

Don't Be Anxious

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[0 : 00] The chapter we read in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 6, I'm going to read from verse 25 on to the end. We've already read it, but it says at the beginning, 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.

And then it says down in verse 33, But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself, sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Now the word anxious comes from a word which means to divide, and you and I know that there is nothing in life that divides us quite like anxiety.

When we're anxious over anything, there's always this kind of divided mind. Now when Jesus says here that we are not to be anxious, let us not therefore be anxious, we've got to realize that he's not saying to us that there will never be any point in your life when you're not to be anxious about things.

Because it's very specific here what he's talking about. It says, 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.

[1 : 29] He's talking here about the basic lifestyle as it were. Because you and I know that there are loads of things that crop up, very difficult things, very painful things, very harrowing things that inevitably will bring a level of anxiety.

But the principles that Jesus talks about, even into these things, these principles do bear upon us here. And it shows us that so often in life we are anxious over things that we shouldn't really be anxious about.

And often our anxiety, often, not always, but often our anxiety comes about through a lack of trust in the Lord. And the great truth that if we, the Lord tells us that if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all the other things, often these things that we are anxious about, the Lord promises that these will be added to us.

Now, in the AV, it says, take no thought for your life rather than don't be anxious. And again, sometimes translators, they have a little bit of difficulty in figuring out just exactly what's being said. But people think that when it says, take no thought for your life, that people are not to make any plans for life. So you just, you take every day and you just go with it, that you don't do any preparations or plans or anything like that.

[3 : 01] Well, that's absurd. Because when Jesus tells us to look at the birds, to focus on the birds, but remember birds make preparation. They build nests, they migrate, they do all these sort of things.

So that's not what Jesus is talking about here. So we're not to have this idea that we're not to have any sort of preparation or in life or anything at all.

But Jesus is here showing not to be anxious about the basic things in life. And if we are, we are showing, as it were, little faith.

That's what it tells us in verse 30. Oh, you of little faith, if you're anxious about these things. And the Lord is reminding us that our heavenly Father knows all about us all the time.

And Jesus uses two very simple and powerful arguments to show of how the provision for life is being made.

[4 : 04] Now, I think one of the things that we've got to remember is that when the Lord promises to provide, he's promising to provide, look after us, to provide food and clothing and the basics of life.

Now, if we went back, say, three, four generations, three generations, or even less, back then, the people were simply our forefathers, our, probably going back to certainly even fathers when young, our grandfathers, it was basic, their lives were basic.

It was the essentials of life. There weren't luxuries. There were no luxuries then. We're living in a day we've been kind of spoiled. We've grown up at a time, as time has developed on, where we have received so much.

And I fear that we have received so much, and I'm talking nationally, we have received so much, and we've received it from God, that we haven't returned thanks to him.

And I fear that more and more we're moving back into a place where all these almost like luxuries and extras that we had in life, that maybe they're starting to get less and less.

[5 : 21] Because God said to his people, remember when they were crossing the Jordan and going into the promised land, and he said, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to bless you. And you're going to build good houses, and the produce of the land will be rich, and there'll be lots of resources there for you.

You're going to get on really well. Beware. This is where the Lord, he's underlining this. You'll find it a few times. And beware that you forget not the Lord your God. But it is the Lord your God who gives you these things, gives you the abilities to get these things, who provides these resources. And then he goes on to warn that if you forget me, then I will take these things from you. And you know, that's in a sense, I would say that it's almost what we're seeing in the very day that we're living in.

So we lived through very often in that time where different to our parents and grandparents, who very often struggled and just had the bare minimum, the bare existence.

There weren't the luxuries of life. And God doesn't promise us the luxuries of life, although in his goodness, he does give us these as well. But he has promised us, as it were, the basic provisions of life.

[6 : 44] And in order to do this, Jesus tells us, and he argues, as it were, from the greater to the lesser. And the Lord is saying, if God is looking after you as a person and caring about you, don't worry about the smaller things.

And he was saying, Jesus is saying, in order to emphasize, like in verse 27, he says, which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his life?

That's what we see him saying there in verse 27. Now, again, translators struggle with this because you'll notice that it's down, if you have the Bible there, it's got, it's got down to the margin.

It tells, or a single cubit to his stature. A cubit was about a foot and a half or 45 centimeters. It tells us that there. So translators struggled with this actual, what exactly it means, because it can go either way.

But the point is this, whether it's adding a foot and a half to our height, or whether it's adding an hour to the length of our life, we can't do either.

[7 : 58] I can't think myself any taller than I am. In fact, I'm shrinking. And I think it's one of the things as we get older, we discover, I wish you could make yourself a little, but you can't.

It's impossible. That's what the Bible tells us. We are the height we're at. God has given us. This is what he's made us. And we cannot add to the days of our life. Disappointed, and to a man once to die, and after death, the judgment.

There is a time to be born, and a time to die. And God is overruling all these things. And in the framework of his care, this is all part of where we're at.

Even although there are many things we don't understand in his providence, and in the way that he works. So we've got to remember that we can't add, or subtract, or anything like that.

And so God is the one who is looking over our life, and he ultimately is the one who holds our life together. And in Jesus, as it were, he's from the lesser to the greater.

[9 : 05] And Jesus points to the birds, and he shows that God feeds them. And he points to the flowers of the field, that God clothes them. And he's saying, if God feeds the birds, and clothes the flowers of the field, how much more is he going to care for you?

And we've always got to remember that. Now, when Jesus says, to look at the birds, or consider the birds, it's not like a casual glance, but that we're actually to study them.

And you know, we learn a lot from nature, that we are to actually study, it's like a measured consideration. Fix our eyes upon them. And the Lord, Jesus himself, used the creation often to illustrate things.

And that's what Jesus is saying to us, to fix our eyes on them, and we learn a lot of spiritual truths from them. Now, God, of course, doesn't feed the birds, as it were, by dropping things from heaven.

And he doesn't feed us, by dropping meals from heaven. You know, you go to the shop, and you get ready meals. God doesn't do that. But God has made provision, for the birds.

[10:28] And God has made provision, for us as well. Yes, the birds fed Elijah, but that was a rare occurrence. But God has made provision, for us as well, in everyday things.

And so, we've got to acknowledge, that's why we say grace, when we have our meal. It's one of the things we do, we acknowledge God, as a provider. We, we term it, we give thanks.

Now, I suppose, a question arises, and people say, well, if what you're saying, here is true, and that God, is providing, the basics in life, the basic necessities, of food, and drink, and clothing, and all these things, how is it, that so many in the world, today, are starving?

How many don't have water? How many don't have food? How many don't have clothing? Well, it's true, there's many don't. But we cannot, lay the charge, against God, because, there are sufficient, resources, in this world, to feed, the whole world.

The reason that, there are many today, starving, is when we look at, all the conflicts, and all the wars, and all the greed, and all the mismanagement, some of the countries, that, where there is starving, it has come about, some of these countries, have great natural resources.

[11:53] But, the between, because of the corruption, and the greed, all the wealth, is creamed off, and even, a lot of aid, that goes out, in order to help, never arrives.

The corruption, the greed, the war, the mismanagement, of things, is absolutely horrendous. So, we cannot lay the blame, at God's court.

It's because of, our mismanagement, of this world, and all that we've been given. And so, the Lord, there is more than sufficient, we would say, to feed the whole world.

Now, the Lord hasn't promised us, a trouble-free life, through, this world. We will have the problems, we will have the difficulties, there will be the heartaches, there will be the sad times.

But you see, if we had, which we did, but if we go back, to verse, 19, Jesus says, do not lay up, for yourselves, treasures on earth, where moth, and rust destroy, where thieves, break in and steal.

[12:59] But he tells us, where, to lay up treasures, in heaven. And, you know, it's, it's so true, that if our focus, is purely upon, the things of this world, if we get caught up, with the things of this world, we will face, incredible disappointment, because the treasures of this world, they're temporary, they're only for a little, and they bring trouble with them, they bring worry.

A lot of the worries in life, come about, through what we have, yes, and what we don't have, but often, what we do have. It was, a lot of people think, that if they, if they amass a fortune, if they get a, a huge amount of wealth, then that will give them, great security in life.

They'll say to themselves, I'll, I'll be so secure, I will have, security for, all my life, if I have great wealth. Well, there's Charles Price, writing in his book, on, on this very thing, he tells about, where he was in a, not, he doesn't tell where, but it was somewhere in Asia, and was a, excuse me, a city, that is known for its extreme wealth, and extreme poverty.

And he was staying in this house, a, a beautiful, like a mansion, and was a big, with courtyards and everything. And, he said that, outside the walls of this house, and the, outside the courtyard, it was, there were slums, of, shacks, with doors hanging off them.

This is where the people stayed. But he said that, the house, and the, that, that he was staying in, for whatever length of time, he said there was broken glass, into the, into the, put into the walls.

[14:56] There were steel gates, everywhere, with alarms, all round. All the windows, had, they were like, being in a prison cell, with bars across them.

There were security alarms, at every turn. In fact, all the people, as they moved about, had loaded guns. And he was saying, right, you look outside, and there's, these shacks, and the doors are hanging off, there's no security.

And he was making the point, that here, here are these people, and they've amassed, so much wealth. But, they have no, they're, they're absolutely, beside themselves, with wealth.

That they're going to be, because of their wealth, they're going to be attacked, they're going to be shot, they're going, everything's going to be stolen. So he's making the point, that the more you have, the more you have to worry about.

And that's what, the very point, that Jesus is making. That our focus, ought to be, in heaven.

Because what, if, what, the riches that we have there, can never be touched.

[16:02] And these are riches, that are, they're forever. The, the, the riches of this world, are temporary. The riches of heaven, are eternal. And they're, they're satisfied, they will satisfy us,

eternally.

And in fact, in that very thing, he makes a point, I was just glancing through it, this, this afternoon. And he was talking about, the reward of heaven, and of how, people say, how, how can there be various, degrees in heaven, or various, differing, kind of rewards.

And he was saying, he, he doesn't understand, or no, but he was, bringing forward the idea. And he said, you know how, you can have a painting. And, you can have two people, look at the exact same painting.

Or two people listening, to the exact same piece of music. And one person, looks at it and says, oh, that's nice. Enjoys it. But the other person, is just, totally focused, and enraptured with it.

And similarly, with a piece of music, one person will say, oh, that's nice. I really enjoy that. But another person, is enraptured with it. And he's saying, maybe that's how it is in glory, with the differing degrees, the differing spiritual capacities.

[17 : 25] As we have been in this world, it follows on. The greater knowledge that we have of Christ, the greater understanding that we have of Christ, the greater service that we have of Christ, the more that we'll be able to appreciate him in glory.

And although the person with less capacity, won't have any sense of less, but they don't have the ability or the capacity to enjoy in the fullness of others.

And maybe that is, I don't know, but that could very well be how it is. If our focus in life is all about Christ, and while he takes up the main, yes, we're involved in this world, but he's at the center, then seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And then it loosens us. It gives us freedom. The most chilled, as it were, person in this world is a Christian who's not taken up with his world, but has taken up with Christ.

Because they know that the Lord will look after the other things, that we can rest in him and be assured that he'll watch over us. And that's why he said, therefore, don't be anxious about tomorrow.

[18 : 42] Because you and I know that so often we're anxious, whether we think about our home, our families, our work, what we've done, what we haven't done, all these things. And the Lord says, you know, isn't it true?

A lot of the things we worry about, they never materialize. A lot of the things that we're anxious about. I'm sure, as you look back over your life, there were days and nights you were riddled with anxiety about certain things.

Never worked out that way. And so, that is why every day, we should seek to bring our day at the very start to the Lord and seek to trust him and to follow him.

Every single day, in order to deliver us from the unnecessary anxieties. Because he wants us, it's repeated all throughout scripture, casting our cares upon him.

Why? Because he cares for us. You know what he says? Cast all your cares. Not some of them, not most of them, but all, every single one you have. Cast your burden upon the Lord and he will sustain you.

[19 : 49] He'll hold you up. If tonight you feel you're going down. And remember, the word is, cast your cares, cast your burden, not put on and leave a hand.

You know, we're good at that. Giving Christ, we'll say, well, Lord, I'm really, this is really getting to me. And you, you bring it to the Lord, but you're kind of holding it there as if the Lord isn't able to deal with it properly.

And you're saying, I need, I need, I still need to, still need a part of this. No, the word is cast. Lord is saying, I'll take it, but I can't take it until you give it to me.

And so this is where we, we need the faith. We need the grace. We need the trust to give our burden to the Lord, to cast our burden, but he cares for us and he'll sustain us.

And he will deliver us from undue and unnecessary anxiety in this world. Let's pray. Lord, our God, we pray that you will bless us tonight.

[20 : 49] Oh, we need you. We need you every day. So often we feel that we're up against a wall. Sometimes we feel down. Sometimes we feel that as Christians, we're really, really struggling.

And yet the amazing thing is that you will never let us go. Although we sometimes wonder and although sometimes we don't think of you the way that we should, it's never true that you don't think of us because your eye is upon us all the time.

Lord bless us. We pray. Bless all those who are in need, all those who have been prayed for tonight, all those whose hearts are heavy and sore. We commit them to your care and keeping. Bless us and take us to our home safely and forgive us our sin. In Jesus name, we ask it. Amen. Amen. Amen.