

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, 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, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"

28 So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?"

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Ok, Christ has given us a command not to worry. Then he followed it up with four reasons that we can chew on when necessary.

Our lives are important to God.

The birds are provided food.

Worry is impotent to accomplish the smallest task.

The flowers are provided clothing.

And then he ended that section by saying, "Oh you of little faith".

We concluded that unbelief is the core source behind worry. We do not like to reduce it that far. But Jesus does not hesitate to do so.

I like what Mr Jones has to say. It was about something a man had once told him:

He said, "The trouble with many of us Christians is that we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but that we do not believe Him." He meant that we believe on Him for the salvation of our souls, but we do not believe Him when He says a thing like this to us, that God is going to look after our

food and drink, and even our clothing. He makes such statements as ‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’, and yet we keep our problems and worries to ourselves, and we are borne down by them and defeated by them, and get anxious about things. He has told us to come to Him when we are like that; He has told us that if we are thirsting in any respect we can go to Him, and He has assured us that whosoever comes to Him will never thirst, and that he that eats of the bread that He shall give shall never hunger. He has promised to give us ‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life’ so that we shall never thirst. But, we do not believe Him. Take all these statements He made when He was here on earth, the words He addressed to the people around Him; they are all meant for us. They are meant for us today as definitely as when He first uttered them, and so also are all the astounding statements in the Epistles. The trouble is that we do not believe Him. That is the ultimate trouble. ‘Little faith’ does not really take the Scripture as it is and believe it and live by it and apply it.¹

It is easy to look at texts like this one on worry and feel a sense of **dread**. Jesus is here telling us to **stop doing something** that is very hard for us to **stop doing**. So we can approach this with the feeling that this is just another **invitation to fail**. “If I could stop worrying, I already would have”, we might think.

Is that not how we often approach the scripture when it addresses the sins we are **most likely** to fall into?

But I would like us to look at the other side of that fence. You and I **must face trials**. Jesus said so. We must face **persecution**. Jesus said so. There are many painful things that happen to us because we live in a sin laden planet. We cannot escape many of those things we do not like.

But do you know one anguish we **do not need** to experience?

Worry.

While some might actually try to make you feel foolish or shallow or inconsiderate if they do not join you in their worry, it is really none of the above. **Refusing** to worry is a **stellar virtue** in a believer because it shows off the trustworthiness of our God to everyone looking.

We do not **need** to worry. There is nothing in our lives that **warrants** worry in the sense that Jesus uses it here.

¹ Lloyd-Jones, D. M. (1976). [*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*](#) (Second edition, pp. 444–445). Inter-Varsity Press.

1 Cor 7:32-34 uses a **similar** word when it describes a married person has increased concerns because that person is married. There is more to think about, to plan for, to take care of. But that is not the **same** word used in what Jesus is saying. The additional burden of being married is a burden, but it is not a sinful one. It is just **costly** and that cost needs to be considered.

But the worry **Jesus** is talking about has **nothing good about it**. A person who does it is not acting wisely.

Again, think about this. Here is **one pain** in this life we simply **do not need to partake of**. It is never necessary or godly to do it. We can live completely free of it.

Do you remember when Moses was challenging the Pharaoh with the plagues. They were dealing with the frogs. And life was miserable for the Egyptians.

Exodus 8:8-10 (NKJV)

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD."

So Pharaoh is forced to ask Moses for help in relieving them of this awful state.

9 And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *that they may remain in the river only.*"

So Moses says, you pick a time. Any time is good. When do you want it?

10 So Pharaoh said, "Tomorrow."

Doesn't that sound like the dumbest response you ever heard. You can get rid of your pain **today** or **tomorrow**. Which would you rather? Would any intelligent human being say "**tomorrow**"?

Well, we **do**, every time we worry. We do not **need** to worry. We have **fuel** for our battle **against** worry. Worry accomplishes nothing. Worry harms us in lots of ways. But we so easily give into this temptation and invite pain that we could just as easily avoid.

So we act just as dumb as Pharaoh. I could be rid of this today. But I think I will wait for a future date to stop worrying.

Again I just want to emphasize. **We do not have to worry**. It is not a spiritual requirement. It is not a sign of love. There is no merit in it. And we can stop. That is the life Jesus is inviting us into. In fact, He is commanding us into it.

Now let's move on in our text.

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

So here is the second commandment to **stop worrying**. And I read that is the verb tense used at least some times in this passage. When it says “Do not worry” the verb tense is really “Stop doing what you are doing.” Jesus knows us. He knows what we are like.

Now look again at the examples of things we should not worry about. Don’t worry about the things **necessary** for **your survival** on planet Earth.

Does that not look just a little unrealistic? This is **important stuff** Jesus. I will die if I do not have it. My family will die if I do not provide it. Are you really sure you want these things on the “do not worry” list?

I think the point is, if you can stop worrying about the most crucial things in life, you can stop worrying about everything. If we can **pass the test** on food, clothing and shelter, we can likely stop worrying about anything. If we can trust God completely to keep us alive, the things we **really need**, we can more easily trust Him to provide **what we prefer**.

Note how most worry is **future** based. It is based on questions like what am I going to do when this thing happens? How will I respond to that? How will I get what I need?

And it is all based on the idea that God **may not come through for us**, at least not the way that we want Him to. He might just not give me what I need to survive. So I better have an alternative plan. I better figure out something to overcome God’s deficiencies.

We would never say that. But that is logically what we must think in order to fuel our worry.

Now what does Jesus tell us **this time** to fuel our worry stopper?

³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Just like Mr Jones told us earlier, do we believe **on the Lord**, or do we **believe the Lord**? These are the kinds of places we get to apply a test.

How are we different than the gentiles? Really?

The problem with the gentiles, as used here, is that they have nothing better to seek for and no one better to depend upon than themselves.

MacArthur says this-

When we think like the world and crave like the world, we will worry like the world, because a mind that is not centered on God is a mind that has cause to worry.

Think about this. If you saw your life as consisting of maybe 80 years on earth and then nothing, with no God, no eternity, how would you live? What would you think about? What would you look to to provide you pleasure or security? How would you live? What would you live for?

It is very likely that you will live for stuff and live in the pursuit of the world's stuff in one form or fashion.

What else could you do?

And really, who could you trust to take care of you? Who **is there** who has shown the **willingness** and the **capability** to provide your needs, no matter what happens? Who **is there** powerful enough to overcome all the bad things that can happen in a person's life?

Those outside of God do not have a God that is dependable. Everything rests on that person's shoulders. And that is a very heavy weight to carry.

When we live like they live, we dishonor our God. We essentially communicate to them that the **God** that we **DO have** is no better than the **God** they **DO NOT have**. Both cannot be depended upon.

And think about it. If you have a dear friend, and they have the goods that you need, would you not expect that your friend would **give them to you**?

Jesus says- **For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

Isn't that all we need to know. We preach doctrine that says that **Jesus loves us**. We preach doctrine that says that **God is all powerful**. Is there anything else we really need to know other than **God knows our plight. God knows our needs**. God makes it **His business** to know **our business**. He is aware. Is that not the most important thing we need to know to have our mind set at ease?

Sometimes there are disasters at work. They are things that are above my paygrade. But they are things my boss **IS** responsible for. There are often times when I go on a **frantic search** for my boss. I try to communicate things to her all different kinds of ways. And when she responds, I am instantly relieved because I know that my dilemma is over. Hers may not be. But mine is. Because the one who **is responsible** for this thing, the one who **cares most** about this thing, the one who **has the resources to resolve** this thing is now **aware** of this thing. My burden is relieved by the knowledge that she knows.

Such a thing should be true of us and God as well. Jesus is drawing our attention to the fact that the **FATHER KNOWS**. The **most important part of having our needs met** is **already** taken care of. **God knows**. Like the post that Brad frequently puts up on Facebook. God knows. We do not have to

stress out getting it to His attention. We are to tell Him about it in prayer. But not because He needs the information. He knows.

And it is very clear here that the implication is, **if God knows, God cares**. And if **God cares, God will act**. And if **God will act, we are good to go**.

And note too that God knows we **NEED** them. **NEED** is a carefully used word in scripture. There are many things that scripture does NOT say that we need. But these things in our text are things God recognizes as being **needs**. And does He not promise to **supply our needs**? Now there are rare occasions when something is needed in God's kingdom more than our continual survival. And that is in God's hands. That is way above our pay grade. So we cannot think we always know what God will do. I will go into this further in a couple of weeks. But most of the time it is **God's will** that the temporal needs of God's children **are met**. That is the **kind of God** He is.

Now we continue.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

The meaning here is clear. Rather than seek one thing we are to seek another. Rather than **worldly things** having first place, we are to have **heavenly things** take first place.

John MacArthur points out that **"The cause of worry is seeking the things of this world, and the cause of contentment is seeking the things of God's kingdom and His righteousness."**

MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 1-7.

I like how Matthew Henry emphasizes the use of the word, FIRST.

Seek first the kingdom of God. Let your care for your souls and another world take the place of all other cares: and let all the concerns of this life be made subordinate to those of the life to come: we must seek the things of Christ more than our own things; and if ever they come in competition, we must remember to which we are to give the preference. "Seek these things first; first in thy days: let the morning of thy youth be dedicated to God. Wisdom must be sought early; it is good beginning betimes to be religious. Seek the first every day; let waking thoughts be of God." Let this be our principle, to do that first which is most needful, and let him that is the First, have the first.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible.

The Greek word for First is in time, place, order or importance. I think in our text it would fit every definition. We could say First things First. That is what Jesus is commanding.

John MacArthur says

Seek first His rule, His will and His authority.

Seeking God's kingdom is losing ourselves in obedience to the Lord to the extent that we can say with Paul, "I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God" ([Acts 20:24](#)). To seek first God's kingdom is to pour out our lives in the eternal work of our heavenly Father.

MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Matthew 1-7.

Sometimes I wish this were harder to understand. Then I would have better excuse for my **daily failures** to actually do this as I should.

This is not complicated. Jesus already told us that we should be praying for this very thing.

Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Will be done.

That is what Jesus is saying again. But He is applying it in our real **day to day mental dilemma** of **needing stuff**. Sure, it is easy to pray Thy Kingdom Come. But it is hard to sacrifice those **things we desire as creatures** for **those things that last forever**. Jesus is showing us what really happens when we **mean** these prayers. This is what happens when we want what God wants more than we want what flesh wants.

So what does this mean?

³³ But seek first the 1 kingdom of God and 2 His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

What does it mean to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?

Matthew Henry says

we must mind heaven as our end, and holiness as our way.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible.

Seeking first **God's kingdom** is to live in such a way as to **further** that Kingdom. We have **Kingdom goals**. We have **Kingdom perspectives**. We see our lives as passing through this realm with citizenship in a **different Kingdom**. It is the framework through which we see life.

Seeking first **God's Righteousness** is to live in such a way that we **fit into that Kingdom**. We have **kingdom attributes**. We begin to look like someone who belongs to a different Kingdom.

People should be able to read the sermon on the mount and watch our lives and they can say, oh, so **that** is what Jesus meant by storing up treasures in heaven? Oh so **that** is what Jesus meant about seeking the Kingdom of God. Oh so **that** is what Jesus meant when He said not to worry but to trust God. This person does those things.

So that is what a **good eye** looks like. This person finds a way to see everything from God's perspective.

We cannot get the idea that Jesus is something **you add** onto your life. You know, you find a spouse, you find a career, and then you want to add something to give you stability, purpose, things like that, so you add Jesus. I think that is the danger of some seeker friendly churches.

No **Jesus** demands **priority**. He will not be added onto the end of the line. He goes to **the front**. We are to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

We are too treat family as if we hate them **in comparison** to how much we are committed to Jesus. Our love for Christ should be so supreme.

And when we do place Christ **first**, then things start falling into place. Worry becomes less and less an issue. Because the kingdom we are concerned most about is not ours any longer. We are pieces to be moved on the chessboard by God. We can fully trust in our Lord.

Remember we mentioned earlier that the Gentile does not have a Lord they can depend upon. They must **take care of themselves**. They do not have another choice.

But look at what **we have** as we are pouring ourselves out on that which our Master cares about. Might he use us as **commodities**, ride us hard and put us away wet because all He cares is that **we get work done**? Might He take advantage of us and treat us like slaves?

No. He is nothing like that.

and all these things shall be added to you.

Remember Jesus has already taken note that we have need of those things.

When we know that, we can rest. Because our God is a **good God**.

So while we are absorbed with **eternal things**, while we are absorbed in **doing service in the Kingdom of God**, while we are focused at **pouring our lives into being righteous**, doing those things that **please God**.

While we pour ourselves into the **things of God**, nothing is being missed. God is making sure we will be able to keep eating and drinking and remain protected from the weather.

Christ is **in charge** of all that. It will not go **undone**. We will not be **neglected**. That is not the kind of master we have. We do not have a Master who will **neglect us** and **abuse us** and **forget about us**.

No we will get all of the stuff **the world worries about** without any of the **worry**.

What in your life can you **not** trust Christ with? What is it that you feel you must control, that it is not safe if **only Christ** is watching it and controlling it? Why does that happen to us?

Jesus is dealing with those very things in this whole text on the **world's stuff**. Ultimately it comes down to what we believe in our heart of hearts about **God's character**. Worry does not **overpower** us. Scripture is clear about that. We are choosing...always choosing. And we are choosing what is first in our lives. Those are the things that **get done**. They are not the things we **intend** to do. They are the things that **we do do**.

Do you think that God will take care of you if you surrender your life to Him? Will he provide you the right food clothing and shelter He has in mind for you? Will He provide you with the right relationships? Will he provide the right resources you need to make it? Will He provide everything at the right time? Can you trust Him to come through for you?

That is the battle ground in our mind every day. If we **believe**, we will **trust**. If we **believe**, we can live free from worry. If we **believe** we will find ourselves actually doing what Christ said, prioritizing properly, scheduling properly, deciding properly.

Christ is calling us to walk faithfully in His presence. And this morning He addressed our deep seated desire to try to **take care of ourselves**. And He has shown us how we can be **set free** of that by **believing on Him** and **believing Him**.

May we faithfully seek the kingdom this week and win every battle over worry.