

Sermon on the Mount Sermon Series

Sermon 24

Do Not Worry

Matthew 6:25 "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?"

Jesus began this part of the sermon on the mount by saying, "Therefore." It means, "For this reason." He had just said that you cannot serve God and wealth at the same time. You cannot have two masters. Either you will hate the one and serve the other or cling to the one and despise the other. For this reason, do not worry. If you are part of God's kingdom you do not need to concern yourself with serving wealth. You are set free from this fear. Why? Jesus explains it

Matthew 6:26 "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?"

God provides food for the birds. Does this mean that birds do not have to work? No. Some people think that God's promise to provide means that we do not need to do anything at all. These people are lazy and rely on others to feed them. The Bible does not condone this.

Proverbs 6:6-11 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, ⁷ Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, ⁸ Provides her supplies in the summer, *And* gathers her food in the harvest. ⁹ How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? ¹⁰ A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep --
¹¹ So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.

Other people point to droughts and famines and ask, "If the promise of Jesus is true, why are some people starving to death?" I will point out two things. God is merciful to even those who do not serve Him. Didn't God provide 7 years of plenty to cover the seven years of drought in the days of Joseph? Did the Egyptians serve God? No. Jesus said that God is good and sends sunshine on the evil and the good and sends rain to the just and the unjust.

To those that know God's covenant and do not keep it, God may withhold His blessings to bring them to repentance. But His purpose is not to destroy but to save. Dead people cannot repent. It is Satan that deigns in the destroying human beings created in God's image.

The second point I would like to make is this: There is more than enough food in this world for all the inhabitants. Go to any farmer's market at the end of the day and see how much edible food is laying on the ground. A leaf of lettuce that has one blemish on just the top part is torn off and thrown to the ground. Governments pay farmers not to grow food so that they can keep the prices high. When droughts happen, other countries try to send aid but it is stopped by bribery and theft and war from reaching the people. The reason there are starving people in the world today is the wickedness and selfishness of man.

A personal friend of mine is a very wealthy man. He told me that he once sent a shipping container full of medicine to Africa to help in a region that was suffering. He told me how the

container was locked up at the port customs; officials would not let it go unless they received bribes. Human beings are denying other human beings necessary medicine because they are waiting for bribes. God provided. Wicked people withheld the blessing.

The World Bank Development Report for 2003 said that 2.8 billion people in the world live on less than \$2 per day. In 2006 the world revenue from sports alone was more than 107 billion dollars. If the world gave the money they spend on just sports to the poor they would increase their daily income from \$2 per day to over \$38 per day. World wide advertising amounts to more than \$460 billion per year. Global military spending is over \$1.7 trillion per year. The problem is not with God. The problem is with mankind.

When we worry about whether we will have enough to eat or drink or clothes to wear we are doing one of two things. We are either distrusting God in His care for us or we are setting up our own standard of living that we are expecting God to meet for us.

Is there life without a cell phone? Is there life without internet or television? Is it possible we could survive and be happy without a computer or a car or fashionable clothes? For many of us the answer is, "no." Many people are too proud to do a humble occupation and they have no money. They beg from relatives and friends when all the time there is work that they are too proud to do. King David at first was a shepherd as was Abraham and Job. Jesus was a carpenter. But in our society it is thought too low to work as a shepherd, a maid or in a factory. Has God failed to provide a living for His children or are we simply too proud to live in a humble circumstance?

Is it wrong to want to improve your circumstances? No. But for many the pursuit of money eclipses their spiritual life and they compromise with sin to advance their financial position.

Matthew 6:27-33 "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.

People who have no faith in God at all worry about whether they will have enough to survive. But God declares that in His kingdom, He will supply the necessities of life. He gives the examples of birds and flowers.

Are you worried about not having enough? Does your worry reflect that you do not trust God as your heavenly Father to provide the things that you need? Is your behavior no different than the heathen who do not know God? Or is the real problem that you are worried because you are afraid that God will not provide the money to live at the lifestyle that you have chosen for yourself? Are you unhappy with your life because you are not as wealthy as you want?

On March 31, 2015 there was a power outage that effected Istanbul and Ankara and Izmir and other regions of Turkey. Transportation systems stopped. Banking stopped. Internet commerce

stopped. Credit card commerce stopped. It is amazing how dependent life has become on electricity. It almost seems we cannot live without it.

God provides life and energy constantly for all systems of life in the universe. The power that holds the stars in their places is the same power that makes the lilies of the field grow. All of these things find their source in God. Without Him nothing can happen.

The kingdom of God has one pulse of life. When you worry about your food and drink and clothing you are thinking outside of the harmony of the kingdom of God. Jesus said that we should first seek the kingdom of God and all these things will be taken care of. This is the nature of the kingdom of God.

The lilies of the field do not live to themselves. God made them to provide happiness for humans and pollen for bees. This is a lesson for us as well. Many people think that they are good enough to go to heaven because they do not harm anyone else. But many of these same people live only for themselves. Their thoughts and actions are totally absorbed in their own pleasure.

God could have provided your necessities without the flowers. God has shown by the lilies of the field that we can and should be a colorful and fragrant blessing to others. This is the essence of the kingdom of God. The flowers of the earth grow out of the cold brown earth. By the same miracle power of God, He can form a beautiful character that resembles Christ's character in a selfish sinful person. The grace of God brought to your life by the Holy Spirit will produce in you love, joy peace, gentleness and kindness.

Matthew 6:34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.