

Matthew Ch6v25-34

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[0 : 0 0] And as they are going out, I'm going to invite Kevin to come and get himself ready, and I'm going to hand over to him then. Thank you, Kevin. Well, good morning again. It's good to be with you all, and I bring you greetings from Middleton Baptist Church, another Cork Kerry Project church, and it's wonderful to be here with you.

When I was in the U.S., I described the Cork Kerry Project to people. I was saying, it's like when you go to another Baptist church, it's like visiting your cousin's house. It's like, it's not your own home, but it's very familiar, and that's a precious thing, and I give thanks to God for that.

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6, the Sermon on the Mount. We're going to be looking at verses 24 to 34 in particular this morning.

It should be verse 25 to 34. Matthew chapter 6, 25 through to verse 34. These are the words of Jesus Christ.

He says, Therefore, I say to you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, what you will drink, or about your body, what you will put on.

[1 : 3 6] Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 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? Which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life?

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, how much more will he not more clothe you, O you, of little faith?

Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, what shall we drink, what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

[2 : 4 7] Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all of these things will be added to you.

Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow. Tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Father, as we consider these words of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that we would have ears to hear and eyes to see the light of your truth.

We ask for your help in Jesus' name. Amen. Worry is a powerful thing. Something we've all experienced at one point or another.

Some problem or crisis or challenge comes crashing into your life, and it's something that you cannot just fix. And so you start to worry.

What's going to happen next? What will I do if this happens? How will I cope if that happens? Is this ever going to get better? Worry is a powerful thing.

[4 : 0 0] You become so focused on the problem at hand that you develop a sort of tunnel vision where all you can think about from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to sleep is that thing, that problem.

Has that ever happened to you? It's happened to me. Sometimes, when we're in that worried state, a well-meaning friend or family member will come alongside us and they will say something along these lines.

Hey, don't worry about it. Don't worry about it. And as well-intentioned as those words are, they are, of course, 100% not effective.

It's like throwing a cup of water on a raging fire. The words just evaporate. And they have no effect. It's like that song.

As I was thinking of this passage, I was thinking of that song. Years ago, it was used for the National Lottery. Bobby McFerrin, Don't Worry, Be Happy. Have you ever heard that song? Here's a little song I wrote.

[5 : 01] You might want to sing it note for note. Don't worry, be happy. In every life, we have some trouble, but when you worry, you make it double. Don't worry, be happy. Don't worry, be happy.

Now, that is a very catchy song, and it's very bad at treating worry. That's a great song to listen to when you're not worried and everything is fine, you're on your way to the beach and it's sunny. But when life is actually difficult and you're dealing with the anxiety that comes with living in a fallen world, that's the last song you want to hear. It's actually counterproductive because it'll just make you angry.

It's superficial, as if stopping worrying was just like turning off a light switch. But when we consider the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in this passage this morning, we find something altogether different.

He deals with worry in a profound and comprehensive way. Unlike our well-intentioned friends in that catchy song, Jesus' teaching on worry goes beneath the surface, underneath the symptoms, and gets right to the source of why we worry about the things that cause us trouble.

[6 : 19] And he shows us a better way, a way of his kingdom, the way of faith in him. Now before we jump into these verses, let's quickly just remind ourselves of where we are in our Bibles.

Matthew 5, 6, and 7 are the Sermon on the Mount. And that is Jesus teaching his disciples all about life in the kingdom of God.

God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. It's not a military kingdom like the Roman kingdom. Remember Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world. It's not a worldly military kingdom. God's kingdom is his realm of salvation and his rule of his lordship.

To be a Christian, to be a disciple of Jesus, means to come into the kingdom by faith in Jesus. If you look back at chapter 4 of Matthew, verse 17, Jesus began his public ministry as the Messiah with these words, repent, turn from your sin, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The kingdom is here. Jesus is the king. He brings the kingdom. You enter into that kingdom through faith in him. So by turning from our sins to Jesus, we enter in.

[7 : 32] We submit to King Jesus. We serve him, worship him, obey him, enjoy him. That is what it means to be a Christian. Here in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 5, 6, and 7, he's teaching his disciples what it means to be citizens of that kingdom.

Here are the ethics of the kingdom. This is what it means to live as my disciples. And in this passage, in Matthew 6, he spends quite a long time, this is a considerable chunk of the Sermon on the Mount, and it deals with worry.

The first thing we need to understand is that here in this passage, Jesus is addressing a specific type of worry. He is specifically addressing the problem of worrying about the necessities of life, the stuff that we need to live.

Look at verse 31. He sums it up with these questions. What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? In Jesus' day, the struggle for the necessities of life, food, water, clothing, it was never ending.

Normal people, like you and me, had to work really hard just to not die from starvation and thirst. Food had to be planted and nurtured, harvested, cooked all by hand, and even then, you were at the mercy of the weather because if it didn't rain, you didn't have a load of plumbing and irrigation systems.

[9 : 04] Your harvest would fail and you'd be in trouble. And even water had to be drawn from a well and brought to your house by hand. There were no taps. And in terms of clothing, people usually just had a handful of garments to their name, nothing more.

You were considered very well off if you had more than one or two changes of clothes. So when Jesus says to his disciples here, he's sitting down with them, teaching them, this is what it means to be in my kingdom.

He says, don't worry about food. Don't worry about what you're going to drink and what you're going to wear. It hits them in a way that it probably doesn't hit us immediately as people who live in the 21st century.

Because we go down to Tesco and it's full of food. We open up our taps, it's full of water, and we have so much clothes that we actually run out of space of where to put them and we put them in

clothes bags. But for these people hearing this, they're like, oh, that's what I spend most of my time trying to do is just get something to eat so I can make it to the next day.

Now, you might be tempted to think, okay, well then, this doesn't really apply to us because now we have taps and we have Tesco. That's not the case. And here's why. Because when Jesus is speaking about food and drink and clothing, he's using those as examples of the necessities of life as a whole.

[10:21] These are the sort of things that we get focused on, what our immediate needs, our physical needs, the things that we need just to survive, the nuts and bolts, as it were, of everyday life.

So while we don't have to worry about the availability of food or clothing, don't we still worry about life? How am I going to pay my bills this month?

Will I have enough money to make it to the end of the month? How am I ever going to buy a house in this market? What am I going to retire on? What are my kids going to, what kind of world do my kids enter into?

Are we going to have another recession? How am I supposed to pay rent and save for a mortgage? Am I going to be able to get a good job when I leave school? These are real needs.

You need somewhere to live. You've got to pay your rent, you've got to heat your house, you've got to feed your kids, you've got to plan for the future. And then Jesus comes to us and he says, don't worry.

[11:27] Now if all Jesus said to us is don't worry, I think he'd be just like that catchy song. Just don't worry about it. And it wouldn't be effective.

But Jesus doesn't stop there. He doesn't just give us a bare command. He gives us reasons, real concrete reasons why we don't need to worry.

And I think he gives us three that we're going to look at in the first half here. Two smaller ones and the third one he spends a lot more time on so I'd say that's the main one. The first smaller reason is this.

Life, verse 25, life is about more than just meeting your needs. He makes this point in verse 25 in the form of a question. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

The problem with it focusing exclusively on these things is that it reduces life down to them. It sort of shrinks life down. Worry monopolizes our thoughts and our energies.

[12:32] It consumes us to the point that we can't see beyond or above them. Worrying about the necessities of life eclipses the meaning of life from our view which is to glorify God, to know God and to enjoy Him forever.

Reason number two, verse 27, again Jesus in the form of a question he makes the point worrying is futile. It doesn't do anything. Which of you by being anxious, he asks, can add a single hour to his life?

You can't extend your life. You can't make yourself taller. You can't do any of those things. You're so limited. And he said, what about worrying will never accomplish these things?

The only thing that worry accomplishes is sorrow. Worrying is futile. Someone once described worry as a rocking chair. It gives you something to do.

You feel like you're doing something but you're going nowhere. All this energy and you're going nowhere. Third reason, verses 26 to 32, as I said, I think this is the main reason because of how much weight and time Jesus puts behind it.

[13:50] Your heavenly Father will provide. Your heavenly Father will provide. He comes at this point from a few different angles. I'm just going to read them quickly.

Verse 26, he points to the birds. 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?

Arguing from the lesser to the greater. This is true of the birds, my disciples. How much more so is it true of you? Child of God. Verse 28, he points to the flowers.

Why are you anxious about clothing? Look at the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil or spin yet I tell you, even Solomon, the rich, glorious king of Israel with all his wealth and pomp was never dressed as well as one of these.

He says, if God so clothes the grass of the field, like today it's there, tomorrow it's thrown into the oven, it's gone. How much more so will he clothe you, oh you of little faith? Your heavenly Father will provide.

[15:01] And again, verse 31, he comes at it again from a different angle. He speaks to the Gentiles, those who don't know God. And he says, therefore do not be anxious asking what shall we eat, what shall we drink, what shall we wear.

For the Gentiles, those who don't know God, run after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you do need them. He knows that you need them all.

Don't be like the Gentiles who don't know God, who are just focused exclusively on these things, as if this is the whole, this is the be all and end all of life. Brothers and sisters, listen to what Jesus is saying to you this morning.

God, your Father, knows everything that you need. And he will give it to you. If you need it, then you either have it or you're going to have it in his timing.

And if you never get it, it's because you never needed it. God knows everything that you need. I don't even know everything that I need.

[16:04] As a parent, you look at your children, as an analogy, you look at your children and see oftentimes they need to go through tough things that they don't want to go through in order to grow and develop.

How much more so will our God give us what we need, not just the necessities, even the challenges and the pains of this life, so that we grow in our trust in him.

God will provide everything that we need. Jesus says, you don't have to be anxious about your life. You can trust him. Worry is a powerful thing.

Jesus deals with it in a powerful way. He's given us these three reasons. Life is about more than just your needs. Worrying is futile.

God is your father. He will provide. But Jesus doesn't stop there. He drills down deeper right to the very source of worry. Look at the end of verse 30 again.

[17:07] He says, oh you of little faith. That's what Jesus points to. Not that they had no faith. They were his disciples. He said, this worry that you have about your needs, the necessities of life, it comes from weak or small faith.

He's saying, this isn't how you should live as my disciples. Now, I need to pause here for a second and make a very important clarifying point. We must be careful not to confuse the worry that Jesus is addressing in this passage with other things in the Christian life such as normal sadness and lament.

Let me explain what I mean. Worry due to a lack of faith is very different to sadness. Psalm 142, David said, with my voice, I cry out to the Lord with my voice, I plead for mercy to the Lord, I pour out my complaint to him, I tell my trouble before him.

To put it simply, David is sad, he is low, he is in a dark place and if David was there next to you and you had this scripture in Matthew 6, it would be wrong to be like, don't worry, you're fine.

That would be a misuse of scripture, wouldn't it? He's feeling the brokenness of this world, it's sadness, that's good to lament and feel sad. Worry due to a lack of faith is different also to normal concern.

[18:42] 1 Corinthians 11, the Apostle Paul writes this, he says, he speaks of the daily pressure on me and my anxiety for all the churches.

I don't think he's referring to the same sort of anxiety that Jesus is referencing. Paul is simply saying this, I am concerned for how the churches that have been planted under my ministry and the ministry of others, I'm concerned that they're going well.

That's not a sinful anxiety, that's just normal concern, the way that parents are concerned for their children or the way that if some of you perhaps are waiting for leaving cert results or junior cert results, that's a normal concern and yes, of course, it can twist into worry and a mistrust of God or distrust of God but in and of itself, that's normal.

You see the point I'm trying to get at? We need to be able to distinguish between those things. We don't want to come up to someone who is just having a hard time and slap Matthew 6, do not worry on them and think that's going to heal everything.

The worry that Jesus is addressing here comes from a lack of faith. That is its source. It's not just some isolated issue, it's rooted, Jesus says, in what we value the most.

[20:01] Did you notice that this passage in verse 25 begins with the word therefore. This word therefore tells us that everything he's just said about worry flows from and out of in continuity with everything he's just said beforehand.

They're all put together. when we jump back to verse 19 where I think his train of thought begins, we see that Jesus has been teaching his disciples specifically about what they are to value the most.

Let's look at them quickly in three chunks. First verses 19 to 21. Do not lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven where moth and rust destroy, where thieves break in and steal, but instead lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven instead of on earth where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. He says, as my disciples, you are to value, to treasure the things that are above, the things of heaven and focus your hearts on those things. because whatever you treasure, whatever you value, that's what your heart, your inner compass is going to point towards and say, that's true north and your life is going to fall in line with that direction.

[21 : 29] He says, don't put true north, don't focus your heart, don't treasure the things of this earth because they pass away. Wrath and rust, moth and rust destroy those things.

even Olympic medals, money and fame. Earthly glory will pass away along with earth itself one day. Jesus says, value the things that cannot be taken away from you. Lay up treasure in heaven. Next, verses 22 to 23.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness? Jesus is referring to a commonly held belief at that time that light would come into your body through your eye.

[22 : 34] It was sort of the window of the soul. We still say that today. But that light was good for you. It certainly is sunshine. It goes in through your eyes and fills up your whole body with light and brings health and vitality.

And Jesus is taking that commonly held belief and he's transposing it or using it to speak of a spiritual reality. He says, if you fix your eyes, the spiritual eyes of your heart, if you want to put it that way, the spiritual sense that you have on what is true, on the light, then your whole body, your whole life will be filled with light.

It will bring goodness and truth and health. But if not, if your spiritual sight is bad and you're focused on the wrong things, not heavenly things, but earthly things, then oh, how great that darkness will be.

You see how it's following on from the treasure? What are you looking at? What are you valuing? What are you valuing? And finally, verse 24, again, he's using these contrasts.

He says, no one can serve two masters. For you either hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

[23 : 49] You cannot serve God and money. That word money there can also just be translated stuff, things, material goods.

What's Jesus getting at here in verses 19 to 24? If you want to put it in the form of a question, he's asking this, what do you treasure above all? What do you look at with the eyes of your heart?

And who are you serving? He says, you can't serve God and stuff. And then so when he says therefore, he's going right along and he's saying, therefore, do not worry about the things that you need.

Because those who don't know God, focus on these things because that's where their treasure is, that's what they serve, that's what they truly value. He said, it's not meant to be like that for you.

You belong to God the Father. You're in the kingdom. Seek the things that are above. And God will give you all the things that you need. Jesus is not denying our physical needs. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

[25 : 02] life is about so much more than just food and drink and clothing and bills and holidays and cars and exams and stuff.

Beware of getting bogged down in the nuts and bolts of life and losing sight of the meaning of life. life is about knowing God and living with him.

That is the joy of the Christian life, is it not? And that is a joy that will come to its climax when we are with him forever. This is just a foretaste of that joy.

Life is about longing for his kingdom, seeking his righteousness and his kingdom to come, not only in our own lives, but across the world. that God's rule and reign and glory would be known all

around the world that he has created.

If we allow ourselves to be focused on those things, then we will not need to worry. If you're worried this morning, it's good to ask yourself, what am I worried about?

[26 : 15] That's a good first step. A bit of self-diagnosis. Can I add to your list of questions? When you're really worried and upset about something, ask yourself, what am I treasuring?

What am I valuing the most in life right now? What am I focusing on? Where are the eyes of my heart looking right now?

And who am I serving? Jesus says, oh, you of little faith, I don't think he was saying that as some sort of harsh rebuke like, you idiots. He's trying to say, don't you see, oh, you of little faith, how valuable you are.

Friends, if you were in Christ this morning, if we could have a glimmer of a sight of the love of God for us in Christ Jesus, we would never doubt again that he would ever provide for us. You think God is short on cash?

Do you think he forgets things, that he lets things slide? He will always provide for his people.

Always. Take these words of the Lord Jesus Christ and hammer them deep into your heart.

[27 : 32] Preach them to yourself. Say, God is my Father, he will provide. God is my Father, he will provide. God is my Father, he will provide. He knows everything that I need and he will provide it for me in Christ Jesus.

To put it another way, Christian, you are free to not worry about your life. You have concerns, you still have to plan for the future, there are still problems to be dealt with.

This is not don't worry, be happy, catchy song approach to life. But it is to say in the worry and the stresses of life that we don't have to worry about these things.

The alternative to worry, according to Jesus, isn't caring about nothing, it's caring about the right things in the right order. It's a life where we keep the first things first.

That's why he says at the end there, verse 33, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and then all these things will be added to you. He's not saying don't go shopping.

[28 : 38] Like, God will provide for me, I don't have to go shopping. Of course you do. You've got to plan for your future, you've got to plan financially, you've got to be smart and use the brain that God gave you. You don't have to worry about these things, seek first the kingdom.

If you want to worry less, don't just say, I want to worry less. Pray and ask God to help you to recalibrate your heart, to maybe correct the compass back to the things that are most important.

Him and his kingdom and seeking his righteousness. You can trust God with everything else. Yes, you're going to work a job, you're going to pay your bills, deal with stress and setbacks and uncertainties, but you're not going to let that take over your life and let that be the be all and end all. Instead, resolve to seek first the kingdom, to submit to Jesus as your king, and to lay up treasure in heaven. Jesus ends this teaching with this concluding point in verse 34.

He says, therefore, in light of everything that I've just told you, don't be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself, sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

[30 : 00] I love the way that Jesus limits us as his disciples in this verse. He says, don't worry about tomorrow. Don't worry about next week, or how are you going to provide for this, or how are you going to get that, and if that's ever going to happen, how am I going to provide for my children?

He says, just focus on today, that's plenty. Don't let the worries of the future stop you from following me and trusting me today. Worry is a powerful thing.

Jesus is greater and more powerful than our worries, and he will provide everything that we need. If you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, I wonder if you've ever thought about the Christian life in these terms.

I hope that by looking at God's word, the Bible, with us this morning, you've seen that life is about so much more than just stuff. It's about living with God and for God, and how freeing that is.

I pray for us all this morning as we look ahead to the future, as you look ahead to the future, is that you will treasure what is good and true, that you will lay up treasure in heaven, and that you will trust Jesus the King.

[31 : 18] You keep your eyes fixed on him, serve him, one day at a time until you see him. As we've sung already this morning, riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise.

Thou my inheritance, now and always. Thou and thou only the first in my heart. Thou high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we pray that you would help us to take the teaching of Jesus Christ, our Lord, to heart.

Lord, I pray where our compass is off and where we are out of alignment and our priorities have slipped and been jumbled, we pray, Lord, that by your spirit you would help us correct them.

Pray for those, Lord, who are this morning worried about serious problems and anxious for the future, that you would calm their hearts. We thank you that Jesus' words here are not trite and superficial, but deep because they point us towards you, the fount of all wisdom and glory and love and provision.

[32 : 33] Father, you have made us and we trust that as you are our Father in heaven, you will provide for us all of our needs in your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us, we pray, day to day.

And we pray that your kingdom and your righteousness would come in our lives and in Carrig Line and in Carrig Tool and around this world, we pray for the glory of Jesus.

Amen. Amen. Thank you, Kevin.

We are going to sing in response. It's another catchy tune, but it's not full of bad advice. It is going to...