

the kingdom of God and His righteousness is all about realizing your own desperate need of God as sinners by nature, and truly and steadfastly looking to God in Christ and leaning on Him and loving Him, and living with Him as your only Saviour and Lord.

Is this your focus, dear friend? What Jesus says here is another call of the gospel message to us all. Without God and apart from Christ as your refuge and strength and your first and foremost focus, life is futile and without hope for sure, for only with Christ the Saviour is there forgiveness of sin and everlasting righteousness before God for us and true blessing from God for now and forever. What reasons to listen to and follow and live by this word from Jesus, for notice also the rich promise Jesus gives in this verse. What does Jesus promise?

Jesus says, “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” “All these things shall be added to you! That means, Jesus teaches us here, that putting first things first, putting God first, the rest will be taken care of. When you fret not in life, but rather are focused on Jesus as Saviour and Lord above all in your life, than you also become a flourishing person. God is faithful and He blesses His people not necessarily with all kinds of material and physical blessings and a trial free life, no, but He blesses those who trust and follow Him with an inner peace and joy and a holy perspective and purposefulness. How does Paul put it in Philippians 4:6&7? “*Be careful [or anxious] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” This is God’s promise in and through Christ Jesus. None who look to Him shall be put to shame. No, for as we read also in Psalm 84:11&12, “*For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee!*”

“*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things [all the other things of daily life] shall be added unto you.*” This one verse from the Sermon on the Mount, as well as the whole sermon, is worth listening to, yes, over and over again. Matthew 6:33. If you are wise, it will be the motto for your life, for it tells the worry-free, gospel way! Amen.

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

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Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



THE MOTTO FOR A WORRY- FREE LIFE

In this gospel message we focus on Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:33 where He says, “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” This verse is part of Jesus’ so called Sermon on the Mount. He had been talking about all the matters of daily life, like food and drink and clothing, and how we can worry so much about these physical and material matters and concerns of each day. Yet here in Matthew 6:33, Jesus shows a more excellent way to live, indeed, the only right and blessed way to live. Jesus says, “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

The verse begins with the word “but” which serves here as a conjunction of contrast. Jesus is stating in this verse, ‘Don’t live this anxious way and only about lesser things in life, but live this Gospel-trusting way and about what counts above all in life!’ Jesus is bringing out not to live in a negative sort of way, but to live positively as He says, ‘*seek ye first the kingdom of God and it’s righteousness...*’ To understand verse 33 better, we need to think a little more about what way Jesus is warning us not to go and calling you and me not to walk in. In verses 25-34 there is one word that appears at least five times which Jesus is especially speaking against. It is the word, “*taking thought*” or you could also translate “worry”. To “*take thought*” or to “worry” means to be anxious about this or that, to fret and be burdened overmuch and for no good; to be concerned about this and that in a restless and ongoing sort of way. It means to be apprehensive, all tied in knots about how this will go and that, and whether you will get through this matter or that, you name it, people can worry about it. Jesus speaks about not worrying about food and drink, or about the clothes you wear, and just about the daily needs of life. He speaks about not worrying about tomorrow.

Dear friend, are you one who is constantly anxious and worrying about this and that in life? Is your mind filled with a multitude of anxious thought about matters of daily life at work, at home, in your personal life and family life? How many things we can be concerned about each and every day, isn’t it true? When Jesus urges not to be taking thought or be worrying about this and that, He is surely not saying we should not think ahead and plan for this and that, but He says not to be fretting and anxious in your life’s course and responsibilities and cares. The cares of daily life for food,

clothing, job responsibilities, financial stresses and bills, health concerns, family problems, these and more can all easily overwhelm anyone at anytime if you fill your mind with worrying about these matters. Besides all that, if you think of the world we live in and the threats and dangers every day in so many ways, there could be endless reasons for worrying about so much all the time.

Jesus says, however, 'Do not be fretting about like this, do not worry so about this and that in terms of this life and all its needs, but be focused and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you'. Jesus makes clear in the context, especially in verses 25-34, that He is the God of creation Who takes care of His creatures and especially of people, and more particularly even of His people, those who trust and follow Him. He makes clear He is the God of providence, and yes, He is the God of mercy and salvation to us and for us in and through the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. So don't worry, but be focused on Him, looking to Him and calling upon Him in all your needs, and you will not be put to shame.

In the context of verses 33, Jesus brings out three truths about worrying that are important to know and good always to remember. First, what does it help to worry and be anxious about things? It doesn't help you any, but only harms you, and it can hinder others too. It is true what someone said, "Worry is like a rocking chair; it will give you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere." Actually though, that isn't the best saying, because sitting in a rocking chair gives the picture of relaxing. Worry doesn't relax a person but only drains a person, while accomplishing nothing. It is more correct what another said about worry [Corrie ten Boom, if you know her story], "Worry does not empty tomorrow of sorrows; it empties today of strength." So don't worry for it does no positive good.

A second truth about worrying and fretting is that not only is it so unhelpful but it is so unnecessary. If God Triune didn't exist, then you and I would have reason, yes endless reasons even, to worry and be anxious. But God does exist, and is He not the almighty Creator God and God of providence and God of salvation in and through Christ Jesus? Is He not the God Who is the Good Shepherd of His sheep and Who cares for us with a tender and faithful care, indeed, for body and soul, in life and death and for now and forever? Isn't this Jesus' point in this passage in Matthew 6, spoken especially to His disciples? Don't be worrying and anxious and go through life that way, for it is unhelpful to you, and unnecessary, and thirdly, so unbelieving. Listen to what Jesus says in verse 30ff. "*Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*" "O ye, of little faith" says Jesus. You see here He joins worry to not trusting enough in the Lord! "*Therefore take no thought, [do not worry, and be filled with anxious*

thoughts] *saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed (For after all these things the Gentiles [those who don't know God nor walk in His ways] seek:) For your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

Think of it this way, as one put it. "A [young] child does not worry all day long whether his house will be there when he gets home from school or whether his parents will have a meal for him that evening. Children [generally] do not worry about such things, because they trust their parents." Well, shall we not trust in God as He is revealed in Christ Jesus, as One most gracious, and all wise, and all powerful and good and kind, one Who promises also to supply our needs according to what is best for us? Jesus doesn't say, "do not worry" without good reasons and gospel reasons, but He says, 'Do not be anxious and worrying with life's cares because of Who God is in Christ Jesus, a most bountiful, gracious, caring, supplying God even for the most undeserving sinners who repents of sin and trusts and follows Him'.

'Don't be fretting', says Jesus, but be focused, in faith following after Him and trusting Him in all your cares and needs, believing that for Jesus' sake, God will remember you in all your needs. Jesus Christ, God's own dear Son, was forsaken in His needs when He hung on the cross as Sinbearer, that whoever calls upon Him in any and all their needs, especially with our greatest need with our sin and guilt, will never be left unheard or left without help or care from God. This is the gospel and focusing on that gospel, Jesus teaches, you need not live in ongoing anxious care and worry. The Lord calls us not to be fretting people, but to be a focused people.

And what is it to be focused? "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*", Jesus says. To seek God's kingdom here means to seek after God's rule and authority and will and glory in all your life, and in all that you are about. Jesus says to put God first in your life always and again. Don't be living for this world or for yourselves primarily, but for God and His praise above all. Don't be living in self-righteousness or pursuing after a righteousness with God of your own making. No, for our best works, as sinners by nature, are all as filthy rags in God's holy sight. Thank God the way of God's kingdom is the way of grace. This means, seeking God's kingdom and Christ's righteousness means looking always and again to the salvation of the Lord, and to the righteousness of Christ the Saviour that He Himself obtained on behalf of sinners through His perfect life and His sacrificial death and His almighty resurrection from the dead. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness means to live daily with that focus of looking to Christ, and being in Christ, and following after Him, and abiding in Him in accordance with all His holy inspired Word. Seeking first