth when he told his three friends (Job 14:1-2),

*​1 “Man who is born of woman Is of few days and full of trouble.
2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue.*

We live in a sin-cursed broken world that groans to be restored (Rom. 8:22). Paul said even Christians are not exempt from this painful world. “*Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body*” (Rom. 8:23).

It is not being naïve for Christians to believe in happiness in the midst of misery. We do no more than Jesus and Paul when we show to the world we have an inner strength, an inner peace, that overrides the trials and tribulations we all must endure.

Jesus promises us this*: “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture… I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:9-10).

Paul promises us this: “*Don’t worry about anything, but in everything through prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your requests to God*” (Phil. 4:6).

Was Paul, or Jesus, skipping through fields of daisies singing *Hakuna Matata*? Were they waving off life’s sorrows and singing *Don’t Worry, Be Happy*? Did they bury their head in the sand and sing *Zip-ah-dee-doo-dah*? Hardly. One was heading to a cross, the other to a sword. Life was serious. Dead serious. And yet they carried a doctrine of life that always spoke to the future. “*This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it*” (Psa. 118:24). “*Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say unto you, rejoice*!” (Phil. 4:4).

Is that a life of denial? Is that simply whistling past the graveyard? No, it is an attitude which has as its outlook “This too shall pass.” Our present problems will become a distant memory if we will but keep a godly perspective on *Who* we serve and *Where* we’re going.

While Timon and Pumbaa might tell Simba their “problem-free philosophy” – it was Jesus who tells us how to live a worry-free life. Don’t wave it off as if this is some Disney song, it is the Lord’s song and He means for us to sing it loud and long. Read Matthew 6:25-34, noting the ***bold underlined italicized*** words.

25 “Therefore I say to you, ***do not worry*** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 ***Which of you by worrying*** can add one cubit to his stature?
28 “So ***why do you worry*** about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?
31 “Therefore ***do not worry***, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore ***do not worry*** about tomorrow, for ***tomorrow will worry about its own things***. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Six times in that passage Jesus tells us not to worry. So, do you worry? If so, He reminds us what He often reminded many in His day, “*O you of little faith*.” As a husband, father, grandfather, preacher, elder and disciple I live a life of concern for my family, friends, brethren and lost souls. But by faith in God and hope for the future I can know that my

“Treat everything that happened to you as if it’s something you prayed for.”

**What Hakuna Matata DOESN’T mean**

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Understanding what Hakuna Matata really means is not the same as understanding what it doesn’t mean. **It can mean different things to different people and this is where the beauty of the phrase can be misinterpreted.** When you don’t recognize the true essence of Hakuna Matata, it can lead to some serious negative consequences.

[Living the Hakuna Matata life](https://ohmy.disney.com/movies/2015/04/06/7-surefire-ways-to-live-a-hakuna-matata-life/) does not mean following a philosophy of unwillingness to do anything. All of us have problems in life. We are all worried and stressed about something or the other. We think more than we actually do. And sometimes all this stress can adversely affect our life’s choices and our health. This is where the philosophy of “no worries” comes in.

**However, having “no worries” does not necessarily mean you will do whatever you feel like without worrying about the consequences.** We all want to live a happy fulfilling life full of adventure and excitement. We want to take risks, make mistakes, have fun and experience life as it is. We want to be happy. We want to relax. **Hakuna Matata can mean all of that as long as you take responsibility for your actions.**