

Series: From Israel to Everyone: Disciples who Demonstrate God's Presence (a study of Matthew).

Sermon Text: 6:25-34 Worry
(See App for lesson, slides, and to ask questions)

Have you ever found yourself staring at the ceiling at three in the morning, running numbers in your head that just won't add up...Calculating the 'what ifs'? *“What IF the medical test comes back bad, what IF the lay-off comes, what IF my kid doesn't turn out okay, what IF I don't pass that test?”* We spend so much energy trying to secure a better tomorrow that we can't see that God is with us today. Let's see what Jesus says about that in *Matthew 6:25-34*, **Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than them? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life, And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, (Let His priorities order ours so that we help creation flourish in right, healthy relationships as God designed.) and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**

Think about those that were there listening to Jesus that day, they would have been under immense struggle from Roman rule, heavy taxes, and religious leaders. For fishermen, all it would've taken was to have a bad season and not meet their requirements, and they would be in debt. The peasant farmers lived harvest to

harvest. One season of drought meant that they could literally suffer starvation or even sell their kids into slavery. Their worry was real, heavy and immediate. Today, we live in a very anxious age where we are constantly stressed about time, money, health, kids, and news. So as relevant as it was to those listening to Jesus on the hillside, it's every bit as important for us here today to heed the words of Jesus. What is Jesus saying? I believe He's saying, *"Choose in your heart to trust God your heavenly Father for lasting security rather than temporary security."* He's not saying, *"Forget about your physical life and just think about heaven."* He's saying, *"Your Heavenly Father knows you need real food, real clothes, and real security today. We don't have to live like orphans scrambling for bread, because the God who owns the kingdom is the same God who calls us His children."*

I started thinking about what it must have been like in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. Have you ever imagined yourself there in the garden? I do, at least I do now. Here's what I mean: Two weeks ago, John Crabb showed us that in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus tells us to pray like this: *"Heavenly Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* That was on my mind while preparing this message on worry. Here Jesus tells us that our heavenly Father knows what we need. And I thought to myself, "God has never changed...They walked daily with God. His presence was everywhere, and God supplied them with everything they would need. We don't have to worry about anything because He wants to take care of us." You see, Satan CONVINCED ADAM AND EVE OF A LIE, and he does the same thing to us. And we worry about those things that we were never meant for us to worry about.

Brandon did a great job pointing this out to us last week when he shared these things with us:

1. Value kingdom priorities on earth more than cultural ones.
2. GOOD EYE - BAD EYE: Are you viewing possessions through a clear kingdom lens, or is your vision clouded by short-sighted fear and self-preservation?

3. No one can SERVE 2 MASTERS because you will love one and hate the other.

Let's read His advice about anxiety *verse 25: Therefore.....put your faith and trust in your Heavenly Father and do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?* When Jesus uses the word “*therefore*” here, it means He's going to answer for you what He just spoke about. So, it's like He's saying pay attention! Let me ask a question, “*What is the one thing that if you lost tomorrow would make you feel like your life is completely over?*”

When I meditate on this verse, a story comes to mind and I would like to share with you. When Brandon asked if I would like to speak a Sermon on the Mount lesson, I said YES! He said to pick from the list he created, so I did. I chose “*The Lord's Prayer*” because I had listened to a podcast on it one time and just enjoyed it and wanted to dig deeper into it. Well, that was too soon because I always need a little extra time to prepare for a lesson since I'm new at this and still learning, so Brandon asked me to pick another one. And I said, “*Why don't you pick me another one? You've picked the first 3 sermons for me and they've been absolutely foundational for my heart.*” So, he picked me this one: “*Do not worry.*” Later, someone asked me which day I would be preaching and I replied, “*The 3rd Sunday in October.*” Then it hit me...the third Sunday in October was a big day for me. Nine years ago today, I was doing everything I could to come up with an excuse to not go to our small group because you see, two days prior, on a Friday nine years ago, I lost my job. And I didn't want to go to our group. I'd spent most of the weekend trying to come up with some excuse to not go. But Rose wasn't having it. She said, “*We are going!*” But all I could think about was, “*What am I gonna do? How am I gonna provide? Where am I gonna work? I'm 50 years old. I've worked at this company for 29 years. Are we gonna have to move? What are the kids going to think of their dad?*” And on and on, but we went to our group anyway.....

It was at Tara and Edwin McFadden's home. And I had every intention in the world to say absolutely nothing. I'm telling you I didn't want nobody to know. So,

at our group we always make it a priority to share a meal together, which just feels like what family should do. And after dinner, I had this overwhelming feeling that just would not leave. This tiny a voice in my head saying, “*Tell them, tell them...*”, and I fought it for a few minutes. And then I just told them. And it got quiet. And then I thought to myself, “*Ok here it comes.*” And can I tell you there wasn't a single, “*What happened?*” or “*What'd you do?*” It was all compassion and love. And I felt it to the core. Tears were shed. Scripture was shared. Stories were told where it had happened to them. God was showing me how he had provided and was comforting me through the comfort others had experienced. Many hugs were given. We prayed together. That evening, my small group family shifted our faith and trust back to where it belonged...to our heaven Father who loves us more than the birds and flowers. Praise be to God...I AM WHAT I AM BECAUSE the Father provided!

In *Vs 26* Jesus tells us to ***look at the birds. They don't farm or store up.*** Jesus lets us know here that ***OUR Heavenly Father feeds them.*** And Jesus adds ***that you are more valuable than them!*** Jesus is specifically letting us know that our heavenly Father is the Sovereign Lord over all of creation. What do birds do? All I know is... they get on their phone and dial up Uber beaks. And a little bird comes out with a little package on their back and drops it off. That's gotta be the way it happens. Just last week, I could have sworn I saw a bird with a blue vest flying around, but maybe it said Kroger delivery on the back. Seriously though, we all know birds have to go look for their food. They also build nests. Birds work for those things. As I consider the birds of the sky and the lilies of the field, it's a peaceful way for me to sit and witness God's sovereignty on display.

Of course, worry isn't just about food on the table. It's looking at rent prices or student debt and feeling like you're always falling behind everyone on social media who seems to be succeeding. It isolates you and makes you think, “*I'm on my own. If I don't hustle 80 hours a week, I won't make it.*” Check out Christ's solution for our rat race in *Vs 27: Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?* Jesus is reminding us that our heavenly Father is Sovereign over our lives. Worrying about our life robs us of the very thing we should be focused on: Loving God and loving our neighbor. Because life is in our Father's hands. Now,

birds don't sit around stressing about retirement accounts or stock markets. But Jesus isn't saying birds don't work because they spend all day searching for seeds. His point isn't passivity; it's trust. Birds work without panic because creation is built on God's provision. So, think about this: *"If God designed a system that feeds birds, how much more does He care about those who bear His image?"* Once I realized this after losing my job, it gave me the courage to keep moving forward in faith knowing that God had my back and gave me all I needed to do whatever He had next for me.

In *Vs 28-30*, Jesus says to ***consider the wildflowers of the field, how they grow and how they neither toil nor spin***. Once again, I believe Jesus is reminding us of something found in Genesis 1 verse 11. On day three of creation, He created the plants and all the beautiful colors of the flowers. So beautiful are these that not even the wisest king—the king that had the finest of fabric and the best seamstress—***was arrayed like one of these***. Spring and fall are my two favorite times of the year because of the colors we get to see. Don't you just love the colors of fall? Then after several months of colorless winter, we begin to see those beautiful spring flowers blooming again. Now, listen to *verse 30*, ***If He clothes the flowers and the grass with that beauty, and today it's alive and tomorrow it's thrown in the oven, will He not much more clothe you, oh ye of little faith?***

In *Vs 31-32*, Jesus brought up the gentiles who were not God's covenant people, Israel. They seek after earthly security and self-preservation. They act like there is no Father in heaven. Jesus says, ***THEREFORE, do not be anxious for what you eat or what you drink. For what you wear. Because your Heavenly Father knows that you need them.*** Most people who had come to hear Jesus would have picked up on His point. They would have remembered the stories of God bringing their ancestors out of captivity and providing for them in the wilderness with manna from heaven and water that sprung from the rocks. So, they would have been reminded about how their heavenly Father promises to provide for His covenant people. If the cure for worry was just telling ourselves *"Stop worrying"* none of us would be anxious today! But Jesus doesn't say, *"Try harder to have faith"* He says, ***REMEMBER*** and *"Look at the birds... Consider the lilies...and REMEMBER."*

He says to look outside of ourselves and notice God's daily track record. The cure for anxiety isn't internal muscle; it's the spiritual sight or perspective we discussed last week. It's opening our eyes to see the constant presence of our Father who sustained us yesterday and won't ever walk away from us.

Jesus finished this portion of the Sermon on the Mount with two “*therefores*”, and what I think is His most profound statement of the Sermon on the Mount. In *verse 33* Jesus says, *let His priorities order ours so that we help creation flourish in right, healthy relationships as God designed, and all these things will be added to you.* And in *verse 34* Jesus is saying: “*Look, you're going to have trouble in this life. Therefore, do not be worried about tomorrow, live for today and let tomorrow worry about itself. My grace is Sufficient for the day.*” And as always, when you're ready to take your next steps in your walk with Christ, perhaps to learn more about letting God's priorities order ours and helping creation flourish in right, healthy relationships as God designed, you don't have to do it alone. Trust me, you just might find out there a whole lot of people on your side. Tell them!

When we truly believe we have a Heavenly Father who knows what we need and abundantly provides, there's no need to live in scarcity anymore, nor to compete with our neighbors or tear them down to build ourselves up. That's the topic for next week in Matthew 7 where Jesus asks, “*How does living as a child at our Father's table change the way we look across the room at everyone else?*”

Sunday to Monday Connection: As we head into a new week, remember Jesus' words in Matthew 6 your heavenly Father knows what you need, and you are precious to Him. Worry may be real, but you don't have to face it alone. So instead of letting fear control your tomorrow, seek His kingdom today, trusting His grace to meet you where you are.

- **Question:** What are you holding onto so tightly that it's keeping you from trusting your heavenly Father?
- **Next Step:** Name a concern in prayer, share it with a trusted brother or sister in Christ, and take one faithful step forward this week. Remember, you're not earning God's care, you're living in response to the care He has already shown you in Jesus.
- **Note:** If you are not a Christ follower and would like to explore what all this might mean for you, please speak with someone you know here or one of our church leaders.

Takeaways to discuss with your people (in addition to the underlined questions above!):

1. What specific area of tomorrow (finances, health, family, career) are you most tempted to try to control through anxiety today?
2. What is the distinction between wise, prudent planning for the future and anxious, controlling worry? Where do you tend to cross that line?
3. How does looking at nature (birds and lilies) help dismantle the lie that we are alone and responsible for engineering our own survival?
4. Every time worry about the future arises this week, intentionally pray: *“Father, You feed the birds and clothe the lilies. I leave tomorrow in Your hands while I seek Your kingdom today.”*
5. Spend 20 minutes outside without your phone. Observe birds or plants and write down 5 ways God actively sustains creation, using it as a physical reminder of His care for you.
6. For three days, whenever your mind drifts to anxiety about next month, next year, or an upcoming crisis, state out loud: *“Today has enough trouble of its own. I will focus only on the grace given for today.”*

Considerations for discussion leaders:

1. Keep circling back to the big idea and main points of the passage to stay on track.
2. Keep the group small for deeper sharing. Single underlined sentences are for discussion, while key points are double underlined.
3. Keep the discussion around 30 mins. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.
4. Keep these simple questions in your back pocket: What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

Other Articles/Songs/Videos: Please ask us for help obtaining other resources.

- Bible Project - Gospel of the Kingdom [Videos](#) and [Podcast episodes](#).
- Bible Project - Heaven and Earth [Videos](#) and [Podcast episodes](#).
- Bible Project - Temple [Videos](#).
- Bible Project – Day of the Lord [Podcast episodes](#).

Quotes related to this passage:

- **Context:** “In the first half of Matthew 6 (1–18) Jesus describes the Christian’s private life ‘in the secret place’ (giving, praying, fasting); in the second half (19–34) he is concerned with our public business in the world (questions of money, possessions, food, drink, clothing and ambition)...If we are Christians, everything we do, however ‘secular’ it may seem (like shopping, cooking, totting up figures in the office, etc.) is ‘religious’ in the sense that it is done in God’s presence and according to God’s will. One of the emphases Jesus makes in this chapter is precisely on this point, that God is equally concerned with both areas of our life—private and public, religious and secular. For on the one hand, ‘Your heavenly Father sees in secret’ (4, 6, 18), and on the other, ‘Your heavenly Father knows that you need’ food, drink and

clothing (32). In both spheres also the same insistent summons of Jesus is heard, the call to be different from the popular culture: different from the hypocrisy of the religious (1–18) and now different also from the materialism of the irreligious (19–34). For although the Pharisees were largely in his mind at the beginning of the chapter, it is ‘the Gentiles’ whose value-system he now bids us renounce (32). In fact, Jesus places the alternatives before us at every stage. There are two treasures (on earth and in heaven, 19–21), two bodily conditions (light and darkness, 22, 23), two masters (God and mammon, 24) and two preoccupations (our bodies and God’s kingdom, 25–34). We cannot sit on the fence... But how shall we make our choice? ... As in the previous sections on piety and prayer, so here regarding ambition, he sets the false and the true over against each other in such a way as to invite us to compare them and see for ourselves.” (Stott, 153-154)

Bibliography (Note: Our use of these materials does not imply full agreement with them)

- The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016)
- Jeannine K. Brown, Matthew, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2015).
- Craig S. Keener, The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009).
- J. T. Dennison JR., “Herald,” in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised, ed. Geoffrey W Bromiley (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988).
- Tom Wright, Matthew for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-15 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004).
- Michael J. Wilkins, Matthew, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004).
- R. T. France, Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985).
- Elaine M. Wainwright, Robert J. Myles, and Carlos Olivares, The Gospel according to Matthew: An Introduction and Study Guide: Basileia of the Heavens Is Near at Hand, ed. Tat-siong Benny Liew, vol. 1, T&T Clark Study Guides to the New Testament (London; Oxford; New York; New Delhi; Sydney: Bloomsbury T&T Clark: An Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017).
- Barney Kasdan, Matthew Presents Yeshua, King Messiah: A Messianic Commentary (Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 2011), 49.
- Briggs, J. R., Bob Hyatt, and Alan Hirsch. 2015. Eldership and the Mission of God: Equipping Teams for Faithful Church Leadership. Downers Grove, IL: IVP.
- Craig A. Evans, The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003).
- Jay E. Adams, The Gospels of Matthew and Mark, The Christian Counselor’s Commentary (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020).
- John R. W. Stott and John R. W. Stott, The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985).