

Worthy of Your Trust

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Bible Verse: Matthew 6:31-34
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Well, I'm glad to see you all with us this evening as we turn for one final time to Matthew 6 and complete a series on returning to our rest and overcoming anxiety. We've looked at Psalm 37 and now we're going to take our third and final look at Matthew 6 here this evening and I trust that the Lord will have something special for all of us from his word here this evening.

Matthew 6. I'm going to read the whole passage to begin, verses 25 through 34. Jesus said,

25 For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to 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, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? 28 And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! 31 Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

As we come to this text, I think that we're all familiar to one degree or another of the way that anxiety in our hearts tends to accelerate and run away with ourselves if we're not watching out for it. You kind of get a sense of that accelerated worry in verse 31 when Jesus recites the questions that are at stake: what will we eat, what will we drink, what will we wear for clothing? And the questions just kind of pile up, and what we saw last time on Sunday was that he's addressing anxiety by teaching us how to think and the way

that we should consider and think about life, think about God, and the way that we think informs our hearts in order to be a garrison for it against anxiety. So we said in verse 25, actually I should say in verse 26, we see that the blessedness of God, the very nature and character of God should be a guard against anxiety in our hearts. God is blessed, he is a good God, and the God of the universe, Jesus says in verse 26, is your heavenly Father. He will care for you. It's the nature of a father to care for his children and this God who loves us, this God who is a God of all power, is a God who has promised to take care of us. And so God is good and God is great and that means that he will care for those of us that belong to him through faith in Jesus Christ and that immediately calms the waters and helps us to realize that our anxieties have a broader context that shows us that they're not necessary, that it's not necessary to be anxious, indeed, the character of God would contradict anxiety if we just meditated on it with the help of the Holy Spirit long enough and deep enough.

Jesus goes further and he says to look at the birds of the air. The birds of the air teach us that anxiety is not necessary. God, our heavenly Father, feeds the birds of the air. The number is around 10 billion or so birds that are in the earth and atmosphere at any given time. God meticulously cares for each one of them and he does this even though birds do not gather into barns, they don't plant crops, they don't reap crops, they don't store crops, they don't do any of that. They just go day by day subsisting on what God faithfully provides for them in each day of their existence, and the argument is that if God cares for a bird, for, you know, two sparrows are sold for a cent, if God cares for birds that are of such little value, then how much more is he going to care for us, his disciples, his children, who have much greater value than birds. If he does the lesser thing, surely he'll do the greater thing.

Now Jesus goes on further and says, and this is just review again from last time on Sunday, he says in verse 27, "who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?" We are not able to do anything that significantly changes the duration of our existence or the height of our body, we can't grow an extra three inches here, and we can't, when the time of death comes, we can't extend that out by a single hour, and if we can't do those major things, then why are we worried about other things? We can't worry and anxiety doesn't extend things for us and so it's a fruitless endeavor to give our minds over to that and not to resist anxiety and find our way to trusting God in trying times.

Then the final thing that Jesus pointed us to in verse 28, look at it there with me, he says, "why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these." He's presupposing that God is providentially orchestrating the orchids of the field, God clothes the flowers, it's an expression of his creative power, his creative variety, his creative beauty, and if God makes flowers so beautiful and provides for them in such exquisite detail, then isn't it obvious that he's going to care for you also and provide what you need? It's very powerful and yet very simple in its logic and once we admit the truth of these things, once we admit, "Yes, God does do this with the birds, God does do this with the flowers, God is blessed forever," when we simply remind ourselves and grow in our knowledge of who God is and we know that we belong to him

through his Son Jesus Christ, then so much of anxiety is driven out of our hearts by a recognition that what God does for the lesser aspects of his creation he will certainly do for those whom Christ loved and gave himself up for.

In Romans 8, the Apostle Paul says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" If God loved you so much as to include you in his plan of salvation, if God loved you so much to send Christ to be the Savior of your soul, if Christ loved you so much as to give himself up for you in love that his shed blood might cover all of your sins and reconcile you to a holy God, well, then isn't it obvious that he's going to take care of the lesser things that are involved in life as well? I've taught on this, I've taught on this passage here from this pulpit in the past but I come back to it again and again because I'm just convinced that you and I, and I'm including myself in this, we just really haven't gotten our minds around the fullness of the goodness and the grace and the love of God for his children. If we were confident in him and we knew him like he actually is, if we had some abiding sense of his goodness toward us and the goodness of his purposes to us, then we would be more at rest, we would be more serene in our approach, we would be more confident about the future rather than fretting repeatedly over things. And maybe we lose sight of the fact of the doctrine of providence, maybe we lose sight of the fact that God actually controls everything in the universe, that he directs all creatures and events to accomplish the fullness of his purpose which he established before the foundation of the world. You know, is God really in control of the universe? Is he really in control of your life? Does he really love you? Has Christ really died for you? On and on those questions go and the answers are all, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Well, if that is the environment in which we live, if that is the track on which the train of our life is running, then don't we see, shouldn't we see that God's care for us guarantees a good outcome for us in the end no matter what kind of uncertainty we may be facing at the time?

So when we neglect these things, when we let other things occupy our attention, this is when we give room for anxiety to come in. And if you're a person that deals with prevailing anxiety in your life, I would encourage you to come to this passage often, I'd encourage you to listen to these messages repeatedly because it does take time for it to sink in deeply that these things are true and therefore that has an effect on the way that I view everything else about life, even to the point that when we are going through our final sickness and laying on our deathbed, there's no cause for anxiety even there. The same Lord who entered into the grave and came out victorious on the other side is the Lord that we are united to and we are united to him in his death and resurrection and his ascension. We belong to the heavenly places. And so he's going to carry us even through the darkest valley, the valley of death, and when we see that as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, Psalm 23:4 says, "I fear no evil for You are with me." And there just comes a point in time, beloved, where we have to step back and ask ourselves, "Do I believe this or not?" Do you believe this or not? If you do, then it has impact on the way that you live your life in this fallen world.

So that's a pretty high and lofty challenge, you know, because none of us would want to acknowledge in a public setting like this that maybe we don't really believe these things, and none of us would want to admit that we struggle with anxiety and that's okay. I'm not a big one on forcing things and forcing people to say things they don't want to say. That's not the way that ministry should be conducted. I'm rather talking to you about the way that you address God and the way that you think about God in the privacy of your own life, the privacy of your own home. Do you believe these things or not? Is your heart a place where God is glorified and God is honored because he is great, because he is good, because he's faithful to his children? If your heart is like that, then it's going to be reflected in the way that you respond to life, and if you're weak on these things and you're not strong in the Lord, then you're going to be more vulnerable.

Well, the challenge of Jesus' teaching can best be seen in what he says in verse 30. There's a little bit of a rebuke here for all of us perhaps, there's a bit of a sense of realizing that – and maybe this is a good way to put it – to realize that the problem in anxiety cannot lie with God, it cannot be because God will be unfaithful to us. You know, it can't be that we're anxious simply because somehow God might let us down, that's impossible. That cannot happen. He is God over all. He is God over sin. He is God over you. He's a good God and it can't be that there's any weakness in God that would justify anxiety in our lives. So the problem somehow lies within us and Jesus describes it there at the end of verse 30 when he says, "You of little faith!" You of little faith. Your faith is not as full-grown as it ought to be and we might go on to say that if you're an anxious person, you know, that your faith is not as full-grown as you might think that it is; it's not as big as it ought to be and it's not as big as you think it is. And we don't need to feel any condemnation over this, we just need to acknowledge it honestly and let the Scriptures inform us and instruct us so that we can grow in grace.

Now that phrase, "You of little faith," that comes up elsewhere in the gospel of Matthew. Look over at Matthew 8 and it comes up in places of severe danger to give us a sense that even extreme danger does not justify or excuse our anxious hearts. Matthew 8:23, you remember the story. Jesus "got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, 'Save us, Lord; we are perishing!' He said to them, 'Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?' Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. The men were amazed, and said, 'What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?'" That's rather startling, in my opinion, that in a circumstance like that where their boat is about to capsize from their perspective and they wake the Lord up and he rebukes them and he says, "Why are you afraid? You have little faith." And what he's saying is that, "You should recognize that when I am in the boat, the boat cannot sink, the boat will not sink." And you should realize, he's instructing his disciples that they should have known who he was, where he was, and to understand that no danger, no harm could come to him while he was with them. "I fear no evil for You are with me."

So the agitation of even severe circumstances on the outside should not shake us from this fundamental premise that governs the way that we view life. The Lord is with me.

The Lord is for me and therefore it will be well in the end even if I don't see the outcome from where I am standing. Now he didn't tell them they had no faith, he wasn't accusing them in that way, but he says, "Your faith is not all that it should be if you are afraid of dying when I am with you." Now in like manner on the water, and these things are, you know, these things are personal to me. I'm not a big water person. I have family that's very good in the water but they did not get that from me. You know, the water troubles me and I'm never comfortable when I'm in the water, you know? Sure, I can take a shower in the morning, it's not that bad. I'm not comfortable in water like I am at a desk with my books open. So here's another water issue and you remember when Peter stepped out of the boat to walk on water and we'll just pick it up in the middle of the account because I know you remember it. Verse 28 of Matthew 14, "Peter said to Him, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.' And He said, 'Come!' And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?'" He was right there with him. "Peter, why are you doubting the Lord thinking that you're going to sink when the Lord is right there with you? Why did you become afraid?"

Now, you know, as we contemplate these things in our own hearts, you know, it's not too much to realize that Scripture is addressing us in that same spirit of calling us to account for our lack of confidence in the Lord. As we face uncertain futures with our country, with our government, with our health, with our finances, with whatever things are coming down the road, why is it that we are so easily frightened by the things of earth when the God of the universe is, metaphorically speaking, in the boat with us? If he has loved us and saved us, it's obvious that he intends good for us and that is to shape the way that we view everything else in life and big things and little things, and to realize that this goes and that his providence and his care extends to the smallest of details about the nature of our existence.

Look over at Matthew 10:28 where Jesus said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." God has numbered the hairs on your head. Don't you think that if he's numbered and that he knows you in such pervasive exhaustive detail that he's going to take care of you in pervasive and exhaustive detail? There comes a point where we have to bow down before these things. And notice that the context is not simply small matters of life there, but Jesus is addressing the possibility of dying for the sake of Christ, dying for the sake of testimony, and Jesus says even when you are threatened with your life, don't be afraid. Fear God instead. Trust him instead. Serve him instead. Worship him instead. Obey him instead. And don't let yourself be intimidated, this is a good way to put it, don't let yourself be intimidated by hostile men or hostile threatening circumstances into fearing and doubting who God is and what he's going to do for you. God loves us, that's why Christ came, he came to redeem us because he loves us. He loved us and gave himself up for you, second person singular. So we are to contemplate these things, meditate on them,

and trust God and honor God with our heart response that says, "Lord, I'm going to trust You here even when I don't know the outcome."

So the idea is that that kind of true knowledge of God frees you from anxiety even in the times of greatest distress when you are in immediate danger. As we saw from the passage with Peter and the disciples in the boat, even in immediate danger this knowledge of God is sufficient to make us calm and courageous when we are threatened even to that extent. So whether it's a momentary crisis like a bumpy plane ride as the plane is coming in for a landing, or the relentless pressure of life, or whether your loved one is lying out on a bed and you're not sure if they're going to get better or not, there is this sense of always coming back to remembering who our heavenly Father is to us and trusting him in the midst of it so that it will put anxiety to rest. And look, we need the help of the Holy Spirit in order to do this, don't we? This is beyond. This is something supernatural. This is beyond, you know, just mere human effort. This is more than just an intellectual calculation. We need the work of the Spirit to bring these things to bear on our hearts and to give us strength to live in light of them.

Well, Jesus instructs us and he gives us a simple contrast going back to Matthew 6 now and we're going to look at verses 31 to 34 in the remainder of our time here tonight. He gives us a simple contrast to show you that God is worthy of that kind of trust in your life. He's worthy of it. He deserves that kind of trust. He is entitled to that kind of trust. It is your privilege and it is your responsibility to trust him like that. So Jesus is going to contrast the worries of an unbeliever with the trust of a believer. The unbeliever's worries and the believer's trust, the contrast is going to show us that God is worthy of your trust.

Well, let's look, first of all, at the unbeliever's worries. 1. The unbeliever's worries. Jesus has given these commands against anxiety and now he gives further reasons that you are to grasp and to apply to your heart and look at verse 31 through the first half of verse 32. He says, "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things." Now to the Jews, Gentiles were cut off from God and they were nothing more than pagan unbelievers. They had no part in the life of God, they had no life in the believing community, and Jesus points to them and points to the way that Gentiles considered life and the way that they approached life in order to instruct his audience by contrast with how they themselves should live. So he says after the hurried questions, "What are we going to eat? What are we going to drink? What are we going to wear for clothing?" Jesus says, "The Gentiles are like that. The Gentiles are eagerly seeking all of these things." The idea of the verb is that there's an intense seeking. Their life is preoccupied with the acquisition of earthly things and earthly priorities are what govern their life, their disposition, and they don't think about anything else. It's a purely horizontal approach to life with them. What Jesus is saying to his disciples because he's speaking to his disciples here in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is telling his disciples that they are children of God and because they are children of God, they must live at – watch this – they must live at a better level and at a better spiritual life than unbelievers who do not know God.

We all know unbelievers who are just perpetually worried. They are continuously on edge, worried about what's going to happen next and Jesus says, "Look at them in that condition and understand that that is not to be the mark of your life." And beloved, could it be any other way? I ask you, could it be any other way? If we've been given the new birth, if the Holy Spirit dwells within us, if we are united to Christ by faith, if God is going to take us to heaven when we die and we fear no evil because he is with us, don't you see how different the sphere of our existence is so that the sphere of our existence in Christ compels us to have a different kind of life than those that are separated from the life of God and do not have the Holy Spirit within them? Jesus says unbelievers are preoccupied with material things and their immediate problems. They are looking at life, they are living life apart from God and his whole point here, his whole point here as he speaks to his disciples is, there is more to life than external earthly affairs. Unbelievers live at that level. Unbelievers, I'll say it again for emphasis, unbelievers live at that level of just being preoccupied with what is happening on earth.

That's what unbelievers do. That's why they're worried. The point is that if you are in Christ, then you are a child of the King and children of the King don't live that way. Jesus is calling us to higher spiritual ground. He's calling us to live with different priorities and with a different perspective than what marks unbelievers. That's why I get so concerned when I hear Christians talking about politics as if it's the be-all and end-all of human existence, and so many times the conversation goes just like it would if I was talking to a random person on the street, or talking to somebody at a political rally, not speaking specifically of anyone in the context of this room, mind you, but just making the broader point that unbelievers can be preoccupied with those things and the question is, is there a different perspective that is engaging us and is concerning us and that we thrive on, that we live off of, that motivates our hearts and occupies our affections and our love and our desires and our priorities. Is it different or not? How can it not be different if we are in Christ, I ask you? How could it be that we're preoccupied with politics if we are in the kingdom of God? How can we be preoccupied with the kingdom of man if we are in the kingdom of God, I ask you? These are searching questions, aren't they? These things go to the heart of what we love and what we want out of life.

So a passage like this asks you, who are you when money is tight? When your health fails? When life upsets you? When the government is going a direction that you don't like? Who are you in times like that? Are you going to be a man, a woman, of little faith like the disciples in the boat and say, "But yeah, but I don't know what's going to happen and everything could collapse....." Slow down. I say it gently even though I say it with emphasis. Slow down. Come back to what you know to be true about your heavenly Father, about his care for his children, about the way that he runs the universe. Slow down. Come back to these things and let them reorient your perspective.

I remember my friends Mac and Nancy McCurdy from many years ago. They were volunteers at Grace to You. I was fairly new to the organization at that time but I was getting to know them, I'd been in their house multiple times before they passed away. And I remember they were getting bad news from the doctors, I don't remember the sequence, you know, now some 20 years later, but Mac was getting bad news about

cancer and Nancy was also and it was hitting them at the same time, and it was serious. And I remember talking to Mac in the volunteer room, big guy, 6'4", 6'5", you know, "Mac, what's on your mind? What are you thinking about these things?" And he just looked at me with a calm in his face and a calm in his voice that I've never forgotten and I never will forget, he said, "We're getting ready to walk through the forest." He knew that they were entering into a dark time physically speaking, but there was no fear in his life, there was no fear in his heart. His life was in jeopardy but his trust in Christ was fully intact. And a few months later, I was involved with their memorial services 24 days apart. One was gone on September 14 and the other one was gone on October 8. And so he fully understood what was happening to him but there was not an expression of anxiety or fear in his heart. He was grounded in Christ. He believed the promises of God. He knew that he was going to go to heaven when he died and it changed the way that he responded to a crisis that would have shattered others of lesser faith. He was a man of great faith, not a man of little faith. Do you know what? I don't claim to be like him, I don't claim to be so well-grounded in my own heart like that, but I want to be like a man like that. I want to be like him. When life threatens me, I want to respond like that. "Do you know what? We're getting ready to walk through the forest and it's okay."

The Lord is with me. I fear no evil. What do I have to be afraid of? I mean, doesn't all of Scripture prepare me for trials? Doesn't the presence of the Holy Spirit guarantee the presence of God with me as I walk through difficult times? You know, I want to be like that and I hope that you want to be like that. I want you to be like that. That's why we're teaching on these things. I want you to trust God in your trying times and to glorify him because this glorifies God when we trust God in the midst of adversity. And here's the thing, look, you know, with few exceptions in a room like this, we're all saying that we love Christ and we want to honor him. Well, if we want to honor him, then we want to consider important what Jesus considers is important, right? To have him as Lord is to adopt his priorities as our own. Well, to Jesus this is really important. That's why he teaches on it at such extended length, it's because he wants us to be like this. It glorifies him and it's a far better way to live life.

So if nothing else, if nothing else and this is a bare minimum thing, if nothing else we should all be able to agree on the fact that having a heart that is settled in anxiety is not something that is worthy of the Christian life. This is not worthy of our blessed heavenly Father. It's not worthy of our blessed Savior. It is not worthy of the blessed Holy Spirit who indwells us. None of that is worthy of him anymore than having doubts and suspicions toward a faithful parent or a faithful spouse. If your spouse is faithful to you and is kind to you and has always loved you and been there for you, then there's no reason to cast doubt upon their character by wondering what they're going to do next, right? Well, as I like to say, multiply it by infinity and apply it to your walk with the Lord and realize that the outcome could be no other way. He's entitled to your trust. He is worthy of your trust and you can live that way. You can. We do not have to accept living at that lower level of little faith. We can be big-hearted, big-faithed people in Christ because we have a glorious Savior who is with us and who is for us.

Well, we've looked at the unbeliever's worries, number 1, let's look, number 2, at the believer's wealth. The believer's wealth by which I mean believers have a spiritual wealth that they can always draw upon and we're going back to Matthew 6 beginning in verse 32 now, and in these remaining verses I'm going to show you three aspects of our wealth that are all related to our heavenly Father, okay? So three aspects of our spiritual wealth that is derived from our heavenly Father, and this is what enables us to be able to trust him in trying times. It's what enables us to overcome anxiety in Christ without the use of pharmaceuticals or other kinds of artificial ways of addressing things.

First of all, we see the Father's person. The Father's person. Beloved, you should always remember that this good God, this great God, is your heavenly Father. Look at verse 32. "The Gentiles eagerly seek all these things," all of these material matters. They eagerly seek them and Jesus says, "but your heavenly Father knows that you need all of these things." The God who reigns over all, the God who is sovereign is the God who watches over you. He is the God, if you are in Christ, he is the God who knows your situation perfectly down to, as we pointed out earlier, the numbers of hairs on your head. He knows what you need before you ask him. He protects you. He provides for you. He will care for you. And because the Father is like that in his very person, then therefore the conclusion that we draw from that is this: you and I should not live life in anxiety like an ordinary unbeliever does. That's not right. That's not the way that it should be. God is sovereign. God is good to us. God is our heavenly Father and that means he will take care of us regardless of the situation and therefore anxiety in light of his care for us is totally unjustified and it is indefensible. It is indefensible for us to live like an unbeliever. Your privilege as a believer in Christ, your responsibility as a believer in Christ, is to trust him always, to trust him implicitly and to trust him completely.

I mentioned this verse on Sunday, I believe, it might have been last week, it doesn't matter we're going to go there again, look at Matthew 7:7. Jesus builds a whole approach to prayer premised on the nature of our heavenly Father. He says in verse 7, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?" What earthly father is so sadistic like that and so uncaring that he would turn the trust of his child into an occasion to mock him? What father would do that? Jesus says in verse 11, he's not teaching us about earthly fathers here, he's teaching us about our heavenly Father, he says, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" If we're asking for good things, if we're asking for biblical things from God, is it not obvious that he'll give them to us? Did not Jesus earlier in Matthew 6, look over at this with me, when Jesus taught us to pray, among the things that he taught us in verse 11, "Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts. Do not lead us into temptation." Well, beloved, Jesus specifically instructs us to pray this way to our heavenly Father and if we are praying in obedience to the command of Christ about the things that God wants us to pray, isn't it obvious if prayer means anything, if God is sovereign at all, if he loves us at all, isn't it obvious that he's going to answer and provide for us in accordance with

the way that we pray? If we go asking him humbly, isn't it obvious that he's going to give what is good to us?

You know, for some of us, some of us the problem isn't the matter of God not providing or God not being good, sometimes the problem is we just don't take the time to stop and pray and humbly ask in dependence upon him. James speaks about this. Nathaniel took us through this passage not long ago. He said, "You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives so that you may spend it on your pleasures." You know, rather than doubting God, questioning God, casting aspersions on the character of God, maybe just maybe, maybe we should just look back and say, "Am I really walking in this kind of prayerful dependence upon God that Christ commanded me to do?" You know, there's nothing wrong with your pastor asking you that question. There's nothing wrong with us examining ourselves like that and saying, "You know, am I even asking God to give me what is good? Am I praying in humble dependence upon Him as He has called me to do?" Because the Father's person tells us that he's good, he responds well to us, he loves us, he delights in answering our prayers, we're commanded to pray, the person of our Father tells us that we have a spiritual wealth to draw upon because he loves us and cares for us.

Now secondly, going back to Matthew 6, we see an indication of the Father's priorities. The Father's priorities. There is a certain level of responsibility here. There is an ordering of life, there is an ordering of your affections that is involved in this and we have a responsibility in our heart to set our heart on the right things. Look at verse 33. Jesus says, he starts there in verse 33, "But." He's making a contrast. In contrast with the Gentiles who are preoccupied with material priorities, Jesus says, "But," by contrast, "don't be like them, be like this instead. Put off the earthly-minded, materially oriented things that mark the Gentiles and mark your life, your heart, your affections, mark them by this," he says in verse 33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." There is this sense of prayerful dependence that we've already looked at and there's also this sense of subordinating our desires and affections in life to the purposes of God. We subordinate our desires for things on earth to the priorities of the kingdom of God. Jesus says, "Seek these things first." He says, "Make the kingdom, make God's righteousness the guiding priority in life, the thing that you want more than anything else."

What does that mean? What is this kingdom? Well, whole books have been written on it and I'm going to describe it in two minutes so that gives you a sense of the brevity with which I'm treating this. Let's just look at it this way. When we talk about the kingdom of God, we're talking about the fact that we cherish the future more than the present, we care about being with Christ more than life on this earth, and we look forward to the time when our King will reign on the earth. That's far better than anything in the present. We are longing for things yet to come. We are longing to see Christ glorified on earth when he reigns from Jerusalem. We're looking forward to seeing Christ face-to-face.

Look over at 1 John 3:2 with me, and actually we'll read verse 1 to go along with this. "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of

God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." So the context here is everything that we've been saying this evening, John is speaking about the great love that the Father in heaven has upon us as his children, so much so that we rightly call ourselves his children. We belong to his family. Then he goes on to say in verse 2, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." He says now we are children of God but there is something better coming. We have the fullness of salvation now but we have not entered into the fullness of the experience of it. What we have in this earthly life in Christ is wonderful to walk with the Spirit, to walk through life with each other, to have God's word and all of these things is great to be a Christian, it is the highest, most noble thing that anyone could do on earth is simply to be a Christian, but even with that, there is so much more yet to come. In our existence now, we have not yet seen Christ face-to-face, we have not seen him visibly, and those who claim to have done so are deluded in their mind. Christ is in heaven. You don't see him on earth right now. But one day, one day we are going to see our Savior face-to-face. One day we are going to look on his physical features and we are going to see him face-to-face and Scripture tells us right here that when that happens, we will be transformed and we will be made like him, and somehow we are going to share in his glory and we are going to belong there and we are going to be perfected, we are going to be glorified by the sheer power of the presence of Christ, all of that far greater than anything we have here on earth right now, all of that still future.

Beloved, for the true Christian who is acquainted with Scripture at all, that's what our heart is longing for, longing to see the fulfillment of our salvation when we see our Lord Jesus Christ face-to-face and we see him as he is, and we see the Incarnate face of the glory of God. That's what we are to set our heart affections for. That's what we're eagerly seeking. That's what we're eagerly waiting for. That's the supreme desire of our heart. Nothing attending to this earth could ever begin to compare to that and so we seek that and we look forward to the coming of Christ, and we long for heaven, not the comforts of this earth. Beloved, Scripture tells us repeatedly that this world is not our home. Here we have no lasting city. We are seeking the city to come, Hebrews 13.

Look over at Philippians 3 with me, Philippians 3, the final two verses of that chapter where he says, "our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Do you see? We're waiting for something yet to come. There are things about our salvation, there are aspects of it that are yet to be fulfilled. There are experiences that are going to be glorious that are not yet our possession and that's what we're eagerly waiting for, that's what we're longing for, and when that is fulfilled, verse 21, he "will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." There is a transformation coming and we will exchange this jar of clay for a glorified body where we are fit to be in the presence of Christ forever and ever without end and that's what we long for, that's what we're waiting for, that's what we're seeking. And when it's set before us with such clarity in Scripture, you see how paltry anything on earth is in comparison to that.

So Christ saved you to long for and to love greater things than the things on this earth. Well, so we seek first his kingdom. Jesus says, "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness." What is this righteousness of which he speaks? Well, I believe that the context of the whole Sermon on the Mount answers that question, and without going through all of the passages that lead up to this and would explain this, in the Sermon on the Mount, you can read it on your own in about 15 minutes, what I mean is it would take 15 minutes to read it. Don't start reading it at 8:15, that's not what I mean. Jesus calls you to sincere worship, obedience to his word, trust in your heavenly Father. He calls you to reject hypocrisy, sinful anger and sinful lusts. He calls you to reject retaliation and to love your enemies instead and to love your enemies as well as your friends, and on and on it goes, to give and to pray and to fast in ways that only God sees and you're not doing it as a display to others, all of that being a manifestation of the righteousness that God has called you to live in response to his saving grace in your life. That's that righteousness.

So you're seeking this righteousness first when you're conscious of cultivating your inner man and developing holiness in your inner man as you repent of sin and cultivate the righteousness that God has called you to live by, and all of that, my friends, all of that, beloved, you can do that regardless of what your external circumstances are. All of it is independent of that. So these inner graces, these inner virtues of gratitude toward God, holiness before God, humility before God, those are the real priority in life. That's what really matters in the kingdom of God and that's why you seek it first. We could look at it another way. I'm not at all fatigued about trying to explain this in multiple multiple ways for you. Look at it another way. Jesus says, "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?" If you're seeking after worldly things, you've got the whole world and you died and went to hell, what good did it do you? And by the clarity of that forceful pronouncement, Jesus shows us what the real priority is, and the humblest believer in Christ, the most, from a human perspective, the most obscure believer in Christ is able to live in this way that glorifies Christ, seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness. It's a matter of who you are on the inside and what you love in your heart.

So to seek the kingdom is to pursue its priorities, to seek its righteousness is to pursue personal holiness. In other words, your first priority in life that deals and puts a dagger in the heart of anxiety, your first priority is simply to love the glory of God and to seek to glorify him, to ask yourself, "How can I please God here no matter what the future holds?" Well, we've seen the Father's person, the Father's priorities, now we see the Father's promise. The spiritual wealth that belongs to the believer: who our Father is, what his priorities are, and now we see this blessed promise, this undeserved gracious promise that he gives to us there at the end of verse 33, "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and," something goes along with that, "all these things will be added to you." Jesus promises us that when we seek his kingdom and his righteousness in the way that we've been talking about here this evening, God for his part promises that he'll provide all that we need. God honors that kind of life. He honors his children. He blesses them. He provides for them. He guards them. He keeps them. He protects them.

And you see there, there's just a little verb form thing here that I want to show you because I like this kind of stuff. He says, "all these things will be added to you," it's the

passive voice. It doesn't tell us who it is that's doing the adding by the structure of the sentence and the form of the verb itself, but this is what's known as a divine passive. It's God who adds these things. These things don't just happen randomly, God guarantees that the things that you need will be added to you as you seek his kingdom and his righteousness. Now that doesn't mean that you don't have to work for it. God provides for you as you fulfill your personal responsibilities. As we said last time, if a man doesn't work neither let him eat. The whole point here is that we trust God as we keep our daily responsibilities and as you do that, you can put anxiety to rest. Lesser matters of earth fade in the light of your wealth as a Christian.

So where does this contrast between an unbeliever's worry and a believer's trust, where does it leave you? Look at verse 34, the concluding verse of this great great chapter. Jesus for a final time in this section tells us not to worry. "So," in light of everything that has been said about Gentiles and Christians and trusting God and seeking, in light of all of those things, in light of the Father's person, the Father's priorities, the Father's promise, in light of all of that, "do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." And so in the simplest of terms we can put it like this: you trust God today because he has the present under control, you trust God for tomorrow because he also has tomorrow under control. God has given you sufficient grace for what you have today and his grace will be sufficient for you tomorrow. We trust him not only for what we have now, we trust him that just as he was gracious to us in the past, he's gracious to us now, he's going to be gracious to us in the future.

So at every conceivable level, beloved, your anxiety is fruitless and it is needless, and even if, even if the worst thing comes to pass of whatever troubles your heart, even if the worst thing comes to pass, your heavenly Father will still be with you, he will still be for you, he will still care for you even then. You occupy your mind not with what will I do if that happens, you occupy yourself with the certain reality that even if the worst thing happens to me, my all-sufficient God in his all-sufficient grace will be with me even then and I can be fearless, I can be strong, I can be courageous, not tormented by doubts and worries in my mind, but resting in the greatness and goodness of my sovereign God who made himself known to me in the face of my Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, your life may change but do you know what? Your life will change but your heavenly Father will not. He's the same yesterday, today and forever and if, you know, we all joyfully sang a little while ago, "Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come. Grace has led me safe thus far." Well, you believe that, good, I'm glad, you see that in your life. Well, then the other thing is what we rest in, "Grace will lead me home."

God's care is certain. His grace is sufficient for you for power is perfected in weakness. Beloved, this kind of trust is the birthright of every true Christian. It is the responsibility and duty of every true Christian and the beauty of it is that God has given us everything in Christ, everything in his word that is necessary to live just this way. Praise be to his name. And my friends, if any of you don't know Christ, I would just ask the Spirit of God to use the conviction of your own troubled heart and your own anxiety to help you see that maybe that's an indication that you're not in Christ at all so that it would motivate you to seek him and say, "I want to know You like this. Work in my life. Save my soul."

Do whatever is necessary to bring me to this kind of life and be gracious to me so that I might enter into this life of trust both now and throughout all of eternity."

Let's pray together.

O heavenly Father, hallowed be Your name. Thank You for Your grace which has led us safe this far and, Father, thank You for the grace that will lead us home. We do trust You, O God, and here in this moment we put our anxiety to rest. Oh, we know that we're going to need Your help to live that way day-by-day but in response to Your word here tonight, Father, we acknowledge that You are worthy of our trust and we trust You unconditionally for You to be good to us because You always give what is good to those who ask You. So be with us, bless us and keep us in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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