
“Do Not Worry”
Matthew 6:25-34
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(Matthew 6:25-34)

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Core Idea: Worry takes over your mind, heart, and ambition. The only way to combat worry is to meditate on the truth about God and receive His promises as true for me today. Then it will free us to seek and honor God in all circumstances.

Opposing Value: Our perspectives on life, God, and ourselves are often distorted because we lack faith. As a result, it causes us to run after the things of this world.

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon church. Today’s text comes from Matthew 6:25-34. So, if you have your Bibles, I invite you to turn and follow along. Keep your Bibles open so that you may see the truth for yourself as I share from this passage. Let me read for us.

[read: Matthew 6:25-34]

We’re living in a season of uncertainty. No one can be sure about their future. And when these uncertainties continue, when we don’t have a clear direction, when we feel like we’re going to lose control, worry settles in – and often in the form of questions. I wonder if you’ve been asking questions like:

- Am I going to get this job? What if my resume is not good enough? How am I going to support myself or my family financially? Will I have enough food and essential resources? What if the economy doesn’t bounce back?
- What if this doesn’t go through or work out the way I planned?
- When will I find the “one”? What if this person is not the “one”?
- What will they think of me if I say this or do that?
- What if I get sick? Will the vaccine be ready?
- When will this all end? What if it doesn’t? How will this impact my job, school, marriage, children, future?

So many questions run through our minds and they weigh our hearts down. I read one secular psychologist say that asking what-if questions is our coping mechanism in attempt to solve problems that haven't actually happened yet. He says, "What-if questions are often difficult to resist because by answering them, we often feel that we become more mentally prepared or ready to deal with life's uncertainties... [But] how often does this 'mental preparation' actually pay off for people with anxiety? Almost never... We may feel prepared for a few seconds, minutes, or hours, but the feeling eventually wears off and then we feel compelled to re-board the what-if train. Because life involves infinite possibilities and our current situation is constantly changing, the scope of potential what-if questions is limitless... Perfect preparation is only a mirage" (Seay).

In our passage today, Jesus says three times, "Do not worry." Thankfully, He doesn't just command us not to worry, but He teaches us how we can fight our worries. Then as we begin to explore His words, I want to invite you to do one thing: **cease your questioning for now and let the Spirit of God do the questioning.** Pastor Tim Keller once said, "Before the change, I pored over the Bible, questioning and analyzing it. But after the change, it was as if the Bible, or maybe Someone through the Bible, began poring over me, questioning and analyzing me." Brothers and sisters, instead of directing your questions to your life, I invite you to take the truth and start asking questions to your hearts. Three things about worry:

- MIND
- HEART
- AMBITION

1) WORRY IS AN ISSUE OF YOUR MIND

In this passage, you'll notice that Jesus asks a few rhetorical questions. As you know, rhetorical questions, by nature, are asked to make a point rather than to get an answer. In other words, through these questions, Jesus is actually communicating three important truths to stimulate our minds. He provides us with arguments and reasons to show us how worry is irrational for Christians.

The first question is found in verse 25. "*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. **Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?***" Jesus here calls us not to worry about food, drink, and clothes – three basic things to survive. Now, if you're going to worry about anything, it seems like these are pretty essential things to be concerned about. But Jesus says, "Don't worry about them," and in asking this question, He makes His first point: **because life is more than food or clothing.**

Unfortunately, too many of us are more obsessed about these things than we think. And this is not just for our survival but for other reasons. We're interested in food and drink because they give us pleasure. We're interested in the types of clothes we wear because we think that it's connected to how others view us. But when we get down to it, we must realize that we're interested in these things ultimately because we're obsessed about keeping and enjoying our life here on earth. We have somehow made comfort, safety, and well-being of our life here on earth to be the be-all and end-all of our existence, but Jesus reminds us that life is much more than that.

If you put this differently, it means that **if you are weighed down by worries over these things, it could be that you've lost sight of the greatness of life.** Do you realize that your life is a gift from God? It's so easy to lose sight of that because life either feels so busy or so mundane; but God has given us life for a greater purpose. I love how the Westminster Catechism puts it: "Question 1. What is the chief end of man? Answer. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." **We are created for His glory and for happiness in Him** – which is why the Giver of this life teaches us that we're not to be desperate for physical pleasures but to live by finding pleasure *for* and *in* God.

Think about the implications of this. Your life is more than what others think of you. Your life is more than what job you have, how much money you make, whether you marry or not, whether you have children or not, how well you look, how well you perform, how healthy you are, all because our ultimate purpose for life is not dependent on these things. And Jesus wants us to see that *this* truth will help us lay down our worries. Of course, this is not to say that these things don't matter or that you should never be concerned about these things. In fact, this is what Paul says, "*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart*" (Colossians 3:23). "*Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever*" (1 Timothy 5:8). **We are called to plan wisely, always work hard, and diligently provide for ourselves and our family.** Then what does it mean to be concerned about these things in the way that pleases God? Let me share something interesting. The word "worry" in Greek is translated as "worry" here, but the same word is translated as "concern" elsewhere like 1 Corinthians 7 and 12. But the word there is portrayed as a virtue. What's the difference? This is how one pastor explains, "The difference can be seen in these mathematical formulas: concern + unbelief = worry; concern + faith = a biblical virtue." In other words, concern becomes worry when we fail to relate the things of life to our faith in God. Then the right way to be concerned for these things is not to be overly obsessed about them; but see them in light of God – to know that they're in His hands. We must remember that our life is more than these things because it'll help us combat worry in our minds.

The second question is found in verse 26. "*Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not much more valuable than they?***" Jesus calls us to look at the birds and see the flowers of the field. When you observe them, you'll notice that they don't do anything to deserve God's extravagant care. Birds don't sow, reap, or store away – these flowers don't labor or spin, yet God provides for them. They're valuable to God simply because God sees value in them as His creation. Then listen to Jesus' reasoning: Don't you realize that the One who provides for them is *your* heavenly Father? If *your* Father takes this great care of the birds in this general sense, how much greater will He care for *you* who is infinitely more valuable as His child? Brothers and sisters, you and I are children of God. God is not merely our Creator; He is our Father. We're valuable to God not because we've accomplished something great but simply because we're made in His image. Do you believe this? Are you feeling the implication of this? Because this means that even if you make mistakes in life, even if you fail, even if you don't make it, nothing can diminish the worth and dignity in you; nothing can change the fact that Jesus died for you; that He loves you and through Him, God becomes *your* heavenly Father. If this is true, and it is for Christians, then we have nothing to worry about.

That's what I see in my son, Eli. In three years of his life here on earth, I've never seen him worry about food, drink, or clothes. He simply turns to me whenever he's in need. Sure, it might be because he doesn't have a choice but to be dependent. It's true that he's incapable of doing things on his own right now, but maybe, we need to recover this kind of utter dependency on God. Maybe we should realize that we are helpless and hopeless apart from God. Because when we do, when we become confident of our identity as children of God, we'll realize how unnecessary worry is, for God who created and sustains the universe is our Father.

The last question is found in verse 27. "**Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?**" Jesus is asking, "With your tremendous effort to worry, is there any of you that can extend the span of life by even a moment?" Of course not. This argument seems so obvious that it sounds ridiculous, but it's the one that we forget too often. We *know* that worry is unproductive and unhelpful in every way, yet we continue to worry. We *know* that our times are in the hands of God – and no matter what we do, we cannot add a fraction to the duration of our lives – yet we still worry. Brothers and sisters, this is why we need to preach this truth to ourselves over and over again because we are simply forgetful. Jesus reminds us that worry will never dissolve our problems, never offer solutions, but will always weigh us down. Charles Spurgeon said, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength."

Then let me summarize. **Worry is irrational for Christians because life is more important than you think; because you are more valuable and God loves you more than you think; and because worry is absolutely more wasteful than you think.** Do you know these things? Have you reflected on these truths? Did you ever wrestle with these truths in your mind? Jesus invites us to start here.

Now, some of you may say, "But I don't worry because I don't *know* these things. I *know* all these things in my mind. But I continue to find myself worrying." To this, we turn to our second point.

2) WORRY IS AN ISSUE OF YOUR HEART

Let's read verse 30. "*If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you—you of little faith?*" It's important to note that Jesus doesn't say that you have *no* faith – but rebukes for our *little* faith. It's not the *absence* of faith but the *inadequacy* of faith that concerned Jesus. Then here's what Jesus is saying: **worry for Christians is always due to lack of faith. In other words, the root of worry is in a problem of trust.** You may *know* it in your head that God is your heavenly Father and He loves you; but you fail to *believe* it in your heart that He'll provide you everything you need. Now the irony of this is that many Christians have learned to have firm, unshakable faith in the salvation of our souls, but for some reason, have their faith shaken in the promise of His provision. Pastor John MacArthur says it clearly, "Think about it this way: Christians who worry believe God can redeem them, break the shackles of Satan, take them from hell to heaven, put them into His kingdom, and give them eternal life, but just don't think He can get them through the next couple of days. That is pretty ridiculous... That we can believe God for the greater gift and then stumble and not believe Him for the lesser one reveals an embarrassing lack of faith."

He continues, “For some reason, we think of doubt and worry as ‘small’ sins, but when a Christian displays unbelief or an inability to cope with life, he is saying to the world, ‘My God cannot be trusted,’ and that kind of disrespect makes one guilty of a fundamental error, the heinous sin of dishonoring God... Worry strikes a blow at the person and character of God... That is no small sin.” **Brothers and sisters, worry is ultimately a sin – it dishonors God.** Do we realize that our worries grieve our heavenly Father?

Then how do we combat this heart issue, this trust problem? **We must wrestle with the Word of God – fight to believe that what’s written in the Word is for me.** You see, our lack of faith is ultimately due to a failure to apply what we know, and claim to believe, to the circumstances and details of my life. We forget that the Word of God is living and active – that it has power to breathe hope and life in us; that it has power to bring courage and faith to our hearts. Then the only way to overcome this worry and lead you to trust God is to warm your hearts in the Word. And we must believe that He is speaking to *you* – not just the disciples, not just those who are mature, not just those who have accomplished a lot, but *you*. God *is* speaking to *you* right now in light of *your* problems and circumstances. Then think about the life situation you’re facing right now and listen to what God is saying to *you*:

- If you’re worried that you won’t have what it takes to overcome it or persevere, He says to you, “*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness*” (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- If you’re worried that it’s not going to work out right, He says to you, “*Be still, and know that I am God*” (Psalm 46:10).
- If you’re worried that you’re going to fail, He says to you, “*Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you*” (Isaiah 46:4).
- If you’re worried that you’ll be left alone, He says to you, “*Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand*” (Isaiah 41:10).
- If you’re worried that you won’t know what to do, He says to you, “*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you*” (Psalm 32:8).

Brothers and sisters, did you hear God speak to you? These promises and more are for *you*. And this is true because “*while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8). Then whatever happens to us, “*He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?*” (Romans 8:32). It’s true that God never promises that we would be free of troubles; but He encourages us by reminding us that “*in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us*” (Romans 8:37).

Now, I’m not saying that this is easy. When we look at the weightiness of our problems, trusting God still seems impossible. But this is why Jesus tells us to *look* at the birds. In other words, take your eyes off of life and see how God works in nature, in the Word, and how God has worked in your life over and over again. **He is inviting us to fix our eyes on God.** It’s true that Jesus doesn’t tell us *how* He will provide; but He just says that He will. I love what Pastor Tim Kerr said, “When we can’t trace God’s hand, we trust God’s heart.” Brothers and sisters, God can be trusted with all of our hearts even when we can’t make sense of it in our minds.

3) WORRY IS AN ISSUE OF YOUR AMBITION

Let's read verse 31. Jesus says, "*So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For [because] the pagans [those who don't believe] run after all these things.*" It's important to understand who these pagans are. These are the people who have no knowledge of God; therefore, no relationship with God. In other words, they have no one to provide for them. They're on their own. They must fend for themselves. They must make a way for themselves. No wonder these things become their ambition – something to give meaning to their existence and something on which they set their hearts and minds on, but the Bible teaches that it will always come short. We will never be able to provide for ourselves on our own. Even if we do somehow, we will never be satisfied because the things of this world cannot fill the void in our hearts and this is why those who run after these things will always end up worrying. They have no choice but to worry.

However, brothers and sisters, Jesus tells us that we're different because we know something that they don't. They don't know that "*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16), but we do. They're in real darkness about life and their eternal destiny, but we know. Their view of life is entirely limited by their own thoughts, but we have the Word of God that gives us life. And even better news is that our "*heavenly Father knows that you need them*" (Matt. 6:32). He knows everything about us, every circumstance, every need, every pain, and suffering. He'll never abandon us nor forsake us, which is why we *have* a choice not to worry.

Then how are we to be different from these pagans? Here's an interesting thing: the word "*run after*" in verse 32 and the word "*seek*" in verse 33 share the same root form of the verb. Then this is what Jesus is saying: "Though the pagans ambitiously run after worldly things, you, Christians, must ambitiously, earnestly, with everything you have, run after *first* His Kingdom and righteousness. Though they're desperately seeking for the things they *will* lose, I'm calling you, Christians, to desperately seek for something that you can *never* lose." To put it simply, **He's calling us to live for God's glory and to do His will.** He's calling us to put all of our energy on passionately worshipping God and intensely pursuing holiness to become more like His Son, Jesus Christ. Seek this *first* before anything else.

During this pandemic, I personally went through a long dry spiritual season. I had no motivation for anything. I just did things out of duty. There was no joy – until I came across this quote from J.I. Packer. He said, "If you ask, 'Why is this happening?' no light may come, but if you ask, 'How am I to glorify God now?' there will always be an answer." And that's when I realized that I've been asking the wrong question. I've been focused on how I can get myself *out of* this dry season when I should've been thinking about how I can honor God even *in* this season. Now, this didn't mean that suddenly, I felt this motivation surging over me. Actually, this dryness continued for awhile. But it no longer weighed my heart. Instead, I learned to thank God, be content, and find ways to honor God in every way.

Friends, I want to encourage you to do the same. I'm not sure how heavy your load may feel right now. You may have been tempted to run after everything except God to find a way out – provide a solution for yourself. But turn to God today. **Seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness by finding ways to honor God and to grow in your holiness even *in* this challenging season.** The promise that Jesus gives is that our heavenly Father who knows and loves us will provide for all that we need.

Listen to what Pastor Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, “The nearer we live to God, the less we are aware of the things of this life and this world, and the greater our sense of assurance about Him. The more holy we are, the better we shall know God. We shall know Him as our Father, and then nothing that happens to us will upset our composure, because our relationship to Him is so close... If you want to seek anything, if you want to be anxious about anything, be anxious about your spiritual condition, your nearness to God, and your relationship to Him.” Friends, let your ambition be for God – then worry will begin to fade away in light of Him.

APPLICATION

I know I've been talking only to the Christians today. But if you're not yet a believer, I'm so thankful that you tuned in and patiently listened. If this is you, I want to tell you that you can know and have a relationship with this God who can dissolve your worries. But this is only possible through Jesus Christ because of our sin. You see, even though God created us in love, we all rebelled and sinned against God. We've all turned away from God to our own ways. Now, the good news of the Bible is that God still loves us; so, He sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, who had no sin, to pay for the punishment for *our* sins by being killed on the cross, but three days later, He rose from the grave in victory, so that anyone who turns from their sinful ways and puts their faith in Jesus will be forgiven and be restored to the relationship with God for all eternity. Friends, I pray that you will do just that – that you will surrender to God and receive this life in Jesus Christ today.

Christians, if you've been worried, I invite you to repent of your sin – and learn to “*rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). And find ways not only to honor God, but love and bless others in all circumstances, for Jesus who reminds us here that our heavenly Father feeds and clothes us, later in the book calls *us* to feed the hungry and clothe the naked (Matthew 25:31-46). Learn to be generous, hospitable, and loving, instead of worrying, for He *will* provide for our needs.

CONCLUSION

Brothers and sisters, worry takes over your mind, heart, and ambition. Then the only way to combat worry is to meditate on the truth about God and receive His promises as true for *you* – that our heavenly Father knows and cares for us; because only then will this enable us to give ourselves over to the cause of the kingdom and honor Him in all circumstances. Then I want to give you some time to respond. How did God speak to you? What was one thing that resonated loudly in your heart today? Spend some time in prayer and I'll close.

Let's pray.