



### **Contrasting Doubt and Faith**

Matthew 6:31-34

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We are on our last section on Jesus' teaching on anxiety in Matthew chapter 6, and I would encourage you to turn there. The wonderful thing about the Sermon on the Mount – as we get ready to move into chapter 7; the end is kind of in sight as we turn the corner – but there is no way that you could truly study and truly understand the Sermon on the Mount at any level whatsoever than to immediately conclude that it comes from the divine mind of God.

Never has there been a sermon delivered where so much soul-searching, profoundly moving teaching has anything ever fallen like this from the lips of any ordinary man. Only the mind of God can search the heart like this. And in the Sermon on the Mount you see tangible proof of the fact that Jesus is not only Lord over creation, but He is the Lord over the innermost spiritual life of man as well, particularly of His disciples.

Even in this teaching on anxiety, if we look at the section in verses 19-34 – if that was all that you ever looked at in the Sermon on the Mount – your life priorities would be profoundly sifted. Your thinking would be probed; your deepest affections would be searched out and examined, shown where they are wrong and guided toward where they should be right. Jesus has examined our fundamental beliefs about the love and wisdom and goodness and power of our God and Father.

When DC stands up here and sings, "His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me" – words that come from the text of this Sermon on the Mount – you have to ask yourself whether you really have that kind of fundamental trust in your heavenly Father as well. Jesus doesn't leave it open for you to say, "Well, that's a nice idea, but I'm going to stay over here." Jesus says this is what the Christian life is supposed to look like. That kind of fundamental trust, that utter serenity in the face of all of life's issues, is not only the privilege of the Christian, it is his duty; it is his opportunity.

And so, if you come in here with your heart tied up in knots over whatever issue it is, come to this Sermon on the Mount, come to this section of Jesus' teaching and hear what Jesus says and respond to it because Jesus calls you to look at all of the character of God the Father that is revealed in the scripture. He tells you to look out at nature around you, look at birds and look at flowers, and in them see the activity of God in caring for the smallest of creatures. And if truly His eye is on the sparrow and you belong to Him by faith in Jesus Christ, how much more is He going to watch over you – the conclusion is inescapable. And the conclusion should drive you not only to an intellectual, head knowledge, but to a heart embracing and a heart resting in the fact that God will certainly take care of you if you know the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not just an academic, theoretical thing – it is the kind of true trust that would move a writer to say, “His eye is on the sparrow, and I *know* He watches me.”

You say, “Well, you don't know just how bad life is.” Listen, this is independent of the worst life circumstances. And that is not to diminish the depth of your difficulties that you bring in with you this morning; it is to show the surpassing greatness of the love and care and sovereignty of God – that He is over all of that and somehow, one way or another in the infinite wisdom of the divine mind that spoke the world into existence, He will work out those issues for your good and to His glory.

If that's true and you say that you believe that, then coming with that affirmation of that belief is the recognition that your anxiety is banished. You cannot simultaneously say, “I believe all of that, preacher... and man, am I worried about tomorrow.” No, those two things are fundamentally incompatible – it is light and darkness; you can't have both in the same room. What a blessed God we serve!

Now, let's get into the text here. Matthew 6:30 is where we will start out. It kind of overlaps a little bit with what we said last week. Jesus says:

*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!*

*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; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Now just as a preliminary observation, understand that Jesus here when He is speaking, He is not suggesting – He is not just kind of standing on the sidelines and urging you in a particular direction. He is *commanding* you: do not worry. He is commanding you: don't worry about tomorrow. He is commanding you: don't be anxious.

The challenge of this teaching is that this is an imperative – this is what your life is supposed to look like. Even more, this is what the inner man that only God sees is supposed to look like; this is what tranquility of soul is supposed to be; this is your responsibility as a believer in Christ. You can't say, "I believe in Jesus as Lord and I follow Him," and cherish anxiety in your heart or allow it to fester. When Jesus lays a command like this on your soul and lays responsibility like this on your soul, you have to respond, as we have been saying over the past two weeks, and Jesus gives you the tools to do that.

When you understand Jesus' teaching here and you come to grips with it, you no longer have an excuse for your anxiety. Stated in a positive way, the keys to your prison have been given to you and you can walk out and go free. Christians don't have to live in that kind of bondage.

And when you see the totality of what Jesus teaches in this passage, understand this – and I really want to emphasize this, particularly in the superficial environment that tends to mark Christianity in America today, with all of the Jesus trinkets and the cheap little books that you can go into a store and get and spend \$10 on stuff that is not worth the paper that it is written on – what Jesus gives you here is far more than a thought for the day that will wear off by tomorrow. What Jesus is laying down in this passage is the fundamental pillars of living the Christian life. He is giving you the essentials to live your entire life from a position of trusting strength.

This is not designed to help you through today; this is designed – by the mind of God and by the plan of Jesus – this is designed to develop – get this – in you, in your heart, settled fundamental convictions about the character of God and the nature of life so that anxiety is permanently banished. When Jesus says in verse 31, "Do not worry then," He is using a form that says don't even *start* to worry; don't even go there. And the only way that He could make such a pervasive commandment upon your soul is if what the things that He is telling you here deal with every anxiety in life.

The goal of our instruction here this morning, the goal of what Jesus teaches, is more than helping you to feel better until noon today. What I want for you and what God is calling you to as you study the Sermon on the Mount is a settled faith that frames your entire disposition to all of life and sustains you even when the most severe trials hit. This is to be settled. This is not something that you study and then you have to fight a different battle tomorrow; this is to settle the whole thing for all of life. And so beloved, it is urgent for you to pay attention to Jesus here.

The challenge and the depth of the challenge that Jesus lays out before us here can best be seen when you see how He uses the term that we see at the end of verse 30. Look at it with me, where He says, "You of little faith." He connects, He links, anxiety to a status of soul that He calls "little faith." And in this context of worrying about eating and drinking and clothing, you might think that He was simply limiting it to the easier issues of life. In our Western society as we have prosperity, we don't worry too much about those, but we have bigger issues we think that we worry about.

If you only saw Jesus rebuking fear and anxiety in the context of such basic daily needs in our prosperous society, you might think to yourself, “Okay, that’s fine for that little stuff. But preacher, what you don’t understand is, I have major trials in my life – this is about more than food and clothing. The precious things in my life are at stake in what’s going on in my life right now. I don’t know what’s going to happen. You don’t understand how much my loved ones are at stake. You don’t understand, preacher, that it’s my unsaved loved one that’s on the brink of death and I don’t know if he is going to come to Christ or not. You don’t understand that the doctor has said it’s terminal and I don’t know what’s going to happen and I’m worried – frankly, I’m scared!”

If that’s you, you need to see how deep Jesus’ commandment about little faith and trust in God goes. Turn over just a couple of pages to Matthew chapter 8, beginning in verse 23. You remember the story, which makes it easy to point you to it. But in Matthew 8:23, Jesus gets into a boat and His disciples follow Him – verse 24:

*And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves – it makes me seasick just to read that; the waves are crashing over this boat – but Jesus Himself was asleep.*

There’s a certain amount of divine silence in the midst of a really serious storm. And so His disciples in verse 25 come to Him, and they wake Him up and they say, “Save us, Lord, we are perishing!” And look at verse 26. Think about this situation: this boat is about to capsize, they are sick, their life is in utter danger – if ever there was a time for someone to be upset, this was the moment, because who knew what the next second was going to hold – and so they wake Him up and say, “Save us, Lord, we are perishing!” And look at what Jesus says to them in verse 26:

*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.*

In a moment of utter life crisis, Jesus looks at His disciples and before He calms the sea, He says, “Why are you afraid? This is an unjustified state of soul for you, you men of little faith.”

Look at chapter 14:28 – another familiar story. Peter is going to do something miraculous: he is going to walk on water. We will pick up the story in Matthew 14:28:

*Peter said to Him, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” And Jesus 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!”*

Again, another moment of utter life crisis. If you have ever been a poor swimmer and you started to go down under water, you know the sense of panic that comes over you – it happened to me a couple of times. And you say, “This is it! Life is about to go away!” And you are gripped by panic. And even in that moment – verse 31:

*Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”*

If I’m Peter, I’m thinking, “Lord, come on, I was standing on water here – that doesn’t happen – and I’m going down, and so of course I’m going to cry out!” And yet, even in that moment of life crisis, Jesus expected more of Peter’s faith than what Peter delivered – this is astonishing teaching.

What I want you to see is, in the midst of daily cares of life as we see in Matthew 6 or in the times of greatest stress where the next moment could bring utter disaster, Jesus rebukes anxiety and fear as stemming from little faith.

Wow. We have to come to grips with that, beloved. That means that no matter what your life trial is, if you are here as a believer in Christ, your anxiety, that nervous controlling concern over your circumstances, is not permissible. It is not allowed; it is not necessary. It is not allowed because it is not necessary.

Jesus says in this passage that a true knowledge of your heavenly Father frees you from anxiety even in times of greatest distress, even when the provision for life is at stake, even when your future is at stake, even when wicked men are opposed against you, even when those that you love the most are at stake and at risk or are in jeopardy, even when it is matters of life and death – you have to transcend little faith.

So at whatever level you are dealing with anxiety, whether it is a momentary crisis like a bumpy plane ride, or the relentless pressure of a difficult life, Jesus’ teaching here can move you and is intended to move you from that state of anxiety to a state of settled trust, and it is utterly transforming.

What I want from you as we move into this passage, what I want from every one of you that is in this room, I want from you a settled commitment as we start out here that says, “Yes, I want to transcend my anxious life; I want to transcend my anxieties.” You have to realize that that anxiety is a bad thing to be put to death. It is not something that troubles you, but it is a foe for you to attack and to vanquish – that’s the point. This isn’t the spiritual pick-me-up; it is not a spiritual vitamin for today – this is the conquering Jesus Christ, the conquering Son of God, coming to conquer your soul and to conquer it in terms of total peace, total trust. Do you want that?

This is where reality supposed to be lived out. This can take you from the basement into the upper room of spiritual life. This can take you from that miserable condition of being a frustrated Christian into a place where you shine like a light on a hill – I want that for each one of you here today. The way Jesus lays it out for us is – I am going to show you

the simple but profound contrast between the way unbelievers and a believer approaches life to help you develop composure as you live for Christ day by day. We are going to contrast unbelievers with believers – the thinking of unbelievers versus the thinking of believers – to help you see where your mind is supposed to go.

## 1. The Worries of the Unbeliever

Look at Matthew 6:31 with me again. Jesus says:

*Do not worry then, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear for clothing?” – key point here in verse 32 – For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

If you collapse the sentence a little bit and just pick out the main parts of it, Jesus is saying, “Don’t worry, because the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things.” Remember in the Sermon on the Mount, He is speaking to His disciples. He is speaking to people who have truly been born again and now He is showing them, He is teaching them and commanding them, about what the life of repentance looks like. He is showing you what your life can be and He is commanding you to be this way all at the same time, and He says, “Do not worry, then.”

And the word “then” is what I want to focus your attention on. What He is doing here is He is connecting what He is about to say with what had gone before in the prior six verses, verses 25-30. The flow of thought is this: He says, in light of God’s providential care over creation which is shown in His care over your body, His care over the birds of the air, His care over the blossoms of the field – in light of all that God does and all of those myriad of ways with lesser things, Jesus is now going to reinforce that command against anxiety with further reasons that you are to grasp and apply to your heart: Because these things are true about God and the way He relates to creation, then you cannot worry, you cannot be anxious. and that’s the flow of the thought here as we’re developing it a little bit further.

So what He is saying is, don’t ever start being anxious in light of the way God is. Don’t cultivate untrusting questions about the future in your heart, because Gentiles live that way. When He says “Gentiles,” He is referring to people who are unbelievers, people who do not know God. Keep your finger in Matthew 6 and turn to Ephesians chapter 4. I want to show you a little bit about the way the Bible views Gentiles and view unbelievers. Ephesians 4:17 – the apostle Paul says in a parallel thought to what Jesus is saying in Matthew 6:32 – he says:

*So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.*

Paul says: don't walk like the Gentiles – they are excluded from the life of God, they are darkened in their understanding, they are ignorant, they are hard of heart – that's the idea of what it means to be a Gentile in the scriptural language in terms of their spiritual state. It is more than not being a Jew in this context; it is the fact that they are unbelievers, separated from the life of God – that's the idea.

Now, follow this very carefully: Jesus is speaking to His disciples and He comes and He says to you if you are a Christian, He says, "Listen, child of God, you have to live life and your inner man has to transcend that of what unbelievers are like who do not know God" – that's the thought there.

If you have been born again by the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God dwells within you, and you know that Christ has taken away your sins on the cross, and you know that in front of you lies nothing but eternal glory and the blessing of seeing Christ face to face – if that is true and you affirm that in your heart, then it has direct implications about how you live out your daily life today and how you deal with the uncertainties of what the future may bring. If you truly know the sovereign God and you truly belong to Him, then what Jesus is saying is, you can't live in an anxious, fretful state like Gentiles do. You are someone different – you are qualitatively by nature someone different, and that nature should yield itself into a different kind of spiritual life for you.

It is not the first time in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus has reasoned on this level. Turn back to Matthew 5 for just a moment. Matthew 5:46 – Jesus again calls you beyond the life of the Gentile, the life of an unbeliever. In verse 46 He says:

*If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*

And so Jesus is saying, as a Christian, you have to live a distinct life. Unbelievers can love those who love them back; you must love your enemies. Here in Matthew 6, Jesus says unbelievers worry about their future; you have to be different, you must go beyond – you must trust God instead. Go back to Matthew 6:32 – Jesus says:

*The Gentiles eagerly seek all these things.*

He is using the word that denotes an overly intense or an anxious seeking – they are just totally preoccupied with these things of material life. They are totally preoccupied with their immediate problems. They are consumed with the gratification of their carnal desires, and they worry about it when they cannot achieve what they want.

And when you look at the way they frame their questions in verse 31 – "What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear for clothing?" – look at that and understand that they are framing all of their questions about the future totally apart from the living God – they are just looking at the future in purely material terms.

Jesus is helping you see – by pointing out the way Gentiles think – He is helping you to see that you have to think in a different realm. Beloved, there is more to life than your earthly problems. You as a Christian believe in a God who orders the affairs of your life even when you face adversity – a God who is intimately involved in every detail.

Therefore – here is the bridge – therefore, don't fret like an unbeliever. Don't deny by the attitude of your heart what you say you believe with your mind. Your heart has to follow what you say you believe.

So beloved, do you believe in the sovereign God who is over all creation, whose eye is on the sparrow and who you say watches you? Do you believe that? If you do, then your anxieties are out the window – they are no longer justified and you in your thinking no longer even permit them. Because for you, beloved, the call is different – the standard is higher. Anxiety-free living is what your Christian life should look like.

Let me give you a positive illustration of what I am talking about: I remember talking with my friend, Mac McCurdy, several years ago. Mac was probably in his 70s at the time and I know some of you remember Mac and Nancy. Mac and Nancy were starting to get the bad news from the doctors. It didn't look good; if I recall right, it was cancer for both of them – it may have been something else – but the point is, when I was talking with Mac on this particular day, he knew the situation was serious. He knew that he was facing terminal illness. And the course that was to follow in his medical treatment he knew was not going to be pleasant.

I remember standing with him in the old Grace to You building in the doorway between Fulfillment and the break room that we had back there. With utter serenity in his voice, Mac looked at me and said, “We're getting ready to walk through the forest” – no fear. His life on earth was in jeopardy and he knew it. But his trust in Christ was intact, and he was winning spiritual victory even as earthly life was being taken away from him. It was just a matter of a few months later that we buried first Nancy and 24 days later we buried Mac – September 14 and October 8 of 1999. I have never forgotten that, never forgotten that living example of what trust in the midst of adversity looks like.

Beloved, in the midst of the trials that you are facing today, that's what I want for you. When you are looking at how serious the life issues are that you are facing, rise to the occasion and say, “Okay, Lord, if You're going to take me through the forest, as long as I'm walking behind You, as long as I'm walking with You as I go through these trees, everything is okay.” Because that's the reality of Christian life. When you think about the words of Jesus about anxiety, when you see it lived out in a life like Mac McCurdy, you can get excited about the opportunity to move to higher spiritual ground. You don't have to live in the muck any more – it's time to get out of the muck; it's time to wash it off of your feet and walk in glory like something that befits the child of God.

And in that perspective, some of the rest of us have some spiritual growing to do, don't we? I'm including myself in that group. Beloved, what I want you to see is that you betray the state of your heart with your anxious questions and preoccupations about your



uncertain future. Listen to what Jesus says here: Unbelievers act that way. An unbeliever could be anxious about the same kinds of problems that you are facing; the question is: how are you different? How does your faith in Christ result in something different in the way that you live it out? You are different, beloved – you have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Live that way. Think that way.

If you are a true Christian, you can live differently – no, you *must* live differently, not with a change in your external behavior, but by having Christ transform the fundamental attitudes of your heart. You say, “I’ve got more important things that I’m living for. My heavenly Father cares for me, and I’m not a Gentile.” This is completely different.

How can you live with that kind of trust? We will contrast the worries of the unbeliever with the second point:

## **2. Your Wealth in Christ**

When I say “wealth,” I am not talking about material wealth; I am talking about your spiritual wealth. If you put your faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, there are three aspects of your spiritual wealth that Jesus points out here in the next two verses that you can draw upon to move from anxiety to trust. These are very practical; they are living spiritual realities that, when you appropriate them, change your whole view toward life and your incidental anxieties. There are three sub-points under the wealth of the believer in Christ:

### **A. The Father’s Person**

Look at the end of verse 32. Jesus is still expanding on the reasons why you cannot worry and you should not worry. He said: “Gentiles eagerly seek all these things.” But notice the next clause beginning with the word “for.” He is giving you another reason why you don’t have to be anxious and it is the flip side of the life of the Gentiles. He says: “For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

He is picking up on a theme that we have seen repeatedly through chapter 6 here: “Your Father sees in secret...” “Your Father knows your need...” And He is going back to the same theme again. This God who is sovereign over all creation, who is sovereign over birds and flowers, Jesus says *that* God is your heavenly Father; *that* God lovingly protects and provides for you no matter how desperate the circumstances may seem to be.

Your heavenly Father knows what your needs are; He is in absolute control and He absolutely loves you and He absolutely will provide for you and His grace is absolutely sufficient for you. Your Father’s person – your Father’s character, His immutable faithfulness to those that He has called to Himself – means that your anxiety is totally unnecessary.

It does not matter that you don't know how this is going to turn out. It does not matter how much is at stake. If you belong to Christ, your heavenly Father has it all under control. Your heavenly Father loves you. Your heavenly Father is going to take care of you. It may not work out the way that you think it should, it may be contrary to your desires, but look past the immediate situation and see the great big picture: God rules over all, He has called you into fellowship with Himself through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and He says, I am going to accomplish My purposes in your life to the uttermost."

Now, if you hear that and if you are truly getting the point – I will give you a hint how you can tell if you are getting the point – when your mind enters into that realm, you should find yourself saying, "What was it I was anxious about? What was it I was worried about?" Because the surpassing greatness of who God is and the greatness of His care for His children drives out everything else and you are totally consumed with the utter exuberant joy of belonging to Christ, and that's enough to satisfy your soul.

Not only do you have that wealth of the Father's person – I have to go through that quickly; we dealt with it mostly last week anyway – secondly, in this teaching on anxiety, in terms of what you occupy your mind with, you have a wealth – it is not only the Father's person but also:

### **B. The Father's Priorities**

Look at verse 33 where Jesus says:

*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness...*

Throughout this passage, Jesus has been saying, don't be anxious; don't be worried. He said it three times – commanded it directly at least three times: "Do not be worried..." – verse 25, verse 31. And so what you have here in verse 33 – kind of getting the main structure of this thought here – He says don't be worried *but* – verse 33 – "seek His kingdom and His righteousness." A total transformation of priorities is what He is calling for.

This word "first" here – Jesus is saying, "Make the kingdom of your heavenly Father and His righteousness your clear number one priority in life." Life and death, careers and futures, education, children, loved ones, health – all of that stuff is secondary. There is a number one on your priority list: it is the kingdom of God and His righteousness. It is loving and worshiping this blessed God through all of eternity – that's number one on the list, and there is no number two – there is nothing else that matters in comparison to that.

All that you have in your life are the circumstances that God has ordained for you to worship Him through. You take those circumstances, you obey Him, you love Him, you trust Him through all that He has given to you, good and bad, and say, "Lord, these are incidental to the main priority of Your kingdom and Your righteousness. God, if I know You, if I can approximate the righteousness of Christ somehow in my life, that is all I want. If no one notices, so be it, God, I don't care. If I never go any further in life than

where I am at right now, I don't care. Can I know You? Can I be blessed in knowing You? That's great – that's all I want, Lord; that is my number one exclusive priority.” Seek His righteousness; seek His kingdom.

The nature of the command is that it should be an ongoing life priority. So beloved, what I want you to see here is when Jesus says, “Don't be worried, but seek first the kingdom of God,” He is not simply commanding you to avoid worldly anxiety. He is saying replace it with a clear understanding that the kingdom is your priority. To seek the kingdom is to pursue the priorities of God in your life. To seek the kingdom is to fulfill its duties and share in its privileges.

And so, in this context of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is not talking about seeking the imputed righteousness of justification; He is talking in this context about the practical living out of righteousness as God works out His plan of sanctification through your soul. In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, He is talking about the inner righteousness that we studied in chapter 5, the righteousness that transcends that of the scribes and Pharisees, that goes to your inner desires, that righteousness that you practice with the view to the approval of God rather than the praise of men as we saw in the first 18 verses of chapter 6.

So if you want something to grip your heart instead of your anxiety, let this grip your heart – let this question grip your heart: How can I please God right here, right now, no matter what the future holds?” That's the most important thing to you and how the circumstances play out is secondary. Not to say it is not important, not to say that if I had an earthly loss today of one of my children or something like that, that I wouldn't be overwhelmed with sorrow – but beloved, what you have to settle in your mind as your starting point in dealing with anxiety is settling in your heart that “I love God and I love Christ and I love His righteousness more than anything else. And if I lose some of these incidentals in the process, my main love, my main focus, is completely unaffected because the grace of God will be sufficient even in that.” Pretty challenging, isn't it?

That is the kind of claim that the supreme Son of God can make on your heart because that is His right by prerogative. He has the right on all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength, and you direct all of that energy to loving Him. And how He plays out the circumstances in your life, you trust Him for. Final thing that I want to point you to is:

### **C. The Father's Promise**

We looked at the Father's person, the Father's priorities, and now the Father's promise at the end of verse 33. Jesus says:

Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

What a blessed promise of God! This is a divine passive, that “all these things will be added to you.” Who is it that is doing the adding? It is your heavenly Father; it is the One who has been the focus of this entire chapter. He is the one who will add these things to you. He is the one who feeds the birds, He is the one who gives flowers their color, and Jesus says, He is the same one who will provide for all of these earthly needs. By the sovereign might of His power, by the gracious love of His designs for His children, He says, “Relax – God is going to take care of it. Just make the first thing first.”

And when you sin against that and you try to do it your own way, when you stray into patterns of sin and you start to suffer want and you start to suffer pain, don’t blame God for that. Jesus has made it clear that if you would just seek Him first, this life of peace and the provision that you need for your life will be provided.

I hate it when preachers go overboard in using their personal lives as illustrations in their life, but there is something that I want to share here just to emphasize the point that even if you are a brand-new Christian, this applies to you. Wherever you are at in your spiritual life, this is the blessed privilege even if you are just a couple of days old in Christ for you to live and to act upon and to appropriate as your own promise from God.

I got saved in law school on November 20th. Now you have got to understand something: law school finals started on December 9 or something like that. There was a two- or three-week period there, and I got saved right at the tail end of law school. The law school that I went to at that particular time – and it is probably still the same way – you get one exam at the end of the semester and your whole grade depends on that particular exam. And so it is a pretty high-pressure event when you are taking law school finals. And I got saved and God poured out His new life in me, and I just had to read the Bible. And I said, “Ah, man, this is true; this is great!”

I was reading in Matthew and reading the Sermon on the Mount, Proverbs, and all of that. I was so totally captivated by what I was studying that I had no desire to study for my exam whatsoever – I just wanted to read the Bible. From an earthly perspective, that is not a good career move. And trust me when I say all of this is to the glory of God; this isn’t about me. But I just put my books aside and read the Scriptures and drank in the living water that was so much needed in my thirsty soul at that time. Somehow I found time to do a little bit of studying and all of my work. This was my second semester in law school, and you know, with much less study, by putting God’s kingdom first, I did worlds better that semester than I did in that first semester, before I was a Christian. That is just one example among thousands that all of us can share if we thought about it. When you put the priorities of God first in your life, He takes care of the rest. How He did that, I have no idea – I was an idiot in law school.

So understand – and this question has come up – that when we say, “All these things will be added to you,” that’s not an excuse for laziness; that’s not an excuse to avoid your responsibilities. You still live out your responsibilities and still do what you can to meet them. But they are not the consuming, overriding idea and passion of your life. You

have got a supreme priority of the character of God and under that, “Okay, Lord, here’s what I’ve got to do today; bless it to Your end, would You?”

One other thing I would say about this: Jesus doesn’t tell us *how* the Father will fulfill this promise. He doesn’t tell you to what extent it will be done; He just says it *will* be done. For some of us, the provision is a little smaller than it is for others who have more. With our brethren in Third World countries, it is even less for them. But for those who truly know Christ – for example, for those who have been saved out of Catholicism and are living in poverty – I will guarantee you that if you go to a true Christian in that kind of environment – he has been saved and knows the forgiveness of his sins – you are going to look at his utter meager poverty, and he is going to be rejoicing in how good God is because he is seeking first the kingdom. He is going to say, “You know what, God has added everything besides... Here, you want to share this can of beans with me?”

Verse 34 is the conclusion. I know I’m over the time, but don’t *worry* about it [laughter]. Verse 34 – Jesus concludes this whole blessed section; I hate to leave it, but we must - verse 34, Jesus says:

*So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Jesus brings it all together, He says anything that might make you fearful about tomorrow – rest today; God has the present fully under control. Don’t worry today about what tomorrow’s troubles might be. Take care of your responsibilities today and trust God for what tomorrow has. Beloved, we say and we believe and we affirm with the apostle Paul that God’s grace is sufficient for us, for power is perfected in weakness. Not all of us often enough think in these terms – God’s grace is sufficient for today, yes – but in the uncertainty of the future, God’s grace is going to be sufficient then as well.

Whatever kinds of difficulties have troubled your mind and you say, “What is the future going to hold with this important situation?” – beloved, take God’s grace and apply it to that as well and say, “You know what, even if the worst thing happens, God is going to be gracious to me in the middle of it, because it’s not about my circumstances. It is about the immutable, unchanging, faithful, gracious nature of God that He sustains His children no matter what comes.” Even if the worst thing comes to pass, you will still be under the protection and care of your heavenly Father.

Listen, I’m going to close with this: Ultimately – I want you to understand something really, really important, a couple of things – when we talk about trust in the Christian life, trusting God in the Christian life is more than saying, “Well, it may never happen.” That is not Christian trust. That’s true and that’s a reason not to be anxious, but that’s not the heart of what it means to trust God in the midst of the Christian life – it’s not the anchor of your soul. Christian trust is more than a fatalism that says, “Whatever will be, will be, and I’m just going to stand like a rock and I’m going to be unmoved.”

No, beloved, your Christian trust, your power to overcome anxiety, comes from an active believing trust in your heavenly Father and His promise to care for you. It is not just saying it may never happen; it is saying, “Even if it happens, God is going to be good to me! God’s grace is going to be sufficient; He is going to be with me, and His mercy and lovingkindness are going to follow me all the days of my life – Psalm 23:6. The Lord will accomplish what concerns me.”

“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” That is true now; it is true tomorrow; it is true every day of your life until you go to glory. Rest in that – don’t be worried; don’t be anxious. Take those cares and put them in the context of the great grace of God. Trust Him and relax, and glorify Him with your life.

Let’s pray:

*Father, this kind of trust is the birthright of all true Christians. May it be true of us as we have appropriated it. May You transform our lives, transform our decisions about the future, Father, so that we would bank all of our trust, all of our hope for what this life would have, on the living reality that You are a good God, You are sovereign over all things and You design our blessing in everything that happens to us and You are actively involved.*

*Father, what a blessed privilege – what a blessed position is ours. We can’t thank You enough for it. We are grateful that we have got all of eternity, Father, to try to express the gratitude which should spring from our heart for Your goodness toward us. And we understand that as we are with You and as we see the face of Christ that our gratitude is only going to deepen, and that this gratitude is an eternal gratitude, owed to an eternal God. Thank you, Father, so much.*

*If there is an unbeliever here, and he recognizes in his anxiety the root cause of his unbelief and that he is not saved, Father, lead that one to Christ that he might be saved and enter into this life of joy – to know the joy that is in the journey, the joy that loves Jesus and would rather have Jesus more than anything.*

*Give us grace to that end; help those of us who know You to live this way every day, till You call us home. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

*This transcript was prepared by Shari Main.*