

September 17, 2023

## Difficult conversations with Jesus

### Part 3 – Do not worry.

#### Matthew 6:25-34

Are you anxious? What worry keeps you up at night?

Worry hurts us, and it is a sin. Jesus dealt with the sin of anxiety in Matthew 6, speaking about the most basic human needs; food, water, and clothing.

In modern day America we can miss the impact of these verses. For people living in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, they didn't have refrigerators, or a grocery store on every corner. They would have to wake up every day concerned about fresh food and water. Most people only had two articles of clothing and wore them until they were unusable. A far cry from the clothing store app on our phones.

Most of us don't have anxiety about food and water, but we do worry about safety, job security, and unexpected illnesses.

It doesn't matter what we find to be anxious about, we are prone to anxiety and Jesus gives us eight reasons not to be anxious in these verses.

We need to view these as commands from Jesus for our own good.

**1. Matthew 6:25**, *“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?”*

If we are worried about the need for the most basic human necessities, we are missing out on the greatness of life as God intends for us. Missing out on the reason why God created us.

Jesus said in Luke 12:21, *“So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”*

When we are focused on necessities, we miss the glory of God in the world around us.

**2. Matthew 6:26**, *“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?”*

This is not an encouragement to carelessness or laziness. Birds are constantly busy, scratching and digging for food. But God feeds the birds, they are not anxious about their next meal. God provides it, but they must work for it. We too, trust God for provision, but we must work diligently trusting God for tomorrow.

**3. Matthew 6:27**, *“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”*

By worrying, you won't be able to add a single hour or day to your life. On the contrary, it may shorten your life and make you miserable.

**4. Matthew 6:28-30**, *“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. 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?”*

Obviously, we are not all dressed like Solomon, but Jesus isn't saying that we will have extravagant clothing, rather that we will have the clothing that we need.

God doesn't promise us riches here on earth, but the one who follows the Lord and fulfills the call of God on their life will never lack basic provision at a minimum (see Psalm 37:25).

**5 and 6. Matthew 6:32**, *"For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all."*

In other words, by worrying you are acting as if God doesn't exist, you are acting like an unbeliever. We might believe that God exists, but we don't believe that He sees or can provide for our needs. Perhaps we doubt the goodness of God, we doubt that He is a good father. When it comes to the day-to-day needs of this life, we can be guilty of being practical atheists.

*"Anxiety shows that we are too close to the world and too far from God"*. John Piper

This world has nothing lasting to offer and our Heavenly Father has, and always will, prove Himself faithful.

**7. Matthew 6:33**, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

This is not a formula for obtaining wealth, it is a description of how the kingdom of God works. Jesus taught that our focus should be turned away from this world and towards the things of God's kingdom.

This doesn't mean that we don't diligently work at a job, rather it means that we put the things of God above the things of this world.

This is an encouragement by Jesus to avoid idolatry. An idol is anything that we value more than the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Worry and anxiety is an idol.

**8. Matthew 6:34**, *"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

The Lord provides for us today, but we are frequently guilty of taking tomorrow's uncertainties and bringing them into today as a worry. Jesus desires his followers to be free from fear and anxiety.

Worry is a sin, because deep down, we do not trust that God is able to provide for us.

We worship what we value, and frequently we value our worries in our day-to-day decision making. The root cause of anxiety is misplaced worship.

So how do we avoid worry? Psalm 119:11 has the answer, *"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."*

Meditating on the promises of God's word is the antidote for worry. Psalm 46 is a great place to start.

When we sit in the presence of God and encounter His omnipotence, goodness, and glory, our tomorrow fears crumble. That is what it means to, *"Seek He first the kingdom of God..."*

What is the worry that you are carrying today?