

Matthew 6:25-34 | Don't Worry | Dr. Steven Ingino

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What do you worry about? Do you worry about your children? Do you worry about your marriage? Do you worry about the direction of our country, not to mention wars abroad? Perhaps you worry about your job or finances. Do you worry about your health? Maybe you're worried about a rebellious child or the salvation of a relative.

If someone could download your thoughts from this past week and analyze them, how many of your thoughts would've been anxious thoughts? 20%? 30%? We often worry so much about the past or the future that we don't enjoy the present. We can be so obsessed with the imaginary "what if's" and worst-case scenarios that our perspective becomes unnecessarily depressing.

We might worry about passing a test in school, about our appearance, about getting married, about the economy, about our work, about change, about politics. We worry about our children or grandchildren's choices, about terrorism and school violence, about riots, shootings, and lawlessness.

We worry about our increasingly secular or anti-Christian culture and how it will impact our family, faith, and freedoms. And of course, we worry about facing death. We worry about all kinds of things. We know that we worry or worry too much, but how can we worry less? How do we overcome anxiety? What is at the root of our worry?

Why do we worry and how can we be freed from the shackles of worry and live more joyfully and effectively for Christ? How do we move from the quicksand of worry to the solid rock? This morning we'll see that Jesus, the Great Physician, offers us a cure for worry. So, please turn in your Bible to Matthew 6:25 and we'll see three reasons why we shouldn't worry and how to worry less. That's page 811 in the Bible near your seat.

I'll share three main reasons Jesus tells us not to worry, but you'll pick up many other reasons along the way. We'll also be challenged with some applications throughout the message as we look at this great section in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Let's start back in Matthew 6:24, one verse before, for some context. ²⁴ **"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. 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?"**
(Matthew 6:24-25)

Notice that Jesus begins this section by saying "for this reason," in verse 25. He's connecting what follows with what He said previously about not being enslaved to the idol of money. What's the connection?

Hearts that are tied to earthly treasures will be anxious because we are setting our hope and security upon things that can never give lasting security and peace. So, Jesus says, “If you’re serving God (instead of wealth), for this reason, you don’t have to worry.”

Worrying is Sinful

He says, “Do not be worried about your life” in v. 25. That’s a command in Greek – “do not be worried.” It’s actually a strong command in the original language that one scholar translates as “do not ever worry.” And let’s not forget that when you disobey one of Jesus’ commands, it’s a sin.

If Jesus says, “Don’t lie” and you lie – what is that? A sin. If Jesus says don’t steal and you steal - what is that? A sin. If Jesus says, “Don’t worry” and you worry – what is that? A sin. Jesus says, “This is a direct order, a command – stop worrying.”

Now, it can be stinging at first to hear that worry is a sin because some of us are going to worry even more now, because now we have to worry about worrying and worry about sinning. But take this as good news. When God in the flesh tells you “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of you,” that’s good news.

And actually, when I learned that worry was a sin, it helped me worry less (by God’s grace) because I didn’t want to sin against Christ or disobey His Word. When you label worry as sin, worry is unmasked for what it really is – a sin to be avoided. That’s why John Wesley said, “I can no more worry than I can curse or swear.”

Point **#1. worrying is sinful** so, do not worry. Jesus gives us many reasons for us to obey this command. And He’ll repeat this command – don’t worry – three times in this little section. Think about that. Jesus said “Do not worry” 3 times in nine verses – verses 25, 31, and 34 to drive out our tendency to worry, which reveals a lack of faith or trust in God as you’ll see.

Life vs. Food

But notice the reason at the end of verse 25 – Don’t worry: **Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?** Isn’t there more to life than material things? What about your soul? What about God? What about people and relationships? What about worship, and Bible study, and evangelism?

There are more important things to be concerned about than physical things. Isn’t there more to life than food and clothing and material things? Yes! Later on, Jesus will tell us in verse 33 to seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness – that’s more important.

Here, Jesus is using a common rabbinical argument from the greater to the lesser. He’s saying: If God gave you the gift of life, then won’t He take care of the things that sustain the life He gave you?”

That's the argument, from the greater to lesser. If He gave you life (the greater), He's going to give you the things that sustain your life (the lesser). Worry distracts you from the important things in life and keeping the proper priorities and perspective. So, Jesus says, "Don't disobey My Word and worry, because I want you to focus on other things – like trusting God."

Worry and Concern

Now, before we go any further, I want to address a question that I'm guessing some of you might have by now. If Jesus tells us not to worry, and later in verse 34, not to worry about tomorrow, does that mean we shouldn't have any concerns or think about the future? Is it wrong to plan? And of course, the answer is "no."

For one thing, Proverbs 6 tell us to learn from the ant who stores up food for the winter. Planning is encouraged in the Bible. Joseph was directed by God to store up food for seven years in Egypt to prepare for an impending famine – a legitimate concern. Proverbs 31 commends the woman who sees winter coming and prepares clothing for her family.

In a number of Paul's letters, like Romans or Philemon, Paul worked on future travel and lodging plans, as did John in 2 John, not to mention the planning that went into some of Paul's missionary journeys.

The Bible doesn't discourage planning or preparing for a career, or financial planning, or even the wisdom of life insurance or preparing a will. So, worry doesn't exclude looking to the future or planning for the future – having valid concerns.

Plus, the same Greek word for "worry" in Matthew 6, the word, *merimnao* is used in other passages to speak about godly concerns. For instance, listen to what Paul wrote in **2 Cor. 11:28**. He writes about how he was beaten, ship-wrecked, stoned, persecuted, yet God rescued him and gave him grace. But then he says this: **Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:28)**

It was a legitimate care or concern – and that's the same exact Greek word as the one used in Matthew 6. Or think of it this way - if you're not concerned about your child playing near traffic, you're not a good parent. Concern is legitimate.

Jesus isn't saying to be irresponsible, carefree, or naïve when He says, "don't worry." The same word for worry in Matt. 6 is correctly translated "concern" in **1 Cor. 7:34: The widow and the virgin are concerned about the things of the Lord... (1 Corinthians 7:34)**

This same word is also used in 1 Cor. 12:25 to describe how each part of the body of Christ cares for one another or has concern for each other. So, there are examples in the Bible of legitimate, worry-free planning for the future and legitimate concerns that are not the same as a fearful anxiety.

There's a difference between worry and concern. There's a distinction between anxiety and care. Now, there's a fine line between the two, so don't use concern as an excuse to worry. But worry is concern gone haywire. One author named Joanna Weaver wrote this: "Concern draws us to God. Worry pulls us from Him."

Worrying is Senseless

Point 1: Don't worry because worrying is **sinful**. What does Jesus say next about worry? **Why** else does Jesus prohibit us from worrying? Jesus will tell us in a handful of ways, how senseless worrying is. So, point **#2 Worrying is senseless.**

Listen to God's Word, starting at verse 26. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, 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?" (Matthew 6:26)**

Worrying is senseless because you're worth more than the other creatures God cares for. How silly are we to worry about our needs being met, when God provides for the birds? You never see birds walking around looking anxious. In fact, on the hill in Israel where Jesus was preaching, He probably pointed to the birds around Him, how worry-free they were and reminded His listeners of God's care.

I've been to Israel several times, right where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, and you can see the birds hopping around, sustained by God's provision from His creation and by His tender care. You see, this time, Jesus is making an argument from the lesser to the greater, as opposed to the other way around, which He did earlier (from greater to lesser).

If God cares for things that are of little value (birds), won't He care for you, since you are of much greater value to Him, everlasting value?

In **Matthew 10:29**, Jesus said: ²⁹ **"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows."** (Matthew 10:29-31)

God cares for things of little value, birds that aren't even worth a penny. If He cares for them, won't He care for us, the pinnacle of His creation? Are birds created in the image of God? No. Did the Son of God take on flesh and incarnate for birds? Was Jesus beaten, spat upon, whipped, and crucified for sparrows? No. Is the gospel, the good news for pigeons?

How senseless we are when we worry. When we worry, we're forgetting the value God places on us, not only as creatures made in His image, but as His children, adopted into His family through Christ's sacrifice. You're His child, made in His image, redeemed by the blood of His Son, Jesus the Messiah – of course He'll care for you, so don't worry.

Notice in verse 26 Jesus said, “Your heavenly Father feeds the birds.” Jesus didn’t say birds have a heavenly Father. Jesus said God is your Father. Point: If your Father in heaven cares for lesser creatures, who are **not** made in His image and are not in His eternal family, then you can be absolutely sure that He will care and provide for you, His own child. Therefore, worry is senseless. It’s needless.

A very important verse along these lines is **Romans 8:32**.

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? (Romans 8:32)

You’re telling me that God gave His one and only Son to die for your sins and secure your eternity, but you’re not sure if He’ll take care of you for a few decades on earth? If Jesus Christ is the gift, then everything else in life is the box, the ribbons, the bow.

If God gave you a priceless gift, His eternal Son, for your eternal salvation, do you really think He’s going to skimp on the little things we worry about? That’s the senseless nature of worry.

Car Analogy

It’s like – if a friend bought you a \$70,000 car and you said, “Thanks for the wonderful gift. But I’m worried about whether the gas tank is filled up.” Your friend assures you, “I bought you the car, so of course I added gasoline – that’s pennies compared to the price of the car.”

You know what? I’m sorry. That illustration worked better years ago – I’m going to have to update that. Because now the price of gas *is* close to the price of a car, so I apologize. But you get the point.

When God saved you, He gave His best – His Son. Everything else is just pennies, so don’t sweat the small stuff. You have a Father in heaven through Jesus Christ your Risen Lord and Savior, a loving, caring, sovereign, holy, and faithful Father. You see, worry is fundamentally an issue of identity. If you live based on the fact that you’re a child of God, bought by the blood of Christ, you won’t worry.

But it’s because we forget our identity in Christ, that we worry. Look at **verse 26** again:

²⁶ “Look at [or it could be translated as “consider closely” or “learn carefully from”] 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?”

Jesus says to examine the creation around you, gaze at and carefully reflect upon the birds until you see through them, to your Abba Father. Now just as a side note, when Jesus says that our heavenly Father feeds the birds, we know that God doesn’t drop worms out of the sky into their mouths.

No, He expects the birds to hunt for their food and they do. The point is that just as God expects us to work, He will provide the opportunities, the strength, the talents, the resources

and through various means, the food we need because we are children of God. In fact, next week's message is all about the importance of work.

Worry Accomplishes Nothing

Well, Jesus will continue His argument about how pointless, how senseless worrying really is in verse 27: **“And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?” (Matthew 6:27)**

Now, this is actually quite ironic. It would be like Jesus saying, “And who of you by smoking, can add a single hour to his life?” It's sarcastic. Smoking and worry don't add to your life, they shorten your life.

Physical Effects

Worry is so harmful to you physically, it affects your heart, your stomach (such as ulcers), and worry negatively impacts your immune system. Worry takes a toll on your mind, detracts from your sleep which is needed for your overall health – I mean, nothing good comes from worry.

Poor productivity, stolen joy, weak faith, strained relationships, misplaced priorities, diminished gratitude, dozens of health issues, these are just some of the wages we pay when we worry.

A *Time* magazine article from June 2002 entitled, *The Science of Anxiety* cataloged evidence of how worry takes a real toll on us physically, mentally, and emotionally – it cripples us in so many ways. The cover says it all, “Understanding Anxiety...Now more than ever we are worrying ourselves sick.”

Dr. Charles Mayo, of the Mayo Clinic wrote,

“Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, and the whole nervous system. I have never met a man or known a man to die of overwork, but I have known a lot who died of worry.”

As Jesus said, worry doesn't add a single hour to your life - it can actually shorten your life. It's senseless for that reason alone.

The *American Medical Association* estimates that 80% of the illnesses in the United States today are stress-related, and we know that worry contributes to stress. I'd read you the list of 20 medical disorders caused by stress, but I don't want to make you worry. Well, I'll say this – it ranges from coronary heart disease to colitis and plenty in between, but one I found that was really fascinating is that worry can actually lead to tooth decay.

Dr. Leonard Fosdick of Northwestern University has proven conclusively that worry restricts the flow of saliva. Then, because natural mouth acids are not properly neutralized, due to the lack of saliva, tooth decay occurs.

It's amazing how harmful worry is to the body. But there is a silver lining. Your kids and grandkids can now say, "I didn't get a cavity because of eating too many sweets. I was just worried about my grades. Hand me another candy bar."

Stress Causes Illness

In December of 2005, a team of Australian researchers scientifically confirmed a long-suspected link between emotional stress and illness. The group from Sydney's Garvan Institute discovered that a hormone called "neuropeptide Y" (NPY) is released into the body during times of stress, fear, or worry. This hormone undermines the body's immune system and literally makes you sick.

According to Dr. Mackay from the Institute:

"During periods of stress, nerves release a lot of NPY, and it gets into the bloodstream where it inhibits the cells in the immune system that look out for and destroy pathogens [like viruses and bacteria] in the body." She added, "That stress makes you sick is no longer a myth; it is a reality, and we need to take it seriously."

"Don't worry yourself to death" is more literal than we thought. Now should we need medical evidence to believe Jesus? Jesus told us 2000 years before this Australian study that worry is to be avoided and it does not help us at all.

Are we going to trust God's Word, or do we need to read a journal article first before we'll believe it? Shouldn't we just trust a perfect, all-knowing God's Word?

His Word is true, we don't need to wait centuries for some scientific study to validate it. So, don't worry, it's senseless, it's totally useless and only harms your health. ²⁷ **who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?** Jesus is asking us, "What has worry ever accomplished in your life?" Think about it - Has worry ever helped you?

Worry is like a rocking chair – it gives you something to do but it doesn't get you anywhere. Worry doesn't change your circumstances; it just changes you for the worse.

Worry Statistics

Or as Warren Wiersbe put it: "Most Christians are being crucified on a cross between two thieves: Yesterday's regret and tomorrow's worries."

In fact, studies show that what we worry about, is pointless. 40% of the things we worry about will never happen. 30% of the things we worry about happened in the past and can't be changed. 12% of what we worry about are criticisms by others, which are usually untrue. 10% of our worries are devoted to our health, which ironically, by worrying about it, makes it worse!

And studies show that maybe 8% of what we worry about are real problems that will be faced. But let me ask you – don't you want to get rid of the 92% of pointless worries? And worrying about the other 8% doesn't change whether it will happen or not – so why worry?

Worrying about those things doesn't help – it prevents us from trusting God, from praying, from seeking wisdom from His Word, from concentrating, and it takes up time and energy that can be devoted to better things.

Worry paralyzes us and prevents us from trusting God, from truly having faith in Him. Mark Twain said, "I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened." Or it's like the woman who said, "Don't tell me worry doesn't do any good. When I really worry about something, it doesn't happen." No, she should've said, "I worried for no reason, because what I worried about never came to pass."

Worrying is Slanderous (vv. 28-34)

Jesus continues his argument in verse 28, but this time, He not only emphasizes the **sinfulness** and **senselessness** of worry, but the **slanderous** nature of worry. Don't worry because **#3. Worrying is slanderous.**

Look at verse 28: ²⁸ **"And why are you worried about clothing? Observe [which has the idea of learning from, the Greek word means "look and learn" from] how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin [meaning, sew clothing], 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!" (Matthew 6:28-30)**

The best designer in the world can't match the beauty and majesty of God's creation - the care God puts into things that are here today and gone tomorrow (as you see in the picture on the next slide – beautiful, and yet it's fleeting). Look at the next picture – spectacular. I'm colorblind and I can tell that's breathtaking!

Jesus says stop worrying because as you can see from creation, if God cares for fleeting things, He'll care for His children who will live with Him forever in heaven. Have the flowers been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, born again by the Holy Spirit, sealed until the day of redemption, and given the promise of resurrection? No, but you have.

So, if God cares for things that are here today and gone tomorrow, of course He'll take care of you now and for all eternity.

The Oven

Jesus says in verse 30 that the flowers and the grass are thrown into the furnace. He's referring to how grass was used for kindling in a home clay oven to bake bread. Since the grass is here and gone, won't He take care of you since you're His child now and forever?

Good feeds and clothes transitory things, feeds the birds, clothes the fields, which means, of course, He'll take care of you. You're the pinnacle of His creation, made in His image, and the object of His love and salvation in Jesus Christ.

Do you think He cares for fleeting flocks of birds and fading fields more than you? Think about God's faithfulness within creation, and now apply that to yourself – but multiply it because you're more precious to God than birds and grass. He proved that at the cross, where He gave His Son so that you could have the gift of eternal life.

It's funny how we believe that God will take care of our eternity, but we doubt Him during the 70 or 80 years we have here on earth. Are we not slandering God's character when we worry? Saying He's not faithful.

We're in essence saying that God cares more about birds, grass, and flowers than His children. How disrespectful and insulting is that? Jesus rebukes us and says, "You of little faith" in verse 30. To lack faith means, among other things, that we don't trust the object of our faith – God – and this demeans God's reputation.

Fundamentally, worry slanders God – it's as if you're accusing God of not being big enough or loving enough to take care of you. If we have little faith, it reveals we have a little God in our mind.

Big Problems?

A lady once asked G. Campbell Morgan (the famous British pastor), "Do you think God is interested in my little problem?" He responded, "Ma'm, what makes you think any of your problems are big to God?" Our anxiety goes up if our view of God goes down – and that's why theology is so important.

If you don't learn about God's attributes, God's character, God's promises, God's omnipotence, God's sovereignty, and providence, you'll worry. Are there big problems that can't or won't be ultimately handled by an all-powerful, unchanging, sovereign, holy, infinitely wise, merciful, gracious, and compassionate God? You of little faith, Jesus says in verse 30.

When we have faith, when we trust in God and His Word, when we believe His promises, worry disappears. George Muller said, "The beginning of worry is the end of faith, and the beginning of faith is the end of worry."

Where there is faith, worry flees, you can see that principle in Matthew 8 and Matthew 14 some other time. But in essence, Jesus is saying here, "When you worry, you have a faith problem, you of little faith – you doubt God, you don't trust God." Jesus is implying, if you have faith, you won't worry. Worry is unbelief. And the opposite of worry or unbelief is faith. The cure for worry is faith. And faith is grown as we read God's Word (Romans 10).

Cure of Prayer

So, faith is a cure for worry. And Paul shares another antidote for worry in Philippians 4:6. He writes:

⁶ Be anxious for nothing [and what's translated "anxious" here is the same Greek word that Jesus used for "worry" in Matthew 6], but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

He's basically saying: "Worry about nothing, pray about everything." It's a simple prescription for worry. It's hard to worry when you pray, especially prayer with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving for God's past provisions and faithfulness makes worry dissipate because you remember He can do again what He's done before.

There's a tongue-in-cheek plaque I've seen that says, "Why pray when you can worry?" The reverse psychology or sarcasm is good – Why worry when you can pray? The next time you're worried about your health, your spouse, your children, or work, have faith, pray, and watch the worry go away.

As Martin Luther said, in his own pithy and sarcastic way, "Pray and let God worry." What anxiety can you cast on God through prayer because He cares for you as 1 Peter 5:7 says? Don't worry about anything but pray about everything.

Well, Jesus continues in verses 31-32 to explain the slanderous nature of worry.

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." (Matthew 6:31-32)

When you worry, you're saying that God doesn't know your needs. When you commit the sin of worry, you're forfeiting your testimony of distinction. You're no different from the Gentiles, the pagans, in this context; the non-believers who worry because they haven't experienced God's love and care.

Jesus says, "Don't be like the nonbelievers" who swim in anxiety. No, you're a son or daughter of the King. So then, we must not slander God's name and deny His Fatherly care, before a watching world, with worry.

Christian Worrier

If a non-Christian asked you, "What do you do for a living?" and you responded, "I'm a Christian worrier," what do you suppose they would think about God? "You're a full-time worrier, and yet you claim to believe in an awesome God that loves you, who will bring you to heaven for eternity, but all you do is worry?"

Worry is an insult to God, it's slanderous. It means we're behaving no better than the gentile nonbelievers in verse 32.

Worry is practical atheism – we say we believe in a loving, gracious, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present God, yet we live as if He doesn't exist. It's been said that worry is temporary atheism because it is a failure to trust in God.

No-Confidence / Practical Atheism

As one theologian put it [Helmut Thielicke], "Every worry is a vote of no-confidence in God."

It's as if we're saying to God, "Sorry Father, but this crisis is beyond your ability, beyond your wisdom, power, and care, so I have to worry. Let me help You God (by worrying), since You clearly can't handle this." How ridiculous and insulting is worry?

Jesus says in verse 31 and 32, **Do not worry...for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

Chicken with Its Head Chopped Off

When you worry, you're running around like a chicken with its head chopped off, instead of remembering that you're a sheep in the fold of the Good Shepherd. He knows what you need. He's faithful. **Psalm 55:22** tells us: **Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. (Psalm 55:22)**

So, worry disobeys Jesus' commands, it neglects the fact that we're children of God, it accomplishes nothing good but harms our health, it distrusts God's Fatherly love and provisions, and slanders His loving and faithful nature and reputation.

But worry also distracts us from pursuing what matters, as Jesus emphasizes in verse 33. What does Jesus want us to do instead of worrying? Let's pick it up in verse 31 so you can see a little wordplay here. 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 [or "continually seek first" as the Greek tense indicates, "keep seeking first"] His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33)****

That word "but" in verse 33 is important. It can be translated "instead." In other words, Jesus is saying, "Instead of worrying, concentrate on living for God." Jesus gives us a new preoccupation – replace worrying with working for His kingdom. Redirect your worries or fears into pursuing Christ.

The word for seek here is a strong word – it has the idea of a passionate pursuit. It was used of a hunter, hunting for his food, with all of his mind, vision, and energy focused on his prey. Here, it has the idea of constant preoccupation with our King, His rule in our hearts, and doing His will, obeying His Word with righteous living. Seek God and spiritual growth with the energy you'd use to worry.

Seek First

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)”

One pastor said you could paraphrase it this way – If you take care of the things that are important to God, God will take care of the things that are important to you. But what do we do? The reverse. We have spiritual dyslexia when we read this verse.

We say, “Add all these things to your life, put your career, your family, your money, your hobbies first, and if you have anything leftover, seek God’s kingdom and His righteousness.” That’s not how it works!

It’s as if God is saying to you, “Don’t come to me last, start with me first. Don’t live your life all week without Me and then think I’m going to bless you just because you show up to church for an hour. Put Me first in everything.”

Don’t treat God like a spare tire, He’s the steering wheel... or the driver – take your pick with the analogy. Jesus is telling us to get our priorities in order. And then we will know what it means to be free from worry as we see God provide for His faithful servants.

So, do you really seek God’s kingdom first, or are you giving God your leftovers? Don’t worry... **“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)”** Put God first, be preoccupied with living for His kingdom and glory and doing His will, by His grace.

One commentator [David Guzik, *Matthew*] shared a needed clarification, “It is wrong to think that this is just another priority to fit onto our list of priorities—and to put at the top. Instead, in everything we do, we seek first the kingdom of God. For example, we rarely have to choose between honoring God and loving our wives or being good workers. We honor God and seek first the kingdom of God by being good husbands and good workers.”

Or, if you’re not a believer, this is your invitation to trust in Christ the King alone for the gift of eternal life. Come under Christ’s reign and receive His perfect righteousness credited to your bankrupt and debt-ridden account – believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

Why else should we refrain from worry? Jesus says in verse 34: ³⁴ **“So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself [or more literally, the Greek says, tomorrow will worry about itself]. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:34)**

Worrying today can do nothing for the problems of tomorrow. To add tomorrow’s cares to today is to weaken the strength God gives you for today.

God divided life into bite-size chunks called days. And when you bite off more than you can chew, you choke. That's what worrying does. It's as if Jesus says, "You know those squares on your calendar? One square per day? Stay in one square at a time."

Yes, there's a place for planning, for godly concern too, but when it comes to worry, Jesus says, "Live one day at a time – focus on today." Each day has enough trouble, so don't worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will worry about itself. You can't bear the weight if you bring into today the regrets of yesterday and the fears of tomorrow.

Corrie ten Boom, the concentration camp survivor and Christian author said, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."

³⁴ So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:34)

Or in the words of the famous *theologian*, Bobby McFerrin, "In every life we have some trouble, but when you worry, you make it double. Don't worry, be happy."

A Loving Father

What the Bible teaches here is clear: **Don't worry because worrying is sinful, senseless, and slanderous**. Instead, put God first, and trust your Heavenly Father to provide for you.

God loves you. God will care for you now and throughout eternity. God doesn't want you to live with anxiety any more than you'd want your child to live in a constant state of worry. Trust Him. Have faith that He is a loving, caring Father. The bottom line: Don't worry because your heavenly Father cares for you.

The Cross

And if you do struggle with worry, just remember this: Jesus died on the cross for your worries. If He died on the cross for your lies, your lust, your sinful anger, your pride, your idolatry, your selfishness, your gossiping, or taking God's name in vain - any disobedience - then that means He died on the cross for your worrying.

His mercy and grace, His unmerited favor, covers even when you disobey His commands that prohibit worry. That's never an excuse to continue in sin, it's the motivation to forsake it. It cost Jesus His life, dying on the shameful and torturous cross, bearing the wrath we deserve, to forgive you. So, be thankful for His sacrifice but let that inspire you to change by the power of the Holy Spirit within you.

A Faithful Father

There's a touching story that comes out of the 1988 earthquake which devastated northern Armenia. The deadly earthquake killed over 30,000 people in less than four minutes.

In the midst of all the confusion and chaos, a father rushed to his son's school. When he arrived there, he discovered the building was completely flattened. Standing there looking at what was left of the school, the father remembered a promise he had made to his son Armand. He said, "No matter what, I'll always be there for you! I promise." Tears began to fill his eyes.

It looked like a hopeless situation, but he couldn't take his mind off his promise. Remembering that his son's classroom was in the back right corner of the building, the father rushed there and started digging through the rubble.

As he was digging other grieving parents arrived and they tried to pull him off of what was left of the school saying: "It's too late!" "They're dead!" Or "You can't help!" "Just go home!" Even a police officer and a fire-fighter told him he should go home. No one would help him, but he continued digging for his son, brick by brick.

He needed to know for himself whether his son was dead or alive. This father dug for eight hours which turned into twelve, then twenty-four, then thirty-six hours. Finally, in the 38th hour, as he pulled back a boulder, with his bloody hands, he heard his son's voice. He screamed, "Armand!" and then he heard his son say: "Dad? It's me, Dad!"

Then the boy said these priceless words, "I told the other kids not to worry. I told them that if you were alive, you'd rescue me and when you rescued me, they'd be rescued too. I told them what you promised Dad, you said 'No matter what I'll always be there for you!' I knew you'd keep your promise."

Your Father in heaven will move heaven and earth to care for you now and throughout eternity. He keeps His promises. He is faithful. Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross and His resurrection prove that.

As John Newton said, "How unspeakably wonderful to know that all our concerns are held in the hands that bled for us."

What About?

Now, you might say, "But what about the others that died in the earthquake, or millions of Christians who've been persecuted and killed in the last century? What about the Christians who aren't miraculously protected?"

What about Christians who die in car accidents? What about Christians who were killed by ISIS or through war or a tsunami?" Hebrews 11 tells us that whether we're protected or martyred, or die tragically, God has a plan, and we must have faith in Him.

In Hebrews 11 some of the heroes of faith were said to have escaped the sword and some were said to have been killed by the sword [v. 34, 37], but both were under the umbrella of God's sovereign plan and faithfulness because He brought them all safely to His heavenly kingdom and used them for His glory.

And God will faithfully bring us into His eternal kingdom. Whether we live long here or are taken home “early” to be with Jesus in heaven, we never need to worry. He knew every day of our lives before we were born as Psalm 139 says, and His care extends from our conception to billions of years into eternity – it never ends.

Proverbs 12:25 says: **Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.**

And this morning, we’ve heard a good word from the good shepherd – our great God and Risen Savior Jesus Christ tells us we don’t have to worry. He saved us by His grace, and He will sustain us by that same grace, in this life and into eternity. Isn’t it good to know that Jesus wants us to experience freedom from worry?

Don’t worry, instead, by the power of the Holy Spirit, put God first in everything, trust in your heavenly Father to care for you, and live worry-free to the glory of Jesus Christ. Let’s pray...

Addendum

“Three words in this section point the way to victory over worry: (1) *faith* (Matt. 6:30), trusting God to meet our needs; (2) *Father* (Matt. 6:32), knowing He cares for His children; and (3) *first* (Matt. 6:33), putting God’s will first in our lives so that He might be glorified. If we have faith in our Father and put Him first, He will meet our needs.”¹

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 28.