

Jesus Speaks About Worry

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[0 : 00] And he said to his disciples, Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.

For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens. They neither sow nor reap. They neither store they neither storehouse nor barns.

And yet God feeds them of how much more value are they than the birds? Of how much more value are you than the birds?

And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do a small thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?

Consider the lilies, how they grow, they neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not a rage like one of these.

[1 : 08] But if God so clothed the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you? O you of little faith, O you of little faith, and do you seek not what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried?

For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

Amen. Amen. Thanks, Michelle, for reading for us.

This morning, I thought I'd begin by reminding all of us of a nursery rhyme that I grew up with, and I think most, if not all of us, would be familiar with this nursery rhyme.

This nursery rhyme actually traumatized me as a child. It's the old lady who swallowed a fly. And what happens is, she ends up swallowing all sorts of other things.

[2 : 20] She swallows a spider, and a bird, and a cat, and on, and on, and on. And, I just thought this lady had problems.

I mean, she's going around swallowing animals whole. Obviously, she has at least one problem.

And as I'm older and I look back at it, my conclusion is that she had a root problem.

And her root problem was anxiety. She was worried. First, she worried about what a fly could do to her.

And then she worried about what swallowing a spider could do to her. And she kept adding on and on to fix a problem that started as something very simple.

I think that's a picture of an anxious person. It's a picture of a person that's consumed with worry.

And a lot of us can be like that sometimes.

[3 : 33] We could be like the old woman who swallowed a fly. we're always running to address a need here or a need there trying to fix things.

If we're not careful, we won't have a minute of peace because we're always worried or we're trying to get ahead of things just steeped in our own anxiousness.

Jesus addresses our tendency to worry in Luke 12. And ultimately, I believe what it comes down to is he's saying that the solution to our anxiety is seeing the spiritual source behind our material needs.

the solution to our anxiety is seeing the spiritual source behind our material needs. Let's pray.

Father, we pray for you to meet with us now. We pray, first of all, Lord, for strength in this moment that what is needed among this congregation will be delivered, that we will hear from you, and that your spirit will speak clearly to us.

[5 : 09] Would you strengthen our hearts? Would you build us up? And may you alone be glorified, we pray, in Christ's name. Amen.

So last week you heard about greed, greed, and Luke chapter 12 continues along those lines. Jesus addresses our disposition towards material things.

So now he is addressing how we tend to worry about the things that we need in life. And so that we are clear, these things are actually connected.

greed is somewhat related to worry. And I thought at the beginning we'd point this out with a quote from a theologian by the name of David Guzik.

And this is what David Guzik says. He says, greed and worry are closely connected. Greed can never get enough. Worry is afraid it will never have enough.

[6 : 22] Neither have their eyes on Jesus. Neither have their eyes on Jesus. And it's not a problem.

This morning I'd like to work through this text using two main headings. There are material needs on the spiritual source.

needs. So first let's look at material needs. When addressing his disciples Jesus acknowledges the reality of material needs.

He doesn't say that we don't need these things. He doesn't say that we ought to ignore them. In fact what he does is he acknowledges that we do need food, we need clothing, he affirms that they are legitimate needs.

But he gives us a simple instruction about these needs. He says don't be anxious about them. In other words we shouldn't be overly concerned about where our meals and our clothing and the school fees and the car bills and the mortgage and all these other things will come from.

[7 : 49] Now I said it's a simple instruction but we all know that in reality it's not so simple. In fact you know sometimes I think Jesus might as well has said go ahead and worry about everything because that's what we do.

We don't really follow the instruction we just we worry that's the first thing we do. We tend to get anxious. about how we're going to find this how we're going to pay for that.

And Jesus knows that we have a tendency we're prone to be anxious and that's why he says don't be anxious.

And he gives some examples to reinforce his instruction. He points to some obvious things in the material world. He points to birds and flowers and grass things that we're all familiar with.

Nothing complicated but he shows how these things they thrive and they thrive without a care about how they're going to thrive.

[9 : 02] Jesus says consider the ravens ravens. And so let's do that. Let's take some time to consider the ravens. As far as I am aware we don't have ravens in the Bahamas.

But we have plenty of pigeons. We have plenty of seagulls. So let's think about those things. It'll be the same effect. And I have become well acquainted with pigeons.

Every morning I park in a certain spot and I have to walk from where I'm parked to my office.

And as I'm walking sometimes there are pigeons walking alongside me. And I tell you no lie. I swear day after day these pigeons are getting fatter and fatter.

It's like I don't know. There's a restaurant right next to my office building. And I don't know if people feed them there or they find food there but they hang out there.

[10 : 10] And they're walking next to me and I swear they have no care. They don't think about where their meal is coming from. They know it's coming and it shows. They're literally getting fatter and fatter.

And I'm walking along and I'm thinking I have a whole day of meetings. I have to consider how to plan for meetings. I'm thinking about my bosses.

They want reports. They want recommendations. And I look back at this fat pigeon. And I swear I'm almost envious because it's clear that they don't care.

And that's why Jesus points to them. When we look at these things in the natural world, they're not anxious. They expect that day by day they're going to find what they need.

And then Jesus says consider the lilies. And again, I don't know if we have lilies in the Bahamas. I'm not skilled in that way, but I know we have plenty of hibiscus.

[11 : 16] hibiscus. So let's think about hibiscus. And what he does is he says specifically consider how they grow. I can assure you flowers are not worried about where they're going to blossom and where they're going to grow.

And that's different for us. And some of us are in the corporate world or we own businesses, and we have to sit down and be intentional. We have to plan growth from term to term.

But when we look at the flowers, they're not having meetings trying to figure out how to have growth in the third quarter over the year. They don't have a care.

Naturally, they just grow. And then Jesus does something even more interesting. He points to the richest man there ever was.

He says, consider Solomon. So we're comparing Solomon and these lilies. Now, there have been studies about how wealthy Solomon was and how that would translate into today's world.

[12:35] So, a very conservative estimate, the most conservative that I've found, says that in today's economy, Solomon would have been worth about \$2 trillion.

And that's the conservative estimate. The estimates that go up as high as \$30 trillion that I've found. So that's somewhere between \$2 trillion and \$30 trillion.

That's a lot of money. today, there's not one person in this whole world who is worth \$1 trillion.

And there's talk about Elon Musk trying to become a trillionaire. And if he encompasses that, he will still need to make at least another \$1 trillion to equal Solomon's conservative wealth estimate.

And Jesus does that because the richest man in the world, as he says, still was not adorned like how he has given glory to the lilies.

[13:57] And they do it without a single care about it. So Jesus points to Solomon, and I believe that's because we tend to think that money is the solution to everything.

we can often believe that if we just have enough money, if we just made enough, if enough was stored away in the bank, then we'd have no worries.

So what do we do? We strive to make money. But then we still know that there are multi-millionaires in the world.

who still worry about money. There are multi-millionaires who still are anxious that they don't have enough.

And I'll confess to you that at one point, maybe at more than one point, I fell into that category. I believe that if I just made enough money, things would be great.

[15:12] I remember when I first came back from university and I wasn't making a lot of money, and someone asked me, in actually a very large setting, they asked me, ideally, how much money would you like to make?

If you could pick your salary, ideally, what would be great for you? money? And I thought this huge sum, and I said, wow, I said, if I could just make \$30,000 a year, I would have it made.

To me, that was a fortune. I said, man, if I could get \$30,000, you know I was steeped in poverty, right? So, eventually, by the grace of God, one day I made \$30,000 a year.

I know what I found? It really wasn't as much money as I thought it was. It wasn't a huge fortune.

And that's what we realized, no matter what amount we make, if we don't have the right disposition, if we don't have the right focus, we'll still be worried.

We won't ever be enough. So, again, there are multi-millionaires people who believe they need more.

[16:34] They don't have enough. And that should tell us something. That tells us that the material needs that we have, ultimately, they're not answered by material means.

And that brings me to my second and final point, and that is our spiritual source. service. So, notice in verse 24, Jesus says that the ravens are fed not because they have store houses or they have barns to store their food.

They're actually fed because God himself feeds them. God has a care for them, and he ensures that they are fed from day to day.

God is our source. And that is the solution to our material needs. We need to understand that God is our source.

He meets our material needs, and just as Jesus gave the example of the birds and the flowers and the grass, we will have our needs met each time.

[17:53] not because of our striving, but because God is a gracious God. Again, the birds didn't sow or reap, the lilies didn't toil or spin, but an all-sovereign God provided for them.

And Jesus makes the point that God does this for grass, and he does this for birds. But how much greater are we in God's sight to grass and to birds?

How much different is the relationship that God has with the beasts of the field, that I'm with you and I? God puts more value on the relationship we have with him than these other things.

So how much more can we be confident that he will also provide for us? We are called his children. We are called his chosen people.

And that's why we don't need to worry. That's why we don't need to be anxious. Because God himself will care for our needs.

[19 : 19] Jesus says, don't be anxious because life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.

And what he is saying is there's more to life than what we can see and touch and feel. There's more to life than material. He's saying that our spiritual condition is always more important than our material needs.

As important as those material concerns are, it's the condition of our souls. It's the health of our relationship with God himself that really matters.

And our material needs are met of that as well. And this is actually a common theme through scripture. From God chose Israel as his chosen people.

We can see this over and over again. And it continues today with us as the spiritual Israel. Here's how Moses describes it to the Israelites when they were about to enter the promised land after 40 years of moving through the wilderness.

[20 : 43] This is what he says to the congregation. And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Moses says that God was working on the hearts of his people as they moved through the wilderness. He was teaching them, he was patiently bringing them to the place that they would understand that it was not about the material things that he could give them.

Though he could give them a promised land, it's not about that. It was more about the relationship that he was building with them.

It was about teaching them to have regard for who he is and teaching him that his instructions would be the most important thing to them.

[22 : 12] They would have complete regard for his word. And even while God was doing this, even while he was working on their hearts, still, he was graciously taking care of all of their material needs.

And Moses again says this in the same address to these people. He says, in verse 4 of Deuteronomy 8, your clothes did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these 40 years. So God was supernaturally sustaining his people as they moved to the wilderness. And we can again be encouraged not to be anxious, not to worry, because God will always provide when we have need.

And where we have a little, he actually sustains our little and makes sure that it's enough for us. So for all of human history, for thousands and thousands of years, God has been providing for his people.

As we saw here, the Israelites didn't have shopping malls that they could stop off out in the desert. Right? Whatever they had with them, God sustained for 40 years.

[23 : 43] It was a miraculous sustaining of them. So if we look back at Luke 12, just let me be clear and clarify some things.

I'm not saying that worrying is the same as planning. Jesus is not discouraging us from planning. He's not even discouraging us for anticipating problems. We can have a plan for challenges that arise and it's not the same as worrying.

So if we look back at the last few years, we've seen a lot of challenges arise. We've seen fuel prices skyrocket many times.

We've seen wars start. We've seen a pandemic. These are all challenges and we can anticipate them. We can expect there will be things that we have to work through maybe even work around.

[24 : 59] But what he's saying is we're not to be overly preoccupied with that to the point that we don't have the faith that God will bring us through.

Even more than that, Jesus isn't preaching some sort of prosperity. He isn't saying that we don't have to work at all. He's not saying that we just sit there and he's going to have God shower us with all sorts of material blessings.

Because I think if we think hard enough we would think that there are Christians we could identify who think they don't have the work. That they would just be blessed and they're going out and they're coming in and they don't have to do anything to earn it.

Nothing but be the child of God. So even when we look at the examples that Jesus gives us in this material world the natural world, the birds and the flowers etc.

We see that the birds actually they go out and work. Birds don't just sit in a tree, open up their beaks and worms fall in there. They actually have to leave their nest and they dig through the earth and they may find seeds and they may find whatever is going to be their meal for the day.

[26 : 19] So Jesus isn't saying we don't need to work but he is pointing out that we have a spiritual source ultimately who supplies all our material needs.

so when Jesus says life is more than food and the body is more than clothing we remember that we need to live according to every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

We need to remember that we need to seek proper relationship with God. And that's really the conclusion of what Jesus is saying here.

He says don't put emphasis on the material things that we need in life. In verse 31 he shows us where the emphasis of our lives should be.

It says instead seek his kingdom and these things will be added to you. So we just seek to know the Lord and the Lord takes care of his own.

[27 : 46] Knowing God should be the priority in our lives and everything else is secondary. Everything else flows from our relationship with God.

And this is what happens. If we know the Lord we learn to trust him. We have experiences with him. We learn to trust him because we become familiar with his character.

What we know about his character is that he is faithful. we know we can count on our God. Jesus describes God in this passage as our father.

And we all know if we trust him that he is a good father. There's a popular phrase today. It's been popular for a long time and it's a really bad phrase.

some people love the title of deadbeat dad. Many times men who don't take care of their children are called a deadbeat dad.

[29 : 05] And I remember that many years ago I was a reporter and I had to sometimes spend a lot of time around the courts. And there's this particular court where fathers would be ordered to make payments for their children.

They had to make child support payments and then the mother of the child would go there and collect. And it was really a depressing place to hang around. Because I want to say more often than not mothers would go there and they'd be very disappointed because the money that they were ordered to pay was not at the court.

Fathers just didn't pay. And when I became familiar with some of the sums of monies that they were ordered to pay, I mean it kind of blew my mind.

It was unbelievable. As low as \$60 a month to take care of a child, fathers would be ordered to pay. And still it wasn't there.

God's not like that. God's not being a deadbeat dad. God takes care of his children.

[30 : 27] So in closing, let's be reminded that Jesus instructs us to worry, to not worry and to not be anxious.

not to be anxious. And I want us to hold on to three reasons that Jesus gives us not to be anxious. Of course, the overarching reason is that we have a spiritual source. But out of that I want to say firstly, we're not to worry because worrying is unprofitable.

It doesn't produce anything good. The only thing that worry produces is more worry. And we would be like the old lady who swore the fly and we'd have to swallow something else and something else and something else.

That's what worry does. It takes us down a steep, dangerous slope. It's a domino effect.

[31 : 31] So worrying is unprofitable. That's why Jesus says, which of you could add a single thing to the span of your life by worrying?

And then he says, you know, you can't do a small thing like that. You can't add anything to your life. And he says, that's a small thing. And of course, we know that's not a small thing. Not for him, it's not a small thing, but for us, it's a huge thing.

And again, it shows the difference between an eternal God and our feeble efforts. So let's not worry because first of all, it's not profitable. It doesn't result in good results.

But secondly, worrying shows that we lack faith in God. That's why Jesus says in verse 28, you of little faith.

So when we look at that, at first we could get the impression that Jesus is criticizing us for not having a certain type of faith. We could almost get the impression that we expect to have some kind of super faith, a type of faith that makes miracles happen.

[32 : 48] But I think if we look closer, we would see it's not quite that. Jesus is really speaking about our lack of confidence in God.

confidence in God to be blind confidence. But God has demonstrated his character to us over thousands of years.

We've read about it. We've read about what he did for ancient Israel, how they got matter from heaven when they were hungry, how they got water from a rock when they were thirsty.

we've been told in scriptures of Elijah how he was fed by ravens during a time of drought. We've been told in the scriptures again about the widow of Zarephath, how God preserved her life miraculously.

God life and then we have our own life experiences. We can think back and say how we made it to this situation or that situation.

[34 : 02] And I think if we look and we can see behind it an all sustaining God who has given what we need materially in each and every circumstance.

So when we worry, we express doubt that God can actually take care of us. And we are not exercising the faith in who he is.

It's again almost as if we are accusing him of being the deadbeat dad. the truth is he always provides for his children.

And then thirdly, worrying can lead us to ungodly behavior. It's amazing what we would do if we think we have no other choice.

If we think we have to take malice into our own hands. Worrying is an internal issue. But it can produce behavior that's ungodly.

[35 : 16] We could be led to do immoral or even illegal things if we let worry get a hold of us. And Jesus uses the example of the nations of the world.

And we know back then and to agree even now nations were all trying to conquer each other so they would have enough resources for their citizens.

And at the time that Jesus was saying this, Rome had pretty much conquered all of the known world. But he creates a contrast between those nations and his spiritual people.

Because our kingdom is not a material kingdom, kingdom, it's a spiritual kingdom. So we don't roll tanks into Ukraine, for example, to take over their agriculture, whatever other resources they have. Our priorities are spiritual. And above all, we seek to honor God in all we do in our lives. so I'm going to leave you with this.

[36 : 36] This is what we ought to do when we are tempted to be anxious. First of what we ought to do, let's not look within ourselves.

By looking to ourselves, our minds can run wild. We will build doubt after doubt and we will be like that old lady again who swore to fly.

You'd think we need to find spiders and a mouse and a cat and everything else. But instead, this is what we should do. Let's not try to be self-sufficient, but let's look to God.

Let's look to Christ, who has carried our burdens so we don't carry them ourselves. We can cast our doubts and our cares on Christ.

Let's turn our doubts into prayers. Let's lay our cares at the feet of the Lord and let's trust our Savior.

[37 : 51] And this is what we'll find. We'll find that God is more than able to take care of his children.

And what's more than that, we'll find that it's his pleasure to take care of us because of his love for us.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we're so privileged to be able to call you Father, to look to you as children who can bring needs to you, knowing that a good father gives to his children.

Lord, you go beyond what our earthly fathers do. Our earthly fathers give us food when we're hungry, and you Lord, go beyond that.

You exceed our expectations. Father, we thank you for who you are. We thank you for showing yourself to be faithful in every generation.

[39 : 17] And Father, we pray that we would not be consumed by worry because we know you are faithful. We would not be consumed by worry because we're not overwhelmed by the material needs that are before us.

But Lord, let us have confidence in our spiritual source, the one who never leaves or forsake us, and the one who is his good pleasure to provide for his children.

May this rest with us and sustain us, we pray. In Christ's name, amen.