

June 6, 2021

“Freed from Worry”
Lesson 1 of Unit

Matthew 6:25-34

Intro

Today begins our summer quarter of lessons entitled “Confident Hope”. The lessons for June deal with Jesus teaching about faith. Today’s passage from Matthew deals with the topic of worry.

Worry is a universal human emotion and response. We would like not to worry, but we look at situations and circumstances, and our minds go into high gear. This passage is in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, and in it he addresses this problem of worry. The earlier parts of chapter 6 deal with the idea of trust: can we trust God to provide for what we need, or do we need to find a way to get those things ourselves? Jesus reminds His hearers (and His followers throughout time) that we can put our confidence in what He says and what He does.

Read Matthew 6:25-34

1. vs. 25: The first area of worry: survival

Finding enough to eat and drink is easy for the majority of us

It Jesus’ day, and much of the world today, finding and preparing food is time-consuming

Also, most people didn’t have disposable income—they used all they had to survive

These concerns are true also of the clothes that people wore

They were hand-made, which took a significant amount of time

The materials purchased cost money—again, not disposable income, but a necessity

Jesus is changing their viewpoint from worry to faith

“Look at the bigger perspective” he seems to be saying

“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?”

He isn’t saying these things aren’t necessary or important

He’s saying that worrying about getting them isn’t the way for a believer to operate

That raises the question, “What is more important in life than having food or clothes?”

To answer that question calls for us to consider what’s truly important and valuable

2. vs. 26: He gives them a comparison to consider

“Look at the birds of the air”

Birds don’t worry about finding food; they gather what is provided by God in nature

They don’t work like humans, sowing or reaping or storing in barns

However...

Jesus is not suggesting that people shouldn’t sow or reap or store

He is drawing a comparison that shows God’s care

Man is God’s highest creation: made last, made with a soul, relationship with God

If God takes care of animals of lesser value and more distant relationship....

How much more will he care for and feed people created in His image

3. vs. 27: He finishes this section with a rhetorical question

“Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

If this were possible, most of us would have added days, not just hours, to our lives

In times when we aren't worrying, we realize that worry wastes time, effort, and energy

The logical next thought is, “If it doesn't add anything to my life, why am I doing it?”

4. vs. 28: Jesus continues about clothing for the next three verses

Making clothes, as noted in vs. 25, takes time and effort

Materials have to be grown (like flax) or raised (like sheep)

Those raw materials have to be converted into a material for clothing

The cloth has to be cut and then sewn

All these works were done by hand—time-consuming!

Based on this, we can see why the average person didn't have multiple changes of clothes

This lack of additional clothing indicated one's lower economic status

Jesus develops another comparison—the flowers of the field (wildflowers)

They don't do any work to look like they do

They are very commonplace / ordinary (like most of Jesus' listeners)

Yet they are beautiful because God made them—a good reminder for us

5. vs. 29: Solomon at his best wasn't as sharp as these flowers

Solomon was the wealthiest, most upper-class man, of his time, maybe ever

He was the king; his palace must have been richly decorated

A field of flowers, even wildflowers, is more gorgeous than even a king's palace

God cares for even the “simplest” parts of His creation

The implication is that God will also care for people, His highest creation

6. vs. 30: This verse is a continuation of the idea at the end of vs. 29

If God takes care of the lesser, He will also take care of the greater

The grass (the flowers) are short-lived; they are beautiful today and burned tomorrow

If God loves and cares for them, He will also care for us

We will have the clothes and the food we need

Jesus rebukes the disciples as being of “little faith”

When they fail to trust Him when in danger or in need

(See Matt. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8)

7. vs. 31: The word “so” in this verse indicates a shift in what Jesus is saying

The previous verses were Now he finishes the last 4 verses with what “to” do

“Do not worry” doesn't mean ignore completely or don't plan

He instructs us to avoid undue anxiety

In other words, don't catastrophize (don't see the worst before it happens)

8. vs. 32: Jesus instructs His followers to trust God, not act like pagans

The pagans (non-Jews) in most cultures had multiple gods they worshipped

These were gods of the harvest, of the rain, of the sun, etc

They seemed to know there was a greater being than themselves from nature

Someone created all this
But they did not know God personally
The Jews of Jesus' time did know God personally
Jesus tells them not to behave like pagans who don't know God
Who He is and/or how He works
God meets every human need (see Matt. 5:45)
The Jews know this and thank God for his blessings and provisions
To worry indicates a lack of faith about who God is and in His power

9. vs. 33: A very well-known verse now arises in the context of what Jesus is teaching
"Seek first His kingdom and his righteousness"
This is part one; we are called to seek the righteousness of God and His kingdom
If we seek His kingdom, we are seeking the things that He wants
Aligning our goals with God changes our focus
More on what He wants, less on what we want
(We must remember: God always meets our needs)
Seeking His righteousness means seeking to follow God's ways
Again, this aligns our goals with what God wants
"Be ye holy, for I am holy"

If we set ourselves to following these two instructions, what happens to us?
Jesus himself says "all these things will be given to you as well"
All the food we need, all the clothes we need
In other words, all the material things to live, God will provide
This is a result of our committing ourselves to God's ways
We recognize that God is in control of our lives; He will take care of us

A brief connection to something Machiel said a few Sunday nights ago:
Some people subscribe to the "health and wealth" gospel
God wants us to be rich and well-off, they say
Those who believe that might use this verse wrongly
It doesn't say God will make us rich
It says God will provide our needs
We show our faith in God by satisfaction that what He has provided is enough
We don't need to have more to know that God is our provider

Also, this verse isn't telling people to sit around and wait for things to drop out of the sky
We are expected to work while here on the Earth
jobs are God's means of providing what we need, not us providing for ourselves

10. vs. 34: This verse summarizes vs. 32-33: "Therefore, do not worry..."
God is in control of time, of the future (tomorrow)
Our worry can't change anything about tomorrow
We are still to plan and prepare intelligently
We just don't do these things out of fear
We do all to seek God and follow His kingdom ways
Besides, we have enough to deal with today! Why not deal with today first...?

Application: This verse, so well-known to Christians, is really a foundational text about living the Christian life. Don't worry, seek God's righteousness and His kingdom in all we do. That means in how we use our time, how we relate to people in our worlds, how we feel and what we think about. This instruction helps lift a burden off our shoulders. We don't have to worry about anything. God, who loves us, provides all we need daily. As we submit ourselves to God's will daily, we find we are looking at life from His perspective, and not our own one which tends to worry. He wants us to trust in that daily provision, and thus free ourselves from worry.

Prayer: Father God, forgive us for worrying about our needs and our futures. You know all, and You always provide all we need. Help us to trust in You more daily by seeking Your kingdom and Your righteousness in all we do. In Jesus' name, Amen.