

Matthew Ch6v25-34 - Faith In The Father's Care In 2024

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[0 : 00] 171. So we'll read from verse 25 of chapter 6.

Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?

Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your life?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the fields grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothes you, you of little faith?

[1 : 13] So do not worry, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Each day has enough trouble of its own. Thank you, Tim. Thank you, Jonathan.

Let's just pray as we start. Father, we need your help this morning to clearly understand your commands to us in this passage.

And not only that, but to put them into practice in our lives in this coming year. Holy Spirit, be our helper now, we pray.

[2 : 24] Amen. Don't worry about your life, Jesus commands. Now, if ever there was an impossible command to obey from Jesus.

What if I don't get the grades that I need in my exams? What if I choose the wrong career? Will there be enough money to pay the bills? Will my kids stay healthy?

Will I ever get well again? Will that relationship ever heal? What do you worry about most when you consider the year ahead? Well, I think one of the biggest challenges facing us in the coming year is this.

How can I not be consumed by the worries of life when I am surrounded by so many pressures? And well, the big thing in this passage is that Jesus understands.

He sympathizes with us in our struggles against worry. After all, he's experienced the pressures of everyday life as a human being. And as we heard in the last verse there, Jesus acknowledges each day has enough trouble of its own.

[3 : 40] He knows there are things in every day that we could and do worry about. But in this text, he also shows us that we don't have to be consumed by worry.

In fact, he commands us not to worry. And he gives us lots of reasons why. Let's dive right in with two of the most basic ones that we see in this passage.

Jesus says, don't worry about your life because worrying distracts us from what really matters. Look there in verse 25.

He says, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothes?

Jesus is reminding us here that if we are trusting in him, we are eternal beings. This life here on earth is temporary. Our unending life with resurrected eternal bodies is still to come.

[4 : 45] So, don't spend all your time worrying about how to preserve this life and this body as if it's all you have.

It's not. You have infinitely more, Jesus says. And don't let the worries of this temporary life distract you from seeing the glory of your best life to come in the new heavens and earth.

That's the first reason. Here's the second reason not to worry. Jesus says worrying is a waste of time. Look in verse 27. He asks, can any one of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your life? Well, of course we can't. Worrying doesn't change anything about your situation. In fact, it only worsens your ability to handle it. Modern psychologists have also discovered this, funnily enough. And they tell us that constant worrying leads to a buildup of the stress hormone cortisol, which leads to more stress, bad health, bad digestion, inflammation, and so on.

[5 : 51] Jesus, as the maker of the human body, knew this before any psychologist. And he tells us we can do something much better with our time, which we're going to see later in this passage.

But before he tells us what to do instead of worrying, Jesus wants us to understand where worrying comes from. What's the heart issue that actually produces worry?

We're going to read from verse 28, and we're going to find the answer. So verse 28. And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow.

They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothes you?

You of little faith. Did you hear that last part? The base problem lurking underneath the symptom of worry in our lives is we have little faith in our father's care.

[7 : 03] We don't trust our father enough to provide for our needs. Now, a couple of summers ago, we had a big problem in our utility room.

It stunk. And I mean it stunk like a sewer. Now, for a day or two, we tried to ignore it. Now, that was the denial phase. It's not really a problem. But it didn't go away.

So then what we did next to us, we started spraying Febreze, air freshener all over us. You know, like this. But obviously that did nothing. About 20 minutes later, the smell was back.

So we were eventually driven to investigate further and discovered the smell was coming from this unused pipe behind our big massive fridge. And that pipe led to the foul drain underneath the path outside.

That's where the smell was coming from. The smell in the room was a problem. But actually there was a much bigger problem underground which we needed to deal with first to solve the bigger problem, the small problem inside.

[8 : 09] Now, how does this world tell us how to deal with worry? Well, I think the main option is to spray Febreze all over it, right?

A relaxing spa day. A wild night out in the town. Or maybe some mindfulness coloring. Now, all these things may make you forget about your worries for a few hours.

But it's not dealing with the real problem, is it? It's going to come back. Now, Jesus says the only way to not be consumed by the worries of this life is to place your faith over and over again in your heavenly Father's promise to provide.

Now, the opposite of faith is unbelief in God's promises, which leads to dependence on yourself for all of life, right? And that's interesting because the context of this chapter here, Jesus has just spent it warning us not to build up treasure on earth.

And in the verse just preceding this passage, he says, don't make money your master. You know what? He knows us very well, doesn't he?

[9 : 25] Because we all want to build up more and more money. That's an innate thing inside of us because we never want to be without anything that we need. And money can get us all the things that we need.

Now, having money is a wonderful gift from God. And yet, we can so easily fall into the trap of trusting our money and trusting our own resources to provide our needs and not trusting in God. Which in turn leads to all sorts of worry whenever those resources and that money starts to run low or is threatened in some way. So, Jesus' second command in this passage is this.

Rather than placing your faith in your own resources, have faith in your Father's care. He will never let you down.

And now, Jesus knows, he knows, we are not going to buy it first time. We would much rather to be independent, self-sufficient, trusting our own resources rather than in his provision.

[10 : 30] We doubt that he really can provide. So, Jesus gives us two examples from nature to try and show us that God has both the desire and ability to meet all of our needs.

So, let's have a look at those in turn. First example there is in verse 26. Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or store away in barns.

And yet, your Heavenly Father feeds them. And the second example in verse 28, which we already read, is about the flowers of the field who can't make their own clothes, and yet, God clothes them. Now, in both of these examples, there's a constant. God delights to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves.

And so, Jesus asks the very same question after each example. He says, Are you not much more valuable than they?

[11 : 31] If God cares for the little robins and the daisies like this, how much more will he provide your every need? You are not a bird or a flower.

You are a precious son or daughter. How much more does your father desire to provide your needs over those of a plant or a flower?

And listen, when you think about it, what good father would see his child in need of food or clothing or money and not delight to give it to them? Think about that.

Now, we can struggle to actually accept that, I think, because part of us always thinks that God is distant from us. He's way up there somewhere in the clouds and he begrudgingly gives us what we need when we ask and nothing more.

And like fearful children trembling as they approach the door of their father's study, not wanting to disturb and incur their father's wrath, we sometimes have that perspective on God our Father.

[12 : 40] But I can't find anything in this passage to suggest a father like that, can you? Jesus wants us to know that the Father is near and is compassionate towards us and delights to provide our every need.

He promises to provide each need. But what about when it looks like he doesn't? Maybe you've been asking and asking and your needs are not being met as you think best.

Maybe you've had times of wanting in your life. Ibrahim, like thousands of others, has a family in Gaza this morning who can't get food.

The aid is not getting there fast enough. Their house is a pile of rubble. They've moved south and they've been sheltering in a church for two months now. They're Christians.

Most waking moments are spent in desperate prayer. And yet, as he looks down at his starving child, he wonders, has God broken his promise to provide for me?

[13 : 59] Has God broken his promise to provide for us whenever our daily needs are not met? What about when God chooses not to give the house or heal the sickness or provide the job in time?

What then? Well, if we keep following this text, we will see Jesus' answer to one of the toughest questions that we have as Christians.

So let's keep going and see. In verse 31, Jesus gives his third command. So, follow with me from verse 31.

verse 31. And this is the climax and summary of Jesus' whole argument in this passage. So we need to listen up here. It says this, So do not worry, saying, what shall we eat?

What shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

[15 : 14] Jesus tells us not to spend our time worrying about our daily needs in 2024. But instead, to spend our time seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness.

First, what does it mean to seek first God's kingdom? Well, if you look back in chapter 6, verse 9, Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray and we all know this.

It says this, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So, to seek first God's kingdom means to seek first to say to God each day in the coming year, not my will, but your will be done.

It's about his good, loving rule being worked out in our lives. And there are big implications of that prayer every day in our lives. Because, I'm going to be honest, a lot of the time, my first concern is how to build up my kingdom.

[16 : 25] kingdom. And I'm not focused on how to build God's kingdom. Often, my top priority in life is getting better financial stability for myself, for my family.

Not a bad thing. But, Jesus says, make God's kingdom your first priority. even if being generous towards church and mission is not the most financially beneficial option for you.

Maybe your top priority is being accepted among your peers or your friend group, blending in as much as possible. Well, Jesus says, make God's kingdom your first priority this year, even if you lose the respect of your peers because you're open about your faith.

Maybe for you the top priority is having good health. Not a bad thing by any means. A gift from God. But, Jesus says, make God's kingdom your first priority, even if serving leaves you exhausted on a Sunday afternoon or a Friday night.

I challenge you, be honest with yourself and write out a list of your top priorities for 2024. Things that you spend your time worrying about happening in your life.

[17 : 48] Genuinely, do this when you get home. I've done one for myself and it was very revealing. And once you've made out your list, bring it to God, present it to Him and say, Father, these are the things I'm anxious for to happen this year, but how can I seek first your kingdom in 2022?

Maybe you could write down the names of two people that you're going to invest time in praying for and meeting. Or, one way that you'd like to serve in church where you see there's a need. Or, one missionary you'd like to support this year, even if it means going without something yourself.

Jesus promises us that if we invest our lives in building His kingdom, then He will provide our daily needs. But there's also a second part to this command, isn't there?

It's to seek first His righteousness. And earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in chapter 5, verse 6, He said, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. So rather than spending all our time running after our daily needs, Jesus says, hunger and thirst after righteousness. Which means, invest your time in becoming more like Jesus.

[19 : 14] Long for growth in godliness. Is that a top priority for you in 2024? I cannot honestly say it was on my initial list that I wrote out.

But Jesus says, make it a priority. So how is it going to happen for you? Well, some suggestions. Set a daily time with the Lord where you will meet with Him to hear from His Word and spend time in personal worship of Him.

Or you can set a target for three or four good Christian books that you could read this year. And if you don't know which ones to read, maybe have a chat with the elders and they could give you some recommendations. Or maybe you could ask a brother or sister in the body to meet with you regularly for encouragement and prayer.

Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. And all these things will be given to you as well.

Yes, Jesus promises to provide all of our needs whenever we are seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness. And this does bring us back to the question, the big question, that we raised earlier, doesn't it?

[20 : 37] What about when our daily needs for food, health, shelter, money, are not met? Does that mean the Father has broken His promise to provide?

God will have to need to ask here is, what do we really most need? Think about it.

Because of our fallen nature, our bodies naturally decay and die. And there's nothing we can do to stop it. So what we ultimately need is something more than food, good health, a good house, a comfortable wage, while we're here on earth, right?

These are good things which God may well graciously provide us for a time, but they're not what we ultimately need for eternity. What we actually need is Jesus, His presence and His provision forever.

Turn with me please to Revelation chapter 7 and you'll see what I mean. Revelation, the last book in the Bible, chapter 7, it's on page 1,238.

[21 : 59] And in John's vision here, we're going to get a glimpse of what God's kingdom looks like in its fully realized sense at the end of time.

If we are trusting in Christ, we are a part of God's kingdom right now. It is here, and yet Jesus also says it's still to come in its fullest sense in the new heavens and earth.

And that's what John sees in his vision, which we're going to read now. We're going to read from verse 13. Then one of the elders asked me, these in white robes, who are they?

Where do they come from? I answered, sir, you know. And he said, these are they who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.

Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple, and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. Never again will they hunger, never again will they thirst.

[23 : 01] The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat, for the lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

How amazing is that? Jesus can promise all our needs will be met, because ultimately he himself will meet them in heaven.

And that's a promise that we can build our lives on. And that's as true for Ibrahim and his family in Gaza this morning as it's true for us in Carragaline.

And that releases us from the need to spend our lives worrying about our present needs not being met. Because we are guaranteed unending years of Jesus' total provision in heaven.

You know what? In this coming year we can ask our good and gracious father to provide our every need day to day. But remember when he chooses not to provide for a certain need that we've asked for he has already prepared a place for you in heaven where you will want and hunger no more or your body will not get sick or tired.

[24 : 47] that is your future in Christ. So in conclusion our dearly beloved children of the king don't be consumed by worry this year.

Jesus has commanded us not to worry and he has promised to provide our every need and he has instructed us to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness above every other priority.

So have faith in your father's care for you in 2024 and spend it well seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness knowing that he will provide.

Let's pray. Jesus we thank you for your words of comfort to us in our worries.

We trust you father with our every need in this coming year. you know each one. Save us from being consumed by worry and help us to trust in your care instead.

[26 : 21] Holy Spirit bring to our minds these precious promises time and time again so that we can live with confidence in our father's care and seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

it's in Jesus name that we ask it. Amen. Well we are going to sing our last song now.