

Don't Be Anxious

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[0 : 00] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6.

And that last section of the chapter from verse 25. Therefore I tell you do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink or your body, what you will put on and so on.

Now as we know Jesus, he always got right into the heart of the matter. Quite often people when they're talking they will go round and round a thing and maybe they're trying to bring home a point or make a point.

But they go about it in such a way that at the end you really don't know what they're actually saying. But that was never true with Jesus. He was very, very direct.

And he got right into the heart of the matter so that people weren't left in any doubt as to what he was saying or how he was challenging in what particular way.

[1 : 09] And the Sermon on the Mount as we know is a masterpiece at challenging us about our life. About our relationship with the Lord.

About our relationship to one another. About our relationship to our possessions, what we have. Our relationship really to life in general.

And that is why this particular sermon is one that threw people. It was so radical in its day.

Because so much of Jesus' teaching seemed to turn what people had believed or people thought on its head. And that is why so many people just found it difficult to accept the teaching of the Lord Jesus in his day.

But Jesus really through this teaching doesn't leave us any hiding place. Because we either do one of two things with it. We either face up exactly to what the Lord is saying or else we dismiss it.

[2 : 18] And if we dismiss it we can only dismiss it for a little while. Because one day we have to give an account of ourselves. Of what we have done with what the Lord has shown us.

There is no hiding place. Now as we know Jesus here is addressing his followers. And while he is teaching them in the particular way in which they should live.

In the different relationships. He is also teaching them and warning them against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. The Pharisees. Of course as we know.

They were very very outwardly upright people. And if you wanted to look at what you thought was a really good decent life. You looked at the life of the Pharisee.

Because they seemed to dot all the I's and stroke all the T's. And with regard to the outward keeping of God's law. They seemed to be doing it perfectly. But of course they weren't.

[3 : 17] And not only were they not fulfilling God's law. Which no person is capable of doing. But they were also very devious. And their outward was a mask for all that really was going on.

And that is why Jesus termed them even painted sepulchres. Looked good on the outside but way off inside. And I read this definition of the hypocrite. Hypocrisy is not.

Or a hypocrite is not somebody who falls short of the high ideals that Christ has set. And falls into sin. That's not a hypocrite.

The hypocrite deliberately uses religion to cover up his or her sins. And promote his or her own gains.

So the hypocrite is somebody who is using the religion. This is what they're doing. They're using religion to cover up their sins.

[4 : 15] And also use that religion for themselves. And that's the way the Pharisees operated. And you know sometimes people will accuse the Christian of being hypocrites.

And at one level it's a very sore accusation. And of course the thing is the Christian is a sinner.

We're all sinners. And we all fall short of the ideal of which the Lord has set for us.

And there's nobody feels more keenly their sin than the individual. If they're a true Christian. They are so... They don't need anybody to tell them of their sin.

They're so aware of it themselves. But the hypocrite on the other hand is using religion as a front. So that to cover the sin.

So that people cannot see it outwardly. And yet they're promoting their sin and their selfish ways through this religion. And it's actually a very serious...

[5 : 16] And that is why the Lord Jesus Christ was so scathing. And so attacking the Pharisees. And he was warning his people against them.

And of course there is only one true right. The righteousness of the Pharisee of course was an insincere righteousness. It was a dishonest righteousness. But the righteousness of Christ of course is a true righteousness.

And that is what we rest in. That's what covers us. That is where we're seeking that his righteousness... Not only that his righteousness covers us...

But that his righteousness indwells us and pushes us on. Now Jesus in this chapter... He highlights a few things. And he's highlighting...

He's contrasting really between the way the Pharisee is and how we should be. And in the first area he talks about giving. And the Pharisees gave.

[6 : 18] That's one of the things. They were very good at giving. And when you give... In verse 2... When you give to the needy... Don't sound a trumpet before you... As the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets...

So that they might be praised of others. That's the way the Pharisees were doing it. In other words... When they gave... When they gave to the needy... When they gave to any cause... They did it in a very public way...

So that everybody could see it. It was like blowing a trumpet. Look at what I'm doing. And of course the Lord is saying... That is not how you give. Let not your right hand know what your left is doing. It's really the principle. And the Lord loves a cheerful giver. And we are to give. But we are not to give it in a way... That draws attention to ourselves.

But in a way that is quietly done. So that we are giving out of a heart... That wants to give. And giving to the Lord. If someone sees... Well that's alright.

[7 : 17] But you are not doing it in a way... That promotes what you are doing. You are trying to do it quietly. That's what the Lord is saying. That's the right giving. And then it's the same with regard to praying.

They love to stand and pray in the synagogue... And on the street corners. In other words as they would go along... They would stop. And they would make this obvious... Just supposing it was here...

And you went along Cromwell Street. And all of a sudden they stopped. And they would begin to pray... And make these actions. And people would say... Oh look... They can't even walk very far... Without having to pray.

And people would say... What good men they are. And the Lord is saying... No I know their hearts. This is all a front. It's to make themselves look good. They want the praise of men.

Well they are getting it. But they are not getting the praise of God. And the Lord tells us that our prayer... Is that... First and foremost should be secret prayer.

[8 : 13] It should be silent prayer. Well I shouldn't say silent... But it's secret prayer. That you go in... When you pray... Go into your room and shut the door... And pray to your father who is in secret. And your father who sees in secret...

And it will reward you. So that there will be this... This is the way it is. And before there is public prayer... There should be private prayer. Now of course... When the Lord says there...

That they love to stand... And pray in the synagogues... That is not... Saying to us... That we shouldn't... Stand in prayer... In the church.

Not at all. That's not the point. Because we have our... Our times of prayer... And it's a great privilege. And the person... Is called to pray. I love the way that we have it.

And... Nobody knows more than me... How difficult it is... In the pew... And when you're called on... To pray. Because I remember... And I still...

[9 : 08] When I go somewhere... I still look for a pillar... To try and hide behind. I know what it's like. I still know what it's like. How difficult it is. Because you're leading in prayer. You're called on...

So that the whole idea... Is that others... Pray with you. You're leading... In the aim... That as you pray... It should be...

Guiding others... And leading others... In prayer with you. Say pray quietly... As you pray... Audibly. So that... It's a totally... It's nothing to do...

With what the Lord... Is talking about here. What we're doing... Is that... It's a right thing. And then... Jesus then talks... About... About fasting. And again...

We've got to say... It's not wrong to fast. But the Jews... There was one fast... They were particularly required... And that was on the great day of atonement. They were required to fast on that day.

[10:03] But... Often... People fast... At a time... When... They are... Really... Really urgent... Before God... About something. Maybe with a fearful sense...

Of their sin... People may fast then. Or where they're really... Really wanting to know... The will of God... They may fast then. Or that there's some huge issue...

Within their... Home... Or within their family... Or within themselves... And they feel it's a time... Where they want to draw close to the Lord... Then... They will fast. Now...

But the Pharisees... They're fasting... They fasted in a way... That again... Everybody saw... And they would be... When there'd be food... They'd be... Oh no... I'm fasting...

And they would make... Make themselves look... Drawn... So that people again... Would say... Look at... Look at... What good people these are... See how devoted they are...

[10:58] To God... That they... They're denying themselves... Thing is... Jesus fasted... We find that... In the Bible... We find that... That... Many of the great saints...

At different times... They fasted as well... And it is... It is a thing that... Is fully... Acceptable... Before God...

And if you... If you... I'm sure there are times... Where... And fasting isn't simply a matter of... Denying yourself food... You fast for a particular time... It is denying yourself...

It is... Devoting yourself to God... In a particular way... For a particular time... And in that time... You are setting aside from...

Everything of this world... Everything... That would normally... Take up your time... And you are focusing... Completely upon the Lord... This is a time... Between you and God...

[11:54] It is a special time... And so there is... There is a place... For fasting... But again... It is private... It is not something... Where we are... Parading and trying to...

Make a display of it... So Jesus is... Highlighting all these things... And then he moves... To our attitude... With regard to possessions... And wealth...

And we often divide... Between what we term... Spiritual... And what we term... Temporal... We often put this division... Between the spiritual aspect of life...

And then... What we might talk... Sort of the normal way of life... But Jesus didn't put that division... Because all of life... Is under God's authority...

And we are living our lives... We live and we move... And we have our being... Because of God... And our relationship... To everything... To everyone... And to everything...

[12:52] Ought to be spiritual... Even in the temporal... Aspects of life... And if we have a correct... View of God... And a correct...

Spirituality... Then our possessions... Or whatever we have... Or don't have... Isn't a problem... Very often the problem is... Within the heart...

And we have a wrong view... And a wrong assessment... Of these things... You see... The Pharisees were incredibly covetous... They were always wanting... They were always after... They were never satisfied...

With what they had... It was one of the... The hallmarks of them... And we have to be very careful... In the day that we're living in... We live in a very covetous age... And an age which is always... Showing us... What we really need... And there's always this... Danger of... Now... We mustn't get it wrong... It is not wrong...

[13:47] To have a healthy ambition... And it's not wrong... To try and get on well... In this world... But it always has to be balanced... In a way where we're...

Looking at the Lord... And putting the Lord first... In everything... And... Seeking that... Through whatever we have... Or don't have...

That there is a contentment with it... Because a covetous spirit... Is an awful thing... Covetous... Covetousness... We're told in fact... Is idolatry... And idolatry...

We know it's an anathema... Before the Lord... So it's no little thing... Sometimes people say... Oh well... What's wrong with... Again... We've got to remember that... Covetousness is not... If you see something... That you really like... It's not wrong... To like that thing... Where it is wrong... Is where you... Where you...

[14:41] Have to have it... Where there is this... Inordinate desire... Where you almost wish wrong... On the person who has it... And where you... It now becomes a preoccupation...

With you that... You have to have that... And that it produces... All kinds of wrong spirit... Within you... And again... Covetousness... Very often goes against... Our... Our... Satisfaction... Or should... The satisfaction... We should have... With God's providence... Because at a sense... Covetousness... Goes against... The providence of God... The Apostle Paul... Had learnt... And it wasn't an easy... Lesson... He had learnt... To be content... And contentment... Is the very... Very opposite really... Of covetousness... So the Lord Jesus... Is saying to us... Watch... He was always saying... Beware... Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees... Beware of the Pharisees... Don't have their attitude...

[15:36] They were covetous people... And so there was always... This... This... This danger... Around there... And... So the Lord is saying to us now...

In light of all these different things... And particularly... Following on from... Our possessions... And... Treasures... And all these things... He says... Don't be anxious... About your life... Because it's often in these things... That we become anxious... Yes we become anxious... About our health... We become anxious... About these sort of things as well... But it's very easy to become... Anxious... About our home... And about possessions... And about back balances...

About these kind of things... In fact... It's very easy to become anxious... About life in general... And the Lord is here saying... Therefore I tell you... Do not be anxious...

[16:30] About your life... Now... The AV translates this... Take no thought... About your life... Now... It's actually... Quite a difficult translation to make...

But that isn't the best translation... Because... The Lord doesn't say to us... Don't take any thought... About your life... Because later on... He actually asks us... To consider...

Say for instance... Consider the birds... And the birds... Certainly... They take thought... Because... They plan ahead... The birds plan ahead...

The birds make nests... The birds get food... The birds migrate... There's all these different things... They are... The birds themselves... Make plans... And it's not wrong to make plans...

That's not what the Lord is saying... So... To say... Take no thought for your life... Don't think about your life... Don't make any plans for your life... That's not what the Lord is saying here...

[17:24] So... It's saying... Don't be anxious... About your life... And if I could say... One thing here... With regard to being anxious about your life...

There is one area... Every person... Should be anxious... Regarding their life... And that is... Whether their life... Is in Jesus Christ or not...

Because if a person... Is not in Jesus Christ... Then they should be anxious... Because... To be without Christ... Is the most dangerous place...

In this whole wide world... Because... We are one step away... From calamity... If we do not have Jesus Christ... As our saviour... Then...

As we stand today... We are in a condition... Of lostness... That's what the Bible tells us... That we are without Christ... And without hope... In this world...

[18:17] And a person without hope... Is in a fearful place... And has every reason... To be anxious... And that's why... It is so important... That we come to understand...

The supreme importance... Of having the Lord Jesus Christ... As our saviour... But you know... To have Christ as saviour... It takes away...

Even with regard to death... It takes away... So much of the anxiety... Now I'm not... Saying for one moment... That every Christian...

Faces death... With no troubles... No fears... No anxiety... Ever... I don't... I can't... I wouldn't be as bold... As to make a statement such as that...

Because we're human... We're... We're weak... We're human... And it's all too possible... Just as it is in life... We... We... We know the ideal...

[19 : 16] We know how our faith should be... We live by faith... But sometimes we fail... In our... Our faith... Our faith may be weak... There are times the disciples... Faith was weak...

And there are times... Our faith is weak... And it might be that some people... As they go down into death's dark veil... That that's... That that is where they are... But the thing is...

The Lord will not leave them... But you know... This is a wonderful thing for the Christian... Is that the death... In regarding death... Oh death... Where is your sting?

Grave... Where is your victory? Victory... We know that in Jesus Christ... Jesus has won victory... Over death... And over the grave... And he has promised to be with us...

He said... I'll never leave you... I'll never forsake you... He is going to be with us... All the time... And he will be with us... As we slip into death...

[20 : 11] And he will uphold us in death... And he will take us through death... And he will take us up to be with himself... Forever... And if there's anything... That can remove anxiety...

From a passion... It is that... Word... That assurance... That we have from the Lord... That he is with us... In... Even into death's dark veil...

But here we have this... The... The... The... The Lord is saying to us... Therefore do not be anxious... About your life... And about all these...

Different things... And... Jesus is using... Very simple arguments here... To demonstrate what he's saying... And... One of the things that we find here is that...

We're looking at... This... 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 so on... Now... One of the problems that we face...

[21 : 10] Is this... God has promised... That he will provide... For our needs... But the thing is that... Sometimes... What we're concerned about...

Is far more than our needs... We're looking for the extras... In life... Now the Lord has not promised us... All the extras... And all the luxuries... And all the things... The other things that we may...

May want... But he has promised that he will... That... He will supply... Our needs... He hasn't promised that he will supply... The luxuries and the extras...

He may... He may choose to... Out of his goodness... Out of his mercy... He may do that... Or he may see... That it's not good for us to do that... But he will... Make the provision...

In life... So... Jesus... Is pointing... This is what he's doing is... He's saying... Say for instance... Here in verse 28...

[22 : 06] And... Where at verse 20 says... Look at the birds... And he uses a stronger word... In verse 28... And consider... And... What Jesus is saying here is... Look...

I want you... To consider... I want you to take... Thoughtful reflection... Not just a passing glance... I want you to look at nature...

I want you to look at God's creation... I want you to look at what God has done... And one of the things that he has done is... He has provided... For the birds...

And if he provides... For the birds... How much more... But is he going to provide... For you? And you can see the whole logic...

Of what the Lord Jesus here is saying... And... I think it's so important that we... That we focus upon... Just who the Lord is...

[23 : 02] And we stop... And we reflect... And we think about even the creation... Your fingers framed... You know... It talks about the... Almost the artistic... Artistic qualities of the Lord...

In the... In the making of this world... In its beauty... In its glory... In its grandeur... And here he is... In his majesty... And he's ruling... And he's reigning over everything...

And not even a sparrow... Falls to the ground... Anywhere in this world... Without his knowledge... Of course... He's going to care for you... He's looking after you...

He's concerned about you... All the time... And so the Lord... He's showing how the birds... Can... Can... The Lord provides... And then he says...

Which of you being anxious... Can add a single hour... To his span of life... Some translations have... Adding a cubit... Having... So... Well the thing is... You and I cannot add...

[23 : 57] We cannot think ourselves at all... We cannot make ourselves... Grow taller than we are... In fact... As we get older... It's smaller...

We can't even stop that... I'm shrinking... Every time I go to the hospital... Every six months... I'm a little smaller... And I say to the nurse... Measure me again... But it's obviously...

It's what happens... I can't stop it... I can't think it... And say... I've got to stop that happening... We can't make ourselves... Grow taller... We cannot add one hour... To our life... We cannot... Say right... I'm going to live... If I was told the day I was going to die... Right... I want another day... We cannot... We're not in control... Of these things... And we'll find that... That... Even the most powerful people... In this world... Dictators in this world... People who had the life... And death... Of so many of their citizens... [24 : 49] In their hand... Snap their fingers... And kill millions of their people... When they came to die... They couldn't... Stop... Death... God is in control... Of everything...

Of every single thing... And may I also say... Just in passing... Remember that the Lord has sent... Two appointments... For all of us... There is an appointment to die... You and I have to meet that appointment... And following on from that... There's another appointment... There's an appointment of judgment... We've always got to remember that... Disappointed unto man... Once to die... And after death... The judgment... So we're told... Not to be anxious... Because we cannot... We're not in control... Of these things... Within our life... And he says... Why are you anxious... About clothing? Look at the lilies of the field... Consider them... There was Solomon... Who had all the riches... [25 : 46] Of this world... He was the wisest... Richest... Most decorated king ever... Well he says... Look at the lilies...

Even Solomon... In all his glory... Wasn't arrayed like one of these... The lily is more beautiful... Than Solomon ever was... With all the... Vast wealth he had... And all the clothing... The rich clothing he had... And all the riches round about... His magnificence... Magnificence... Didn't equal... The magnificence... Of the lily... That God has planted... That God has made... And God has planted... And so... This is why... Jesus is saying... Look... You have to get your priorities right... Don't be anxious... See... These... The word anxious... Means to be torn apart... And the word worry... Means to strangle... [26 : 41] Now you think of these two things... To be torn apart... And to be strangled... It was Corrie Ten Boom... Who said... Worry does not empty tomorrow...

Of its sorrow... But it empties today... Of its strength... And that is so true... When we worry... All the strength that we have... For the day... Just saps... Right out of us... It's strangled out of us... It's torn... Away from us... And so Jesus shows us... That worry accomplishes nothing... But he says... What is important... Is faith... Is faith in the Lord... And we've got to stop looking around... And looking within... But we've got to start looking up... And looking to the God of heaven... Our focus must be upon him... And that's why we find very often... You go to the Psalms... [27 : 38] And you'll find often... That the Psalmist is... He's looking up... The Psalmist... Went through so many difficult trials... There were days... He said... You know... There's just a step between me and death...

And when his faith sunk... He really sunk... But the Lord would work again... Within him... And then... His focus would rise back up... And he would look up... And once he saw the Lord... It all changed... You ask the Lord... To keep your focus upon him... And that is why Jesus said... Look... As you go through life... Yes, there are concerns... And there's this and that... And the next thing... But let me tell you how to live it... Is... Put first... The kingdom of God... Seek first... The kingdom of God... And his righteousness... And all these things in life... That worry you... The Lord look after them... [28 : 33] Put the Lord first... And you know... It's quite a... It's amazing sometimes... How the Lord... Will almost... Well, it's not almost... He does...

He puts his name on the line... And he says... If you seek first... The kingdom of God... And his righteousness... Then... All these things... Will be added to you... The Lord will look after... All these things... That are taking up your time... See all these things... That are strangling you... And filling you with anxiety...

No... Your priorities won't... Put the Lord... Seek the Lord... And that seeking... Is... Is diligent searching... And it's... This is true for the Christian as well...
Sometimes we think... That seeking the Lord... Is something that you do... Before you become a Christian... When... Once you start... Seeking the Lord... You never stop... Once you truly start...
[29 : 25] Seeking the Lord... And if you're an old Christian... Here today... You're still seeking the Lord... You're seeking more of Him... You want to see Him better... You want to understand...
More of Him... You want to understand... Who He is... And what He has done... And the more...
You're saying to the Lord... Lord... Open my mind...
And my understanding... To get a greater glimpse... Of Your glory... Help me Lord... To see You...
As You really are... Because remember this... We're going to spend...
Eternity... In the presence of the Lord... And the Lord is giving us... An opportunity... Here on earth...
To prepare for that... This world is a preparation... For glory...
And that's what the Lord is saying... Look... Yeah... There's all these things... You have your life here... Live your life here... But make your priority...
[30 : 20] Seeking me... Seek me... And my kingdom... And... Of course... When we talk about a kingdom... There's a king... And the Lord is a king...
And that within a kingdom... There are citizens... And subjects... And every person... Who comes into the kingdom of God... Is subject to the king... And you're happy to be subject to the king...
There's no Christian who says... You know... I'm a Christian... But... I really resent... I really resent...
Not having my own life... And having to...
Live according to the way... A Christian doesn't say that... Once we come into the kingdom... We are happy... To be ruled by the king... We're happy to be subject to the king...
He is king... We bow before him... He is our Lord... And we're happy with that... And when we come into the kingdom... When we seek the kingdom of God...
[31 : 17] It isn't just that we seek the kingdom... That the king and his kingdom... Will grow within our own heart... This is what we want... For our... For our family...
That the kingdom of God... Will come into their lives... This is what we want... For our community... Isn't that your prayer today? Lord... May your kingdom come...
May it come and storm away... May people today... Who are in darkness... People who bypass this church... Without even a thought... Or any church... Without even a thought... Or stepping in...
Lord... Take them in... May they come under... The word of the king... May they become subject... To the king of the kingdom...
Lord... May your kingdom then come and storm away... Today... May more and more and more people... Come into your kingdom... It's what we pray for our land... For our nation...
[32 : 10] As in the Lord's place... May your kingdom come... May it come... May it come within our land... May more and more and more and more people... Come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...
So if we are seeking... First... The kingdom of God... And his righteousness... Personally... And nationally... And in our communities...
In our church... In our homes... In our families... The Lord is saying... Yep... You put that first... Then... I'll see... To the other thing... All these other things...
That concern you... Trust me... And I will... And I will... That's what he says... Will be added to you... It's not great...
I'll add them to you... You don't need to worry about it... And that's... This is radical teaching... But may the Lord grant us...
[33 : 07] The grace so to live... So that we will truly put him first... Seek him first... And watch him... Adding... The other things to us... Let us pray...
Lord our God... We... We give you thanks... For your gracious goodness... We give thanks Lord... For your teaching... And for... The way you set before us a way...
Forgive us Lord... For our inability... So often to walk... In this particular way... Forgive us Lord... For the many times... We do not... Seek first the kingdom of God...
May there be a growing desire... Within us... That that is what we will be doing... So that more... And more... And more... And more... We will be seeking... Seeking you... Seeking the growth of your kingdom...
In our own heart... In our own homes... In our own families... In our own church here... Within our town... Within our land... Throughout this world... Oh Lord...

[34 : 04] May your kingdom come... Take us to our home safely... We pray... Grant us your grace... In everything... And forgive us our sin... In Jesus name... Amen... In conclusion...

Psalm 146... Verses 5 to 6... Psalm 146... Psalm 146...

5 and 6... Pianicent in yishin... Gamfeel... Nationalism...

It is just for us to... Amber O'karen... In the end... When there is a house... In the end... Hebrews 06... Heather O'karen... Thank you.

Thank you.

[36 : 18] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.