

24 *No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*

25 *Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing?*

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 *Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

This is such a familiar section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, maybe even a favourite of many. It is also one that we need to be reminded of often because we are all prone to worrying, some more than others. The heading for this section in many Bibles is something like, "Do Not Worry." That does summarize the section well for Jesus says, "Do not worry" five times in this text.

However, Let me ask you, if you are one who worries a lot, does it help if someone says "Don't worry?" Does telling you not to worry make you stop worrying? What if I make it more forceful. "Stop worrying!" Or "Don't you know, worrying can't help you at all?" Will that make you stop worrying? I doubt it. That's why Jesus does much more than say, "Do not worry." Jesus shows us the perfect, loving care of our Father. He builds trust in God and that does enable us to stop worrying so much. So lets think about Jesus' words again and learn to

Trust Your Father's Perfect Care

Why do you suppose humans are natural worriers? Isn't it because we are not in control of everything? If we had total control of everything, like God does, there would be no reason to worry at all. Even the things we think we have control over, we know that can change in a hurry. We know from experience all the things that can go wrong. Nothing is certain. There are countless possibilities of disaster, so we worry. As we get older we lose even more control because we are no longer able to do many things ourselves. It is very difficult to be dependent on others. So we tend to worry even more.

Jesus doesn't just say, "Don't worry!" He shows us that we can and should rely fully on God. God does have control of everything! And God is our perfect, loving Father. He shows us that

-I- You Are Highly Valued by God

Let's just think about the beautiful pictures our Saviour gives us of God's care. "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them." Birds seem to have such a carefree life don't they? Just flying around enjoying the freedom of the air and eating whatever they find. God provides plenty of food for them. They don't have to work for it. They just find it and eat.

Jesus next statement ought to give us great peace and joy instead of worry. "Are you not of more

value than they?" God cares for all creatures He made, but God did not give His own Son into death for the birds or any other animal. You and I are clearly much more precious in God's eyes. So if He provides food for the birds and animals, is it really possible that He will not provide for His own dear children? Would a parent buy the very best food for their pets, but not feed their own children? Jesus says later on in this sermon on the Mt., "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" He is our loving Father who is always attuned to what we need.

The next picture is equally beautiful: "And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The flowers of the field are exquisite! They come in so many colours, shapes and sizes. They are so delicate and intricate. It's true, even the richest kings are not arrayed like them. So then Jesus says, vs. 30 "If God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" Think about that. Most flowers last only a few days and then they wither. Many are literally mowed down and thrown in the fire or in the compost pile. If God gives such attention to detail for something so fleeting, is it really possible that He will not make sure that His own dearly loved children have the clothing they need? Most children don't worry about whether they will have anything to eat or any clothes to wear. They trust their parents to take care of them. Shouldn't we trust God all the more? He is so much more loving and faithful than the best parents.

Now let me ask you, do any of you actually worry about having enough food to eat or clothes to wear? I don't think I have ever worried about that my whole life. Some of you did have those worries during and after the war, but have you worried about it in the last 60 or 70 years since? We live in the most affluent time and place where most people don't have to worry about the basic necessities of food and clothing. Does that mean we have learned this lesson and don't worry? Unfortunately not! We just find other things to worry about.

That brings us to the main message in this section. Worrying is just a symptom of a deeper problem. Jesus says, "O you of little faith?" Worrying is a sign of a shallow faith and a lack of trust. It doesn't mean we don't have faith, but worry indicates our faith is "Little." Thankfully our salvation doesn't depend on how strong our faith is. Knowing that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and that He rose again to win the victory for us over sin and death, that is saving faith.

A weak or little faith doesn't mean we won't be saved, but it does mean we don't enjoy the benefits of our life with God. We miss out on the much of the peace and rest of knowing that God is our loving Father who takes perfect care of us. Do you ever look forward to something, but then worry that something might happen that spoils it? Do you worry that God might send some trial or trouble that will bring an end to your enjoyment of life? We obviously know, both from Scripture and from our experience, that is possible. Talk about a lack of trust in God. God loves you and wants only the best for you. He delights in making life good for His children. Trust in His love and goodness. Focus on serving God not doubting God. And if God sees that you need some discipline in your life to keep you trusting in Him, would you really want Him to withhold that discipline just so you can have a good time?

Jesus is showing us that

-II- God is Worthy of your Total Trust and Worship.

The very first verse of our text says, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." Then He goes on, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life." That's the real point! Being anxious about your life is a sign that you are trying to serve two masters. Worrying

about worldly things is trying to serve both God and money. Jesus says you can't do it. Not just that it is difficult. You can't! That is why, after showing us that we have no reason to worry about our life, because our Heavenly Father takes such perfect care of us, Jesus goes on to say, "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." The Gentiles, that is the unbelievers and the heathen, who don't have the Lord as their God, that's all life is—gaining the things of this life and this world.

Life is so much more for the child of God. We have a life with God. The LORD is our God, which means He is responsible to take care of all these things. Your Father knows everything you need and He provides it at the right time and in the right measure. So don't worry.

Since your life is more than food and clothing, seek what really matters. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." We all know this. We all want to make God the first priority in our lives. Yet, we find it so hard to actually do that because our needs and responsibilities are looming over us. The solution is to Seek the kingdom of God! Remember the Kingdom of God is not a place in heaven or on earth. It is Christ ruling in the hearts of believers.

How does He rule in our hearts? How does any King or Prime Minister or President rule over the people under them? They make decrees and the people are expected to follow them. So Jesus has given us His decrees in His Word. There He speaks to us and guides according to His will. We let Him rule in our hearts when we listen and follow Him. We are letting Jesus rule in our hearts and minds when we let His peace take over in our hearts and minds. As Paul says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Jesus also tells us to seek God's righteousness. That is God's greatest gift. He gives us His righteousness. The fact is we are worriers. We try not to. We know God is faithful and we want to trust Him, but we still worry. If worrying isn't your weakness there are a dozen other ways in which we fail to trust and follow God. We have all failed to truly seek first God's Kingdom. Therefore, seek God's righteousness, turn to Him in repentance. Trust Him not only to take care of your physical needs but trust that He does completely forgive you. Enjoy the Peace that surpasses all understanding, knowing that God is not angry with you. Even if you are undergoing some discipline, it is not because God is angry with you, but because He loves you. Now He forgives you and has covered you with His righteousness. Jesus lived His life in perfect obedience and He gives that perfection to us. Your Father sees that righteousness and He says of you, "This is My beloved Child in whom I am well pleased."

Our lives will be so much better off if we learn to trust God and not worry about anything in this life. Seek God and His righteousness and He will give us everything for this life and the life to come.

Amen.