

FIRST THINGS FIRST

By Claire Robinson

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:25-34

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

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 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? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

OBSERVATION

Worry is a thief of our peace and attacks our relationship with God. By worrying, we inadvertently seek to take control away from God and seek our own guidance. Matthew 6:25-34 is a passage of hope. We as believers no longer have to lay awake at night, worried about our past, present, or things of the future. In these verses, Jesus is defining our worth and setting our focus on heavenly things. Christ Himself is speaking to us in these verses and repeatedly telling us to not worry.

- In verse 25, Jesus is teaching the crowd that temporal needs and concerns of the flesh are not to be what they worry about. Often times, needless worry and fret consumes our minds, overtaking our ability to fully focus on Christ. Jesus even explains that if one were to worry about earthly things, it is folly to worry about food rather than the life that food supports or clothes that cover the body rather than the body itself.
- Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount is often compared to Moses’ giving of the Law in the Old Testament. Thinking back to the Old Testament, the story of the Israelites in the wilderness comes to mind. They were to collect enough manna for only *one day*. Anything more would rot away, and this was also disobedient to God as He had commanded them to take only enough for that day. The Israelites had to trust in God that He would provide the next day’s meal to prevent their starvation. Just

as the birds do not store away extra food, we are to not stress about collecting enough to survive without God's provision.

- In verse 32, Jesus says that the pagans run after things of the world. He is teaching that by worrying about clothes, food, status, money, future, or health, we act like pagans who do not know a heavenly Father. As believers, we know where our provision comes from. By worrying, we choose to forget that fact. Just like the grass of the field, we are here one day and gone the next. What good does it do to worry about our lives?
- Jesus commands His followers to “seek *first His kingdom and His righteousness.*” When we worry, we build our kingdom. It is impossible to worry and also fully seeking Him. To worry means to serve two masters, and God commands us to serve no other gods besides Himself. Jesus also tells us that when we seek Him first, “all these things will be given to us.” He is not saying that by seeking Him, you will win the Powerball this week. He is not even saying that your life will be easy. But, by first seeking His kingdom and His righteousness, God will provide for our every need. We often think we know what our needs are, but who knows better than our Creator?

OBEDIENCE

- “Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” If worrying brings about no good, why do we do it? It is human nature to be consumed by worry; it is an outcome of the Fall. This passage tells us, however, that we don't need to worry. We know how our story ends—with Jesus on the throne. If every day for the rest of time has already been decided by God, what is there to worry about? Let us pray for His will to be done and His kingdom to come and find rest and relief in not having to know the unknown.
- Worry immobilizes; concern moves to action. Worry is stressing about a global pandemic that is affecting our daily lives. Concern is falling on your knees in prayer for the people dying in a broken world and being eternally separated from Christ. Worrying about things only makes them worse. A healthy concern drives one to Scripture and to God and moves them to take their part in God's mission on earth.
- Times of crisis like the one we are in have a unique ability to change our lives. When this period of time ends, we will be left with a choice. Will we have allowed this situation to teach us how to trust and lean on God, or will we return to the old and worry-filled patters of life? Will we continue to seek our own kingdoms, or will we pursue His kingdom and in that way point others to Him?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your sacrifice of Your Son so that we could enter into a relationship with You. Thank You for the hope that is found only through You so that we do not have to worry. We praise You for giving us an identity in You and freeing us from the worry of who we are—because we are Yours. We trust that You are working through all situations for the glory of Your name. We pray that people would come to know You in this time so that they could discover a personal and eternal relationship with You. We ask for boldness for believers to proclaim and reflect Your name to the lost of the world in this time. We ask for the strength to not worry and the courage to act out of concern. We love You and thank You for who You are. In Jesus' name, Amen.