

Lesson 20

Trust the Lord

“Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes?”

Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you—you of little faith? So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

(Matthew 6.25-34).

Introduction

In giving us salvation, God’s primary desire is to transform us into someone who brings Him glory. He wants to display the power and beauty of ability to make us new. The key in making this happen is our full cooperation and trust in Him. *God’s way works*. He desires to make us beautiful. In Matthew 6.25-34 we learn there is nothing we can choose in this world that will ever compare to the way God clothes us.

The principal Jesus is concerned with here is where we place our trust. If we place our trust in Him, He will take care of the rest of life, making worry unnecessary. Worry is the key word of the text as it is used six times between 6.25 and 34. Science has revealed that it only takes one glass of water to create a dense fog 100ft deep that covers seven city blocks. Imagine how just a few gallons of water can cripple an entire city. Now, let’s apply that to worry. The substance of what we worry about is existentially small compared to the size it forms in our mind and the danger it does to our life. Someone has said, “Worry is a thin stream of fear that trickles through the mind – which if encouraged – will cut a channel so wide that all other thoughts will be drained out.”

How do you handle worry? Do you trust the Lord?

Lessons from Birds and Wildflowers

Consider the Birds

In 6.26, birds, despite their tremendous work, are still dependent on God for their provisions. Simple observance sees the fact that He does take care of them. Jesus’ question at the end of the verse should be easy to answer. We are of much more value than the birds. We are the only creatures made in His image, Genesis 1.26. Jesus’ teaching in 6.27 is important. Worry does not accomplish anything.

Observe the Wildflowers

Uncultivated vegetation does much less to provide for itself than the birds, yet God adorns them with great beauty, 6.29. These tender plants may be things we take for granted, but they are a wonderful expression of the beauty of His ways. It is always amazing to pause and observe the intricate detail in these small plants. God has made much of it stunning and vivid, which reminds us how God has adorned everything in creation. It is beautiful. It is according to His design. It fulfills His purpose. As we observe what God has made, we are reminded that He has the power to think and create on the largest scale, as well as the smallest and most minute scale. It all testifies to His existence and greatness, Psalm 19.1-4.

Jesus' point is that God provides all the things the birds and flowers need to survive. If He does that for these perishable things, how much more will He provide for us?

How is Your Faith?

There are four instances where Jesus uses the term *you of little faith*. They are all directed toward the disciples and in relation to worry about food, clothing, and the longevity of life. In 6.30, the Lord does not say they are without faith ... but that their faith was inadequate. What about our faith? How are we developing it?

When we think back to the early months of the pandemic, the quality and quantity of our faith was tested. We dealt with the stress of being isolated. We coped with financial uncertainty. For those who got sick, there was the dread of *what if it gets worse? What about my loved ones? How will I go on without my loved one who died?* That year was filled with political, economic, and societal chaos. What did the crisis reveal about our faith?

Faith Expansion is Vital

We must go beyond salvation. Every Christian can go back to the point where he or she was convicted of sin, saw the hope Jesus provides, and grabbed onto salvation by obeying the gospel. But, has there been a time, at some point later, where your growth and faith expansion stopped? It is difficult to grow a faith that is primarily associated with what happens inside the church building one or two days a week. Somewhere along the way, some fail to rise above their understanding of the form or practice of Christianity and associate it primarily with a series of commands that must be kept. Once all that has been done, then it is back to regular life, which tends to govern most of our affairs.

We must refuse that. Instead of being mastered by our circumstances, we must come to master them. We profess faith in God. We believe in God's desire to save. But where is our focus? Does self-examination reveal an overemphasis and dependence on the physical? Upon our own power and resources to survive? This is not the goal of Christianity. In every situation, God's people are called to rise above and master their circumstances.

What does that mean?

Little faith does not think. This is especially a problem during times of crisis and change. We have a hard time thinking things through. Tunnel vision develops and we see only problems rather than blessings. We think of only what could go wrong versus seeing the situation from the perspective of opportunity and God's working. Negative thoughts can create a vortex in our minds ... eventually overtaking our

entire mindset. This is not what God intends. Believers are those who are pictured as *more than conquerors*, Romans 8.37. We have been called to be *patient in tribulation*, Romans 12.12. We are not victims of our circumstances; we rise above them!

This is why three times in our text, Jesus urges believers to slow down and think when problems arise. Notice 6.26: *look*; 6.28: *observe*; 6.30: an open-ended question, *if . . . will he not?* We not simply react but engage our mind. God will never lead us down a path toward destruction. Simply put, we must . . .

Take God at His Word

Are we to the point spiritually where we can take these passages at face value?

Isaiah 43:2	When you pass through the waters, I will be with you and the rivers will not overwhelm you, When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched and the flame will not burn you.
Romans 8:28	We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.
1 Corinthians 10:13	No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it.
1 Peter 5:7	casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.
Philippians 4:6-7	Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Matthew 7:7-8	"Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Key Concepts from 2 Corinthians 1.18-20

- A. 1.18 – it is a surety that God is *faithful*.
- B. 1.19 – *for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, . . . in Him it is always Yes*.
- C. 1.20 – *for all the promises of God find their Yes in Him*.
 - 1. 1.21a – God has established you in Christ.
 - 2. 1.21b – He has *anointed you*.
- D. 1.22 – He has *put His seal on you and given you His spirit in your heart as a guarantee*.

Will we operate with the certainty of Paul? Will we take God at His word?

What Salvation Implies

May we all come to a greater realization of what is our because God is our Father. God has plans and a purpose for you. He is directing your life, just as He did with Jesus and your favorite hero in Scripture. Remember, God is acquainted with all your ways, Psalm 139.1-3. He knows you. You are of value to Him. He loves you with abundance.

He will become more real to you when you spend more time in His world – coming into greater contact with the things He has made and less with the things we have made. He will become more real to you when you spend more time in His word. His reality will confront you on every page. Remember, if God is concerned with birds, flowers, and grass, He most certainly is concerned about you. He is so concerned about you that He knows the number of hairs on your head, Matthew 10.20. Remember Ephesians 1.18-20; 3.20 – there is *power* working inside of you.

Conclusion

God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble. Therefore we will not be afraid, though the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas, Psalm 46.1-2.

God has all power. Will you apply what you know and believe? Will you raise your faith to the next level? It is a poor type of Christianity that has this wonderful faith in respect to the remission of sin and then melts when confronted with the trials of life. May we all increase our faith.

Do you trust the Lord?

For Thought and Reflection

1. Why does Jesus want us to consider birds and observe wildflowers and grass?
2. What does Jesus mean when He uses the term *little faith*? Would you describe your faith as little? Why? What can you do to grow?
3. What is one of the primary goals of Christianity?
4. How does reading the assurances of the faithfulness of God encourage you?
5. What does it mean to you that there is power working inside of you?
6. What are some things you can do to take your faith to the next level?