

November 28, 2021

“Facing Life Without Worry”
Lesson 5 of Unit

Matthew 6:25-34

Intro

Sleepless nights. Sweaty palms. Nervous restlessness. Feelings of panic. If you have never felt any of these sensations, then today’s lesson won’t be of any help to you.

However, if you have been through these feelings, you’re in the right place. We might call these feelings, stress or anxiety or worry. Whatever we call it, it’s likely that all of us have gone through it at some point, and none of us like it very much. There are hundreds of self-help books on the market about learning to cope with stress or on overcoming anxiety. These topics sell well because people worry.

God does not want us to worry. God is the ruler of the universe, and He has promised to meet our needs. Therefore, we can be confident about our future, since He is in control of that future. What Jesus is teaching in this passage is more than just “Don’t worry”. He is teaching His followers the proper perspective so that we can be free from worry. God has promised to care for His people in all of life’s circumstances; therefore, we can surrender worry and find peace in how He provides.

Read Matthew 6:25-34

1. vs. 25: Jesus tells people to not worry about three essentials for life
 - food, water, clothing
 - In Jesus’ day, much of a person’s time was devoted to gaining these three things
 - Jesus points out the larger purpose our lives have in God’s eyes
 - “Life is more important than food, and the body more important than clothes”
 - People exist for more than the mere sake of existing
 - This runs completely opposite of those that claim our world is random, that nothing we do has any purpose or meaning
 - Jesus says His followers live as people dedicated to God and His will in their lives
 - This isn’t saying that basic necessities aren’t important
 - It’s saying that God sees His followers as precious, the focus of His love

2. vs. 26: Jesus uses an example here, comparing a lesser something to a greater something
 - “Look at the birds of the air”
 - Birds are of little value: there are lots of them, and they’re ordinary
 - Birds don’t work as hard as humans do
 - They don’t sow, work the soil, harvest, store the crops
 - “And yet” says Jesus, “your Heavenly Father feeds them”
 - “Are you not much more valuable than they?”
 - Jesus finishes the comparison by showing if God takes care of the lesser thing (the birds),
 - He will certainly take care of the greater thing (people)
 - This isn’t an encouragement to quit working; it’s a reminder of God’s care

3. vs. 27: Jesus adds another question about how we live our lives
“Which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”
It’s a rhetorical question—
Jesus and His listeners already know the answer to this
No one can add anything to life by worrying about things
The implied question that comes next is, “Then why worry?”
If God takes care of the birds, who don’t worry, He will also take care of humanity, which
is made in His image.
There is no good reason to worry, or value to be gained by worrying
4. vs. 28: Jesus uses the same patten of lesser to greater in this next example
“Why do you worry about clothes? The lilies of the field...do not labor or spin”
The comparison with the birds was focused on food, a necessity of life
This comparison deals with clothes, another necessity of life
Jesus refers to “labor and spin”
Most people grew their own crops, and made their own clothes
The clothes came from either the flax crop or raising/shearing sheep
Both of these activities call for a great deal of labor
Spinning the harvested products into cloth is also laborious
Jesus notes that the lilies don’t do their of these things
5. vs. 29: Jesus compares the beauty of wildflowers to the glory of Solomon
In the Bible, there is no one who had more materially than Solomon
Therefore, no one could expect to equal or surpass the material glory he had
But Jesus says Solomon’s treasure is not as great as the beauty of the flowers
6. vs. 30: Two comparisons here, one less obvious than the other
The obvious comparison is God’s provision is His creation’s “clothing”
He “clothes” the grass (plants) in the field, and He also provides for man to be clothed
- The less obvious comparison is about the burning of the grass / plants
These natural elements were used for frequently for fires
There isn’t a lot of wood in the area, so dried plants become burning material
Something that was beautiful yesterday might be used to cook dinner tomorrow
God made the flowers/plants, which are more beautiful than Solomon’s possessions
Still, He allows them to be burned in a fire
Mankind is God’s crowning creation
Made in God’s image, made last in the order of creation
Will God fail to provide for His most precious creation if He has shown He will provide
for a lesser aspect of His creation?
7. vs. 31: This verse is a repetition of vs. 25
Jesus repeats His main point for emphasis: “Don’t worry”
All these needs will be provided from God
By a job, by a friend, through unexpected circumstances

8. vs. 32: Jesus brings up another example here—the pagans

Pagans are those who don't know God, and don't serve or worship Him
They "run after all these things"

Why? Because they don't know God; they feel they have to meet their own needs

They don't know that God is loving and generous and meets His people's needs

We do know God, and therefore know He meets our needs continuously, joyously

Note also that God is completely aware of what our needs are

This is basically a repetition of the idea in vs. 26

God knows what the birds need and gives it to them

If He takes care of birds, won't He also take care of you?

9. vs. 33: This is a very familiar verse, and we sing the words in the song, "Seek Ye First"

This statement is a summary of what Jesus has been teaching since 5:1

We are to seek His kingdom above all else

As we do, God will make sure our needs are provided for

In 5:6, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"

This implies that seeking God's righteousness is of first importance

Seeking after this righteousness begins with each of us individually

However, we are also to seek to bring the kingdom to the rest of the world

The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) says, "Make disciples..."

We are not to be fearful, like the Gentiles, of not having our basic needs met

"All these things (food, clothing, drink) will be given to you"

In other words, God will meet your needs

(How many times does Jesus have to say it before we get it?? It's a little embarrassing to consider...)

Just in case it needs to be addressed—

Having our needs met doesn't mean getting all we want

God's goal for our lives isn't material wealth, though that may come to some

His goal is for our lives to be patterned after His will

It's not what we want, but "Your will be done in my life"

We are expected to "do our part", to work as we are able to (2 Thess. 3:12)

The big issue here is how we approach our work

We see our work as God's provision for our needs

We see our work as a way of serving God

10. vs. 34: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself"

We don't have control over the future, so worry won't help us to control it

This doesn't mean we're not to plan or save; it means don't obsess about it

God will also provide for His own, a point Jesus makes here repeatedly

"Each day has enough trouble of its own"

We need to live in the now, in the present

There's enough going on today to keep our focus in the now

Application: Though the passage talks about physical needs and how they're met, it's really talking about how we look at our lives, and how we look at God. We are called to consider how we use our time, where we place our efforts, where we place our trust, how we relate to the people around us, and how we feel about all of these things.

This passage shows how Jesus is trying to lighten the burden we feel in this life. He reminds us that we can be free of the burden of worry and fear we might be tempted to have towards the physical needs in this life. When we realize that God always takes care of His own, it releases us from a burden that those who don't know God carry needlessly. Sometimes we have carried it needlessly as well. This is Jesus' instruction to us, that we don't need to worry. God is in control and will take care of us.

Prayer: Father God, thank You that we are precious in Your sight, that You have given us valued us so much as to send Jesus to die for our sins. Teach us daily to be at peace, to reject worry, because we are cared for by You. In Jesus' name, Amen.