Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus, Worry, and You
Scripture: Matthew 6:25-34
Code: 80-193

I want to draw your attention to an issue that seems to be, of course, a major topic of conversation in our time. And that has to do with the matter of financial security. We have people who are fearful about the future.

I was at a conference a few years ago. There was a significant presentation of the Y2K problem. What's going to happen to our culture when it hits the year 2000, and all of the computers that we depend on aren't up to speed? Is there going to be a terrible chaotic result in the banking world so that all of a sudden there won't be any money? And the people who are supposed to be accounting for the money that we have placed in various places will no longer be able to do that...all that information may be lost.

I ran into people who are notable in the Christian ministry, people who are well known writers in some cases, and theologians who are purchasing land in obscure parts of Texas, and building bunkers full of 10,000 cans of baked beans to get ready for the entire economic collapse that's going to come in the year 2000. There are people who are greatly distressed about the downturn in the stock market, and worried about whether or not this is a foreboding of a continual decline in which all that they have somehow amassed to secure their future is going to be sort of systematically and slowly whittled away. People worry about their own economic situation, perhaps because they have overextended themselves in debt, because perhaps they owe credit card debt that is crippling and takes away some of the discretionary use of their resources. There are people who fear the loss of their jobs. There are people who fear that somehow in the future, they're not going to be able to sustain the life of their family in a way that is called for when their children get old enough to go to school and go to college...they won't have the resources. Others are fearful about their retirement. What's going to happen if the always seemingly threatened collapse of Social Security were to come? How would we live in those days?

There are always a series of doomsday prophets who want to camp on our fears...the possibility of future economic collapse that's laid before us by those who are negative and prophets of doom. Those fears are reasonable fears, given our dependence upon the money that we have saved or that we hope to earn. How are we to approach all of this? We are hammered, as it were, by these kinds of fears in our society through the media and through those who would want to frighten us. How are we to understand all of that?

To answer that question, Matthew Chapter 5 is the appropriate portion of Scripture. Matthew Chapter 5...Our Lord begins the Sermon on the Mount. And he marches through a series of things in Chapter 5, 6, and 7. And he talks about many issues in this great Sermon on the Mount. Really, when I say Matthew 5, I mean 5 to 7, the great Sermon on the Mount. He addresses issues that are really very essential important issues.

One of them that he addresses in the Sermon on the Mount is the matter of financial anxiety. And we find that somewhere near the middle of this great sermon that stretches through three chapters. Turn to Chapter 6. He starts talking about money actually in Verse 19, so let me start reading there. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust destroy," or stock markets go down, if I may add. "And where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Dropping down to Verse 24, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life as to what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor for your body as what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sew, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. And yet, Your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single cubit to his lifespan? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin. Yet, I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field which is alive today, and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, oh men of little faith? Do not be anxious then saying, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves?' For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek, for Your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. Let's seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Three times in this passage...first of all in Verse 25...it says, "Do not be anxious." Secondly, in Verse 31, "do not be anxious." And finally in Verse 34, "do not be anxious." The key to the whole passage then is, "don't be anxious." That mandate...that command...is illustrated, elucidated, argued, and reasoned with the inimitable skill of the master teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ. It defines the proper attitude with which disciples of Jesus should live their lives in a material world.

Now he says in Verse 25, "Do not be anxious for your life, for your sukay, your breath." He's really talking about your physical life. This is what it means: don't be anxious about physical life. Don't worry about that. The word "anxious" means to worry excessively. In fact, the noun form of the verb,

which is "do not be anxious"...the noun form is "worry." In Greek, it is used to refer to concern, worry, anxiety...as in Luke 10:41 where, in reference to Martha, the Lord said, "You are anxious and troubled about many things. Martha, you have all these anxieties. You have all these fears and all these worries."

Now the tense of the verb is important...Verse 25..."stop worrying." If you already are, it's a bad habit...end it. Verse 31, "do not be anxious," kind of emphasizes, "don't start worrying." If you don't already have the bad habit, don't start it. I mean there really is no need to worry about physical things...no need. You say, "Well, we have to eat, and we have to drink, and we have to be clothed. Aren't those great concerns?" They are great concerns. Those are the necessities of life. And the Lord sort of sums up the necessities of life...food, water, and clothing.

You know, that's less of an issue in many cases to us than it would be to somebody living in Palestine, because there weren't any stores and malls and things like that typically that were handy, and where you could just go and get whatever you wanted. Food...you had to raise it, you had to cultivate it, farm it, or trek to the marketplace and hope that what you needed was available there. Water was a great concern in that semi-arid part of the world. Clothing...you perhaps could purchase it from someone, but in most cases, you had to make it. If there was a drought, you might have a scarcity of water, and you would consequently have a scarcity of food.

In fact, those people, for the most part, lived just to survive...eating and drinking. Most of the people in the land of Israel basically were poor to one degree or another, and they had to eek out a basic living. In the burning summer, the streams dried up. The water supply was, every summer, minimal. To the poorer people, an annual change of clothing was by no means guaranteed. And when winter came, it could be cold, and it could snow in Jerusalem.

Wanting the necessities of life is very normal. "Just don't worry about it," He says. "Don't be concerned about what you shall eat,"...Verse 25..."What you shall drink, nor for your body as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? Is it life for a child of God? Is it life for a Kingdom citizen way beyond that? You have no business worrying."

And he gives you three reasons...three reasons never to worry. This is the end of financial stress. Number one, "It is unnecessary because of Your Father." Two, "It is uncharacteristic because of your faith." Three, "It is unwise because of your future." This is an incredibly dramatic and astute presentation by Our Lord. Because of Your Father, and because of your faith, and because of your future, it is foolish to worry.

Let's take the first thought...the first principle. Worry about material things is unnecessary. Even worry about what we would basically define as necessities is unnecessary because of Your Father. Now to affirm this point, Our Lord uses three illustrations. One relates to food, one relates to health,

and one relates to clothing.

Look at food in Verse 26. He says, "Look at the birds of the air." Now it may well have been that as he was standing on the mountain north of the Sea of Galilee on that sloping hillside, he might have just pointed up as a flock of birds flew by. And by the way, Palestine is full of birds.

One writer by the name of Parmelee has written a book called *All the Birds of the Bible*. And he calls Galilee the crossroads of bird migration. This is sort of a footnote for you. When birds across Europe, all the way from Western Europe clear through Eastern Europe, migrate south as they do every year for the winter, they all fly through Israel. That's true even today.

More Israeli pilots have been killed by birds coming through the cockpit of their jets than by the enemies of Israel. There are special rules for coming and going from the Ben Gurion Airport at Tel Aviv because of bird migration, because they can get caught in the engines of large airplanes. It's a serious issue. So the Israelis have literally flown with the birds, and they know their migrating patterns. They know what time of year they come. They know for how long certain birds will migrate. And they also know the altitude at which they fly. And it's always the same every year, and so they have charted all the migrating birds that migrate to the north of Africa.

They migrate through Israel because west is water, and there is no food flying across the Mediterranean, and they migrate...they can't go east because it's barren desert, and there's nothing there. And Israel is fertile, and they can land now and then for supplies.

This has always been fascinating to me, because we read in the Book of Revelation that at the end of the age when the Battle of Armageddon is fought, there's going to be a feast for the birds. Do you remember that? If there's any one place in the world where there could be plenty of birds, it is in the land of Israel.

So perhaps Jesus looks up and sees a flock of birds. He says, "Look, they don't sew. They don't reap. In fact, they just fly around and pick up the seed you sew. They just come down and eat the crop that you're growing. They don't gather into barns, yet Your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?" There's no worry in their lives. There's no anxiety in their lives. There's no attempt to pile up goods. You don't see them flying with a little briefcase full of extra food in case they need it. They're not worried about some unforeseen future or some unforeseeable event.

One Jewish Rabbi was fascinated by the way in which animals live, and he said this...His name was Rabbi Simian...he said, "In my life, I have never seen a stag as a drier of figs, or a lion as a porter, or a fox as a merchant, yet they are all nourished without worry." He said, "If they, who are created to serve me, are nourished without worry, how much more ought I, who am created to serve my maker,

to be nourished without worry? But I have corrupted my ways, and so I have impaired my substance."

Job 38:41 says, "God provides for the ravens his food." He tells us in Psalms 104 that "There are, in the great and wide sea, things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts as well. They all wait upon thee that thou mayest give them their food and due season." Psalm 145:15..."The eyes of all wait on thee, and thou givest them their food in due season." Psalm 147:9..."He giveth to the beasts his food, and to the young ravens which cry." They are provided for by God without worry, without anxiety.

It's essential to note that this is not an excuse for idleness. Birds, though fed by God, don't sit on some branch waiting for the food to be dropped in their beak unless they're baby birds being served by their parents. They search for it, but they find it. They gather the insects, the worms, and the seeds. They prepare their nests. They care for their young. They teach them to fly for their own food as seasons dictate. They migrate to where the food is. They do all this by instinct because they're endowed by their Creator with that instinct as His way of carrying for them. And they don't overdo a good thing. They don't build barns and store it up like the rich fool.

Our Lord's argument here is from the lesser to the greater. It's what's called, in philosophy, an ah fortiori argument. "If the birds, who can't plan ahead, have no reason to worry, than certainly you, My children, endued with reason, so you can plan for the future wisely, should not be filled with thoughts of fear and worry and anxiety, especially if it's Your Heavenly Father who feeds the birds, you can be sure He will feed you." End of Verse 26..."Are you not worth much more than they?" Don't you think He will feed those who have been created in His image and are now in His Kingdom, are now joined to Him through the work of His Beloved Son?"

The argument really is profound. The argument is powerful. Life is a gift from God. As long as He has designed to give it, He will sustain it. He does it with the animal world, and He will do it with you. God has given you a greater gift. Don't you think that He'll give you the lesser gift of food to sustain it? If He's made you His own, if He's brought you into His Kingdom, if He has provided for all your spiritual needs, if He's concerned that you live to His Glory, don't you think He'll provide the necessary physical provisions? If God gave you the gift of life, He'll sustain it. If He gave you the gift of physical life and called you to serve Him in this world, He'll give you the necessary food to sustain that calling. That is just such a basic simple truth.

The second issue that confronts people about which they worry is not just that they'll be able to eat in the future, but health...health is an issue. Look at Verse 27. It's quite an interesting statement. "And which of you, by being anxious, by worry, can add a single cubit to his lifespan." That's a very good translation..."lifespan"...at the end of Verse 27. Some translations say "stature" or "height." But he really is talking about adding to your lifespan...aleakia is the Greek word. But nobody can add to his

stature, I mean you can't add a cubit to your stature. You can't grow 18 inches by sheer willpower. It's better to see it...and I think the translators understood in the NAS...as a span of life. Jesus says, "Look, worry can't add one fraction to your life."

People really do worry about their health. We're a generation of people literally almost cultic about exercise, almost out of control about vitamins and supplements and health. The anxiety of death, the fear of disease and illness, forces us to struggle to stay alive at the highest level of health that we can. We preoccupy ourselves with the body and pride ourselves with being in shape, whatever the society says that shape should be. People make incredible investments in exercise equipment, health club memberships, medical assistance vitamins, special diets, and you know it goes on and on. And sometimes behind it is worry. And Jesus says, "You cannot add one fraction to your lifespan by worry." In fact, the opposite is true: If you worry, you'll shorten it, right?

One doctor said, "Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the entire nervous system. I have never known a man to die of overwork, but many who died of worry." A person may literally worry himself to death...worry himself into bad health. But never will you worry yourself into a longer life.

Why would you even think that God somehow would not provide the fullness of life to fit with the fullness of His calling on that life? God has given us life, and in that life, a spiritual ministry. He knows what He wants to accomplish through a sovereignly-designed lifespan. I don't want to live any longer than the Lord wants me to live. I don't want to live any shorter than the Lord wants me to live. I just want to live exactly as long as He wants me to live, to fulfill exactly what He wants me to fulfill. I can't lengthen my life. I can shorten it perhaps by sin, and one of those sins is worry. You don't do anything to help yourself by anxiety over your food or your health.

And thirdly, he brings up this idea of clothing...covering. In Verse 28, "And why are you anxious about clothing?" he says. "Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin. Yet, I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field which is alive today, and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, oh men of little faith?" And here again, He argues from the lesser to the greater. If God is going to take care of grass and lilies, isn't he going to take care of you? What are you so anxious about?

He's not talking here about the sin of carnal selfish worldly materialistic involvement in wardrobe that becomes sort of a fashion stampede, which can arise out of lust and selfishness and pride and all of that. He's talking about fearing that you're not going to be cared for, fearing that you're not going to have what you need, fearing that you're not going to be protected, you're not going to be properly cared for. And he says, "Well, look at the lilies of the field."...Verse 28. "They don't toil, and they don't spin." But look at the garment they wear...look at their beauty. "Even Solomon in all his glory

didn't clothe himself like one of these."

He's talking about the lilies of the field. The question is, what is he exactly referring to here? What is a field lily? Probably the best translation is "wildflowers." We really don't know. There were things called irises, narcissi, gladioli, and cap lilies. There were a number of things that grew at that time, as best we can tell. But he probably is just referring to wildflowers. There's an essential quality, there's an essential beauty, there's an essential magnificence, a delicate texture, form, design, substance, color in flowers that man, with all his ingenuity can never imitate. And if you doubt that, just look at the next batch of plastic flowers you see, or silk ones. It's a nice effort, but they don't have the grace and beauty of the real thing.

So he says, "Look at the wildflowers. They don't toil, they don't spin." They grow. They flourish. They don't spin a single thread to clothe themselves. And don't you think that the Lord is going to make sure you have what you need? They are so beautifully arrayed that Solomon in all his glory, with all his money, couldn't array himself with the beauty of the delicate flower...so beautiful, so gorgeous, so beautifully colored, fragile in its beauty, wondrous in its texture. Place it alongside Solomon in his robes bordered with gold and silver and jewels, and the flower comes out more lovely. Take the finest fabric that Solomon ever wore, look at it in a microscope, and it is sackcloth. Take a flower, and submit its garment to the microscope, and the delicate velvet reveals the exquisite weaving of God.

And Christ is not really engaging in hyperbole here. He's stating fact...no garment loomed with the finest thread on the finest loom is anything but sackcloth when placed beside the petal of a flower. So Jesus said, "Why do you worry? Why do you spend so much effort in the matter of your clothes? Look at the wildflowers. Kings haven't been so magnificently robed. Flowers put all their robes to shame."

And then He makes the point in Verse 30, "If God so arrays the grass of the field," which again is a very generic term which embraces the wildflowers...just the grass and the wildflowers that grow..."If God so magnificently arrays the grass of the field, which is so temporary -- it's alive today, and tomorrow it's thrown into the furnace...really not much more do so for you, oh men of little faith."

The little scarlet poppies and anemones that blossomed, sometimes for one day or even a few days, were clothed in beauty-surpassing royal robes, but they just lasted a very short time. And when they died and dried, they were cut down with the grass that had died and dried. That was all bundled up and used in the oven for fire. They lived so briefly, yet with such beauty.

And Jesus asked, "Shall He not much more clothe you who clothes them, a God who would lavish such beauty on an inanimate object, who would lavish such beauty on a flower that lasts a day, will He be forgetful of His own beloved? Will He be forgetful of His own people? Let men of the world

worry. Don't you worry." If the Creator cares for His creatures, the Father cares, believe me, for His children...that's the point. And he concludes this first point by saying, "Oh, ye of little faith." When you worry about these things, you demonstrate a lack of faith. Where's your faith?

You remember the famous incident of the Lord's earthly life and ministry when he's sleeping in the stern of the boat on the Sea of Galilee, and the storm was going, and the water started to come into the boat. The sea became very boisterous, and the disciples became worried, and they said, "Master, don't you care that we perish?" And what did he say to them, according to Luke's Gospel? He said, "Where is your faith? Where is it? You've got it somewhere; where did you put it?"

Listen, we have a Father who cares for us. We have nothing to fear, no matter what happens, no matter if the whole economy crashes, no matter if all the banks lose our money. We have a Father who cares for us...that's enough for me. I don't have any fear. I don't have any anxiety as long as I know my Father cares. We need not worry because of our Father.

Secondly, he says, "We need not worry because of our faith." He's just said, "Where's your faith? Could you guys please go find it? I know you have it somewhere; where did you put it? Where's your faith?"

Verse 31...he introduces the second section with another statement, "Be not anxious." That's how he introduces the second point. Verse 31..."Do not be anxious, then saying, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves?' Stop being anxious. Stop worrying." Same issues as in Verse 25...food, drink, and clothes...basic necessities of life. Don't worry about that.

There's no promise that God is going to make you rich. There's no promise that God is going to give you more than you need. There's no promise that God is going to lavish you like he did Job or Abraham. But God will take care of necessities. This is not consistent with who you are. This is not consistent with your faith.

Look at Verse 32..."For all these things, the Pagans eagerly seek." You see, worry belongs to people who don't have God as their Father. It's for the faithless to worry...that's right. Naturally, the Pagans, the Gentiles, the Christless, the Godless, who do not acknowledge God, who do not belong to God, who are not the children of a loving father, who have no claim on God's provision, who are utterly ignorant of His supply...we expect them to worry. These are the kinds of things that preoccupy the anxieties of the Pagans. But for us, it's senseless, needless, useless, and excuseless. And believe me, it's not a trivial sin. It's one that strikes at the very character and promise of God.

See, the heathen, they're in complete spiritual darkness. Thus, they have an erroneous idea of the divine government. They have an erroneous idea of the God of the universe. They don't understand how God is involved in the lives of people...His people. So they're like the rich man who just kept

stacking it up in the barns, and stacking it up in the barns, and stacking it up in the barns so that he could eat, drink, and be merry before he died.

The phrase in the Greek there, talking about the heathen in Verse 32, says, "eagerly seek." Literally in the Greek, it says, "they seek it with all their might." Unregenerate people are literally totally consumed in material gratification. They don't have any other resource; it's all up to them. They go after it with a vengeance. How different Christians are to be?

I've been reading and continuing to read the biography of William Carey. And William Carey went to India with his wife and his children. And he found himself in a very remote part of India outside of Calcutta with no food, no shelter, no nothing, and really no money to buy anything. And never wavering in his faith, he just watched God supply and supply and supply. And first it was a little lean-to shack to live in. It was very uncomfortable and very difficult for his beloved wife and their children, one a relatively young one just born before they left. And it was about a five-month journey on a ship to get there from England.

And then things began to turn, and they began to cultivate the ground. They found a new place. And they began to grow food, and it flourished. In fact, he was so good, a botanist...he was so good at farming that villages began to arise all around his little farm on both sides of the river where he was. And then, in God's wonderful mercy, he was offered a position of significance with a salary that was quite large, and he accepted that as the providence of God. He had lived through the testing of the lean times, and now God provided enough for his family, and enough for his ministry, and enough for translating the Word of God, which he eventually did into 11 languages.

There's something wonderful about being in that position of utter dependence so you can see the faithful hand of God. Sometimes it's good for us to divest what we have, just to back up and get ourselves into position where we're more dependent and can rejoice in the freedom of being unencumbered, and knowing we've done what God wanted us to do with what He gave us, investing it in eternal things, and having to wait to some degree on the hand of provision that comes from Him. Gentiles can't do that. Pagans can't do that.

Verse 32, he says, "This is Pagan activity to worry about these things, for your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." He knows that you need them. It's just a matter of faith. Don't you trust in His knowledge? Do you think God knows what you need? Do you trust in His goodness? Do you trust in His promise? Sons of the king don't conduct themselves like beggars. Do I face life like a Pagan, or do I face like a child of God? Do I face life like the son of a king who possesses everything, or like the Devil's beggars?

The real issue, I guess, is does my Christian faith affect my view of life and control my view of life in everything? Does everything come out of my Christian faith? You don't have any reason to worry.

Back to Verse 32, and it goes right back to where he started. "Your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." He knows. Nothing is going to escape His notice. All worry then assumes that God doesn't care, one, or that God doesn't know, two, or that God doesn't have the resources. Ridiculous...God does care, God does know, and God does have the resources. It's a matter of faith...it really is a matter of faith.

He then comes to a third point. It is unnecessary to worry because of our Father, because of our faith, and thirdly it is unwise because of our future. It is unwise because of our future. Now we're getting down to the nitty-gritty here in Verse 34. Why do people worry? Well, because they're concerned about the future. So in Verse 34, look what he says. Again here's the same phrase: "Do not be anxious, for," what? "Tomorrow." Don't worry about tomorrow! Imagine being concerned about what's going to happen on January 1st, the year 2000, and fretting about that now! God is the God of tomorrow, just like He's the God of today. And His mercies are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness...Lamitations 3.

Worry is a tremendous force. It can warp your personality, it can steal your joy, it can rob your peace, it can foul up your relationships, it can cripple your faith, it can harm your usefulness, and it can wreck your Christian testimony. Worry is a powerful force. It's not a trivial sin; it is a significant sin. It creates havoc in your heart and the hearts of those who are watching your life. I mean if Satan can get us to worry, and get us burdened and anxious and stressed and defeated and fearful, what kind of Christian testimony do we have? What kind of benediction and blessing are we to the people around us? What kind of usefulness do we have? And how in the world can that honor God? I mean there are some people who are so devoted to the sin of worry, that when they have nothing in the present to worry about, they look for something in the future. And the Lord forbids it; he says, "What are you doing worrying about tomorrow?"

I like William Hendrickson's translation. He then says, "For tomorrow will take care for itself." Hendrickson says, "For tomorrow will bring its own anxieties. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Really folks, how foolish to reach forward and scoop up all the imagined trouble of the future and dump it into today. You don't have enough? Leave tomorrow out there. God is the God of all your tomorrows.

I can't imagine worrying today about what hasn't happened, but some people conduct their entire life like that. Some people anticipate death, and they live their life now in fear of the fact that they're going to die. And thus, they bring their own death into their life. And every day, they rehearse all the realities of death, imagining how their funeral might go.

Or they fear disease, and so they're well, but they're afraid they're going to be sick, and so they bring all the anxiety and pain of an imagined sickness into the present and debilitate their own lives.

Let me tell you something: you have enough trouble without doubling it by pulling in what may or may not happen in the future. To anticipate trouble is to double your trouble. And I'll promise you this: God only gives strength for each new day. He'll give you the grace for today's trouble, but there's no sense in presuming that you're going to get grace for the trouble tomorrow that you're feeling today. So you're going to go...that's a graceless way to live.

Fear, by the way, is a liar...fear is a liar. Fear tells you tomorrow is something to be afraid of. Fear tells you you're not going to have what you need tomorrow. Fear tells you you're not going to be up to it. Fear tells you if certain things happen, you're never going to be able to survive it. Fear tells you that there's terrible pain out there. Fear is a liar for the Christian because there is no thing that you're ever going to go through, no trial, no temptation, that God will not provide sufficient grace to sustain you in.

So just shoulder the burden of today. Enjoy the grace that God gives you today. And leave the future to God. What happens happens. Don't cripple the present by worrying about the future. You just destroy your joy, and then you lose the present. God will be there in the future. He'll be there when it all comes crashing down. And he says, when it does, count it all...what? Joy, because God is doing a perfecting work.

Worry, then, is a forbidden sin. And Jesus forbids it because it is incompatible with your Father, it is incompatible with your faith, and it is incompatible with your future. You are guaranteed by the grace of God a glorious future; is that not true? Everything that comes in the future, God will give you the grace to carry and to bear. What are you afraid of? Build a bunker somewhere and fill it with thousands of cans of beans...why? I'm not a prophet...I don't know the future.

So don't become preoccupied with material things in the present. Don't worry about things in the present. Don't worry about things in the future. God is the God of the present, and he's the God of tomorrow as well. Beloved, you are not a spiritual orphan, are you? God has not dropped you in the dumpster. He hasn't abandoned you in a phone booth. He hasn't left you at a storefront in a box. He loves you. He cares for you. He has all the resources of eternity at His disposal, and they're all provided for you. And his mercies will be new, just like the manna, every morning. Great is his faithfulness.

Worry refuses to know God. It refuses to trust God. It refuses to love God. And worry is a serious sin. There may be greater sins, you know, in people's eyes. But think about this: is there any greater sin than to distrust God's promised love for His own? Is there a greater sin than that? Is

there a greater sin than the sin that assaults the character of God? Is there a greater sin than the sin that assaults the promise of God? Is there a greater sin than the sin that assaults the attributes of God, namely His faithfulness? I don't think so. It's a serious, serious sin. So don't worry.

Well, there's a positive here...we'll end with this in Verse 33. Here's the positive side. Everything else is don't, don't, don't. Here's what to do: "But seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness, and all these things shall be" what? "Added to you." Now this is a very important principle...priority number one. "These things"...what are these things? What's he been talking about? Three things...what? Food, drink, and clothing...all the basics of life. And those are really representative of everything you need in life. You'll have enough to eat, you'll have enough to wear, and you'll have a place to live. God will sustain you. "All these things"...he's not talking about some spiritual things here; he's just talking about the issues of life. That's the theme of the text. And he is saying, "God, believe me, will add all these things to you if you stop worrying and start seeking His Kingdom and His Righteousness."

What does that mean? It simply means to make the focus of your life on the spiritual matters, right? Isn't this exactly what the Apostle Paul said to the Colossians? "Set your affections on things in Heaven and not things on the Earth. Set your affections above, for your life is hid with Christ in God. Get your priorities right. Pour yourself into the Kingdom. Pursue righteousness, and then you will enjoy all of this."

Now there's an obvious negative side to this. If you don't seek first the Kingdom, if the goal of your life is not the advancement of the Kingdom of God, if the goal of your life is not the pursuit of the righteousness of Christ, if that's not the case, then God does not necessarily have to provide everything. It may be that He withholds some things as a chastening. But you have a loving Father who knows your needs and who has pledged to meet them all, and asks of you that if you'll seek the spiritual, He'll provide the physical...that's it.

So be lost, as it were, in Kingdom enterprises. Be concerned to pour your life and your resources into what builds the Kingdom and exalts righteousness. And watch how God provides.

And he provides in different ways. For some, it's just the necessities. And for some, for a time, it's just the necessities. For others, it's with great generosity according to His own purposes. It's God who gives you the power to get wealth, and God does it differently in different people's lives. But all of us have this one mandate in common: seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness, and then He'll take care of the physical.

That's where Christians should be living their lives, isn't it? "Laying up our treasure" where? Verse 24 says, "In Heaven." That's seeking the Kingdom...take your treasure and put it there. Don't try to hedge against some unknown tomorrow because you don't trust God.

You remember in the Old Testament, the prayer, "Don't give me so much that I forget You, and so little that I'm angry with You. Just give me what I need." And if He gives more, pour it into the Kingdom, and He will make sure all your needs are met.

Father, we thank You for the simple, straightforward, and powerful teaching of Our Lord, Jesus, in this text. It's been so wonderful to go through it just briefly tonight and be reminded of the richness of this great passage.

We really don't want to be concerned about mundane things. We don't want to be concerned about the basics of life as if we had no loving Father, as if we had a Father who didn't know, or we had a Father who didn't have the resources. You are our Father. You do love us. You do know everything about us, and You do have all the resources. And beyond that, You have made a covenant and a pledge to be our God and to supply our needs if we will faithfully pursue the Kingdom and Your Righteousness. Thank You for that promise.

And may we live that with a clear eye, as it were, of the soul, seeing clearly Kingdom purpose, righteousness as the objective of life, day after day after day, leaving the physical things to a loving, caring, knowing, infinitely wealthy Father who has pledged His eternal love to His own. And in that love, the promise of faithfulness every day, we thank You for this.

We are unworthy of such care, to be set apart from the Pagans who continually have to seek these things on their own. We are free from the material side to pursue Kingdom purposes and watch You make provision for the physical. Thank You for this promise, and may it become a rest to our souls, and a source of peace in the end of the sin of worry.

At the same time, Lord, help us to be good stewards. Help us to work diligently as unto the Lord in all our earthly responsibilities as we pursue the extent of Your Kingdom and Your Righteousness. We pray in Our Savior's Name, Amen.

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