



Lesson 1 June 5th, 2021

Why Do You Worry?

Study Scripture – Matthew 6:25-34

Background Scripture – Matthew 6:19-34

Key Verse:

“For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek ye first His Kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things will be provided to you.”

INTRODUCTION

Our Study is a focus on who God is and what He is like. With this in mind we can understand what Jesus is telling His disciples about what really matters given their relationship with God the Father. Their future is wrapped up with God and so they should pursue things that matter, to avoid things that do not matter because if they go after things that do not matter, they will end up in the wrong place.

This is therefore a Study designed to correct the thinking of the followers of Jesus toward our goals and values of life. The choice therefore has to be made and followers are told to focus their life on what really matters eternally.

This is a most important matter for some have called the time in which we live the “age of anxiety”. This is a time of fear for both adults and children. The issue is therefore whether those who follow Christ show in their everyday life and demonstrate the effects of fear which really leads to anxiety.

Scholars tell us that the word “anxiety” comes from an English word which means “constrictedness”, “narrowness”, “contractedness”. In Latin or Greek it means generally “to throttle”, “to choke”. That is what worry does.

The feeling of anxiety, fear or worry is not really a fear of death, but it is really a fear of life, the things in life which gives reason for our anxiety or worry. One writer says that

“It is the fear of the appalling and fundamental contentions of life that grips men”.

This is quite an extraordinary thing when we consider that believers in God are disturbed, for it shows that they do not think that they have found a gracious God.

One comic said in a tongue-in-cheek statement, **“I’m not so much afraid of the end of the world as I am the end of the month”.**

But we should remind ourselves that the Christian good news deals with the light of divine Revelation and therefore is the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which not only deals with man's guilt, but it also deals with man's anxiety.

So Scripture and Jesus declares, ***“Fear not”***.

There is a principle involved here and it is stated clearly in Chapter 6 verse 24 which comes immediately before our Study Text and makes clear what Jesus is about to say when He uses the critically important introductory word, ***“Therefore”***. This word defines the Context and connects with the statement that Jesus will make. This verse reads:

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”.

Believers therefore have to decide whether they are really believers or not. For if they think they are believers they must be prepared to classify themselves as either slaves of God or the slaves of mammon. A believer is a property of his Master, and his Master has total ownership of him. This means that if a believer is a slave and belonging to God his Master has total responsibility for him and therefore that person should be serving his Master and not serving mammon. Believers should really have no lingering or foreboding worries because their responsibilities belong to their master, namely, God, and it should be clearly understood that God cares for us.

With this in mind therefore Jesus in a series of verses would emphasize in verse 25, 31, and 34, ***“Be not anxious”***.

Now this clearly does not mean that you are not to work or can live to do absolutely nothing and just relax. Some of the people in the Corinthian church sadly came to that conclusion for they thought that since God took care of His saints completely and that Jesus was coming soon, they should leave work to others altogether.

But Jesus deals with that and so does the Apostle Paul. We are reminded that when God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden the most ideal place possible, He told them that they had to work, to till the Garden. This was even before they had sinned for all sin did was to make work difficult. So since we are created by God, God expects us, of course, to work.

So as one scholar says Jesus is simply talking about rejecting “foreboding foresight”, a looking into the future with fear and anxiety. Obviously if the Master who is your Savior has given you life obviously, He would surely give you the lesser of things such as your daily needs for these are minor matters in comparison to the gift of life itself that you have been given.

A PRELUDE TO THE STUDY TEXT

These instructions we are examining are part of the Sermon on the Mount, a definitive series of instructions designed to correct the thinking of the disciples. As He continued the Sermon on the Mount Jesus dealt with several ‘deeds of righteousness’ that the synagogue of the Jews promoted, namely, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. In every case Jesus showed that there was much that was wrong with how people looked at these ‘deeds of righteousness’.

Jesus mercilessly attacked the great amount of ostentation in these religious deeds, warning that ostentation reflected a bad spirit, and showed that those guilty of this practice were really hypocrites, that is, actors, who played a role wearing a mask.



With these people, their outward behavior stood in direct contrast to their inward state. The mask of piety that they wore hid their concern with their own glory and the praise of others. This was really all that they cared about.

Jesus then taught His disciples how they should pray, with this prayer emphasizing the transcendence of God, petitioning Him to do His will everywhere, and to guide His servants in the way of righteousness.

Note carefully that the teachings we will study today are directly connected to this prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. The teachings on wealth and treasures and on anxiety must be viewed in the light of the petitions to God the Father, which Jesus had just laid out for the disciples.

For example, if we take seriously and truly believe the petition in verse 11, *“Give us today our daily bread”*, we will have much less difficulty fixing our dependence on God, and less of an attraction to accumulate and hoard material possessions.

In similar fashion, if we believe *“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen”* (verse 13), we will have less difficulty with anxiety.

Then we will be able to focus on service to God, and follow the priorities of God, rather than wearing the mask of the hypocrite.

The Lesson today teaches us once more that there is a vast difference between Pharisaic “righteousness” and true righteousness.

Jesus warned that the hypocrites who loved public ostentation would receive their reward in full from the men who see them. They would have no other reward, other than that praise of men which they sought. The Father however, ‘sees’ or ‘knows’ the heart, and He will judge the motive for every act.

We will now examine some barometers of righteousness, understanding that the way we treat certain things of this world shows the true state of our soul. Our behavior reveals whether we are among the ‘saved’ or among the ‘lost’.

Verse 19 forbids not just the laying up of treasure, but the laying up of treasure on the earth. Treasures of an earthly nature are things considered valuable and desirable by people on the earth. People therefore work hard to pile up these earthly treasures, for they are most necessary if one wants to achieve worldly purposes. These things give one access to power and position and enable one to indulge the senses.

All would agree that wealth and treasures allow one to enjoy the finer things of life. Every natural man therefore knows that it is much better to be rich than to be poor, and people will tell you often that it is better to suffer as a rich person, than to suffer as a poor person.



But what blindness to pile up treasures that must inevitably perish. If God designs you for eternity, logic says that you should never rationally fix your attention on the things which will be corrupted. At best, the corruptible things should be used only as tools to achieve the purposes of eternity, and not for goals that have no relevance for eternity.

Much of the wealth in Jesus' day consisted of expensive clothing such as 'purple' garments and garments of the best silk. In addition there were stocks of corn and grain, wine as well as gold, silver, money and jewelry.

All of these were subject to decay, destruction, or loss to thieves. We know that even the ancient Pharaohs failed to protect their plans for immortality. They went to great lengths to hide their burial places with their remains and the accompanying fabulous treasures that they thought they needed for the future life. But despite their elaborate precautions, grave robbers have plundered most of these tombs.

Jesus warned that the 'clothes-moths' would eat the best clothes and render them useless. Mildew and vermin would attack food stored up, and thieves would break into houses and steal the precious metals, jewelry and money. All of these earthly treasures were liable to be corrupted or taken away.

No sort of worldly riches or treasure is safe. You simply cannot depend on it. These are 'precarious treasures. It is quite foolish and vain to spend a great deal of time hoarding these things and trusting in them.

Verse 20. There is a way to avoid this problem of the corruptibility of your treasures. Treasures should be deposited in Heaven, for there they will never perish, and cannot be attacked.

Wealth therefore must be put into the hands of God in heaven. We learned a few weeks ago that we 'give' or 'do' things to God by helping the least of his brethren, that is, by doing acts of charity. By being liberal to the poor and helpless we will be providing a treasure in heaven that cannot fail. See Luke 12:33.

The acts of charity that Jesus speaks about are not quite the same as giving one's old worthless clothes or food that we do not want to the poor. Jesus is talking about giving your 'treasures', or 'laying up your treasures in Heaven'. This language suggests that Jesus is calling us to give the things that are very valuable to us into the hands of Heaven.

What we are giving therefore should be 'treasures' or 'valuable things. When we do that, we will be reflecting our desire to give the best of what we have to God, or to the poor. Clearly this is a heart problem. When one loves God, and thereby loves man, his heart will enable him to give of his best in the service to God. He will clearly be right with God, and he will certainly not lose his reward.



Verse 21. The reason for Jesus' instruction becomes clear. A man's heart will be found exactly where the things that he treasures most is to be found. If he gives his treasures to Heaven, his heart will stay right there in Heaven.

The truth of this teaching is obvious, but it is almost universally disregarded. The Scripture however tells us that what we love is our God. Martin Luther cautioned that we carry our God in our hearts everywhere we go, but we can sleep with mammon and wake with it, whether it is power, wealth, pleasure, popularity, or anything else.

The problem for many of us is that when we are rewarded with prosperity, we think that everything is right between God and us. We therefore think that if we spend more time on these earthly things God will not mind. After all, He gave them to us.

The Pharisees believed that God blessed those that He loved with material blessings. They therefore were determined to build great treasures on earth.

They, like many today, felt this way because their spiritual eyes were diseased. They were therefore in spiritual darkness, slaves to greed, coveting money and wealth. Because this was their great desire, they failed to serve God, their true Master.

In verses 22 and 23 therefore, Jesus pointed out that if the eye (the mind) sees clearly, (for the Jews a 'good eye' meant one that was liberal or generous, and an 'evil eye' one that was niggardly or grudging) the whole life would be cheerful and pleasant. But if the eye was evil, covetousness would be in control, and the entire life would be full of darkness.

Jesus taught that the whole man must worship God. A man cannot love the world, treasures and riches, and love God at the same time. When one sets one's heart on riches, this will become his or her God.

THE TEXT

The Text now really deals with the Providence or Government of God. Providence deals with the continuing relationship of God to His creation. God continues His actions to preserve creation and guide it to His intended purpose. Obviously, God knows the future, and being all-wise, He makes perfect preparations for the future.

Believers therefore are able to live with complete assurance that God is present and active in our lives. We are in His care. He is our Lord and Master, and we belong to Him.

We can therefore face the future with absolute confidence, knowing that things do not happen by chance. We can pray knowing that God hears and will act on our prayers, and we can face dangers knowing that He is aware of what is happening and is closely involved. God's love means that His children cannot be separated from His keeping care.



Clearly, it is easy to understand that God has given us the most important thing which is life and so the lesser things will be given to us, and we have to trust Him given that we are people of faith, and we trust Him with our life.

Verse 25. When a person therefore serves God and not “mammon”, they should never be anxiously concerned, perplexed, or suffer distressing thoughts and cares, about the ordinary needs of life.

Note that Jesus lists the **things** that are necessary for supporting human life. A person must eat and drink and must cover the body to protect it against the elements.

We are therefore now looking at seven arguments Jesus gave to us to trust God the Father.

To explain His first reason for saying that worry dishonored God, Jesus gives an argument from creation. Jesus asked a simple question. Would God who graciously and with sovereign love gave us our body, breathing into it the breath of life, refuse to give us what was necessary to preserve it?

It is foolish to think that God would give us the greater gift, that is, the life and the body, and then withhold the lesser gifts, that is, food to sustain life and clothes to protect the body. God had showed His wisdom and power in accurately and wonderfully constructing man to serve His Maker, and it would make no sense for Him not to provide for man.

In the book of Romans 8:32 we are told explicitly

“He that did not spare his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things”?

Sons and daughters, children of the heavenly Father, should therefore ensure that they understand that the Father has given us the greatest gift of all and through that gift we have life. So shall He not give us all the lesser gifts as well?

Verse 26. Jesus now showed the second reason why believers should not have that anxious, oppressive, mentally unsettling care that springs from unbelieving doubts and misgivings. Jesus now argues from the less to the greater.

This is an argument from nature.

He pointed to the birds of the air, who do not labour, they do not plant, reap crops, or store massive amounts of food, and are not supported by their own kind. No humans look after them, and they work continually. Birds are an example to us. They are never idle, and they are always active. They never sit on a limb with their mouth open expecting God in heaven to use His power to drop a worm in their mouth. So they are beautiful lesson for what God the Father wants us to do.



So now we should note that Jesus declared that we human beings and children of God are much better in the sight of God and more precious to Him than the birds. Not one of these birds however can fall down to the ground without God the Father knowing. He cares for them and makes His provision for them. But they are constantly active and do not let the ups and downs from the weather and drought and the contingencies of life bother them. They trust and they do not worry.

God alone established the creation in such a way that He takes care of these birds. Even the meanest and lowliest of His creatures are fed by God. If these birds, created to serve man, were without labor and anxiety, how much more would God nourish man, who was created to serve his Creator, man being so much better than birds!

Verse 27. The third argument or reason why believers should not have anxious care was now put forward. This is an argument from human inability.

It is impossible for human endeavor or thought to add to a man's life, or to increase him-self to the tiniest extent. Some interpret the word "stature" as referring to age, while others interpret it as referring to height.

It is rather foolish to think that by worrying you can get taller or by thinking that by worrying you can extend your life or age. No matter what you do you won't get any younger.

Worrying can only produce vexation and frustration. Only God is in control of those matters and that is why we should trust God for we human beings cannot do anything even as simple as increasing our height or increasing our lifespan. One writer warns us that we can worry ourselves to death, but we cannot worry ourselves to life.

Verse 28. Jesus' fourth argument or reason for not worrying now pointed to the inanimate life. The flowers of the field have no gardener or management, but they spring up, exist, are nourished, and develop exquisite scents and colors, not only without anxious care, but also without care or thought of any kind.

We are told to consider that their life and beauty do not depend on anything but the continued care of God. They simply exist and are beautiful. These scarlet poppies and multicolored flowers found in the land of Palestine do not work as men do or take dress materials and weave it into cloth as women do. They simply grow through a natural process.

They bloom for a day and then are gone. Their life is brief, but they even outshine Solomon. So remember that even though you wear ordinary clothes now you have a future because you will be the aristocrats in the New Heaven and the New Earth, and your dress will surpass Solomon in all his glory.

Verse 29. But even though the court of Solomon was the highest example of human glory, taste, grandeur and magnificence, the little flowers of the field were by nature more glorious, tastefully colored and beautiful than anything he had.



Verse 30. Therefore the conclusions now were that if God was so lavish to set up this creation, where there were always gorgeous arrays of splendid and beautiful flowers which surpassed all the artificial creations of magnificent royalty, and which however existed only for a brief moment, for men would simply take them and casually cast them into the oven to produce heat for his own use, would God's children, who are so dear to him, be left naked?

Would not God even more bountifully and gorgeously clothe His children? Would not God cover His servants with glory, those beloved and blessed ones who are so precious in His sight, who are the heirs of salvation?

Jesus then gently chided the spirit of unbelief, which even the best of us have sometimes, when we look around us at the world and its attraction and are unable to focus properly on God.

So Jesus chides, "*O ye of little faith?*"

Our lack of understanding of who God is and who His children are for Him staggered Jesus.

So make sure that your unbelief does not continue to stagger Him and the heavenly Father.

Verse 31. Jesus emphasized that we should not pay all our attention to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, for the belly and the lack are not from our God, it is from the world.

Verse 32. The next reason or argument from Jesus comes from the revelation of God. Those who worry about the future are the bottom of God's list for they are heathens and so they mind the things of the world.

The Gentiles do not know or care about God or the Providence of God. They think that their soul perishes with their body, and so all their attention is to greedily seek after and be totally concerned about getting plenty of food, clothing, riches, and pleasure. This is all the happiness they expect, and they dedicate themselves to diligently and industriously working to acquire and accumulate treasures on earth. They have no regard for the great God and His all-wise Providence.

Many wealthy and really rich people find out eventually that they have to leave everything behind and because of that they are anxious daily for their focus is to add another extra dollar to their billions.

But also, on the other hand, we have the poor that do not have much of anything and because of what they do not have they are anxious about what is going to happen to them and their family. They worry about government cutting off their meager benefits and their friends or family ignoring them when they see them coming. Poor unbelievers as well as rich unbelievers care in a bad position.

It is therefore sad when these characteristics of Gentiles are found in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of us are not really convinced that God is adequate and therefore we are like



the Gentiles who don't have any Father. We should therefore be sad about the situation among the Gentiles as one writer explains:

“The kinds of gods the Gentiles had in these days were gods that made anyone afraid. Their gods were the gods who lied, the gods who cheated, the gods who lusted. Read the stories of the gods of the Gentiles. They were men like you and I are men, except they were generally worse. They murdered. They stole. They schemed... it's no wonder that the Gentiles were fearful of their gods and had no hope in their gods. They worshipped them out of fear. They worshipped them out of anxiety. They were afraid of them”.

The sixth argument of Jesus therefore comes from the matter of family ties
“For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things”.

But believers in God know all about God, His infinite wisdom and knowledge, and His tender care as a loving Father. He is good and would never do anything to injure His children. He is affectionate and will supply all our needs at the proper and appropriate time. This is the life of daily faith. One scholar delves into the early history of the faith and tells us as follows:

“It's very striking to observe the differences between the memorials of the Christians and pagans, in their epitaphs of the early centuries. Among the pagan epitaphs, we have things like this: “To the unrighteous gods who robbed me of my life”.

“Our hope was in our boy, now all is ashes and lamentations”.

“I, Procepei, lift up my hands against the gods who took me undeserving”.

The epitaphs of the Gentiles.

But then go into the catacombs and read the epitaphs of the Christians:

“Tarentiana lives”.

“Agape, though shalt live forever”.

“Marcus, innocent boy, thou art now among the innocent”.

That's all the difference in the world. The gods took me undeserving; Tarentiana lives”.

Verse 33. Those who truly profess Christ therefore, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are holy and pure in heart, and who can pray the disciple's prayer as modeled in verses 9-13, will know that the business of our salvation must consume us entirely, and our desires, cares, and inquiries, must go in that direction.

This is what is called “the great summing up”. There must be a right state of the heart showing itself into right relationship to earthly things.

Verse 34. Jesus is finally on the seventh argument and therefore speaks about the days of sufficiency provided by Providence. His advice is wise.

You can defeat worry and anxiety by living one day at a time. So one scholar says:

“Tomorrow's anxieties are enough for tomorrow. Do not double them by anticipating them”.



The Sermon on the Mount really deals with the Kingdom that God is building in this world of sin. This Kingdom is being built, and all those that have been called by God, and saved, are placed in Christ, and are in that Kingdom.

Those who see the righteousness in that Kingdom should seek to make this righteousness the supreme aim and pursuit of their life. These things must be sought first and above everything else. Then, all the other things that the heavenly Father knows that we need will be added. Obviously, the father is a liberal and lavish Father.

The 'seekers' will certainly receive their proper portion, but in addition to this they receive much more.

CONCLUSION

Note that there are conditions that Jesus demands.

1. That we seek the kingdom **first** in time. We are not to seek to gain other things and then afterwards seek the Kingdom in our own good time.
2. We must make it **first** in importance. Everything must take the back place to its demands.
3. It must be **first** in our affections and occupy our whole hearts.

Accordingly, we are again reminded, do not have any anxious care for tomorrow. It is useless and will only make us miserable. It is folly, and a weakness that must be avoided.

God alone controls the future, and we must not invade His territory and encroach on His rights. He will do what is best for us. We must trust and obey Him.

We are told not to foolishly increase our present burden by borrowing trouble from tomorrow.

This of course brings up the issue of the relevance of modern psychology to the life of the believer. If it leads us to trust in humanity rather than in God, this is a dangerous discipline. It is not that modern psychology does not have certain good features to it. If it advises us to stop worrying and pull yourself together that is useless and quite impossible. That would be bad psychology for it is repression which is never going to be good for you.

Note that Jesus does not say you will stop worrying for it may never happen. Christians should never have that attitude for it will not help you at all. In fact Scriptures tell you that difficulties may come, and we see this in the life of Job for Job said

"For the thing I greatly feared is come upon me". And it did come to him, and his great fear was realized.

Scripture suggest therefore that you do not worry or fear in advance for that will disturb you.

The Christian method is quite clear. Because of whom God is and what you are you are to take things that disturb you to the Lord.



The Psalmist had an answer for tranquilizers for he said:
I laid down and slept, for the Lord sustained me".

We are also told in Scripture:

"Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication by thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your minds and hearts through Jesus Christ".

Most importantly therefore you should note that you cannot control your mind and hearts and thoughts that cause anxiety for you. You can't.

The promise of God in the Word of God therefore is that God can!

God can do it and as you bring it to Him, He will do it and keep your minds and hearts, says one writer.

So Jesus reminds us that worry is useless. It is simply met by taking things to a sovereign God for He our Lord and Master will meet all your needs by His sovereign power. One scholar states:

"Worry is needless. It's blind. It refuses the lessons of life. It's wicked. It does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but it does empty today of its strength. The secret of tranquility is trust. There is an old Christian cliché. When we are worrying, we're not trusting; when we're trusting, we're not worrying. And that's generally true..."

So, we need not look into the future as if it were a befogged landscape. It's a landscape marked out by a loving heavenly Father who cares for all of His sons. And he who possesses the last hour no longer needs to fear the next minute. May God help us to be delivered from the guilt of sin, but the anxieties of sin as well".

Be aware therefore that this exhortation belongs not only to men, but to women, and to children, whether they be teenagers, or very young children.

So your first step is to make sure that you are in the hands of your heavenly Father and not in the hands of mammon. If you are unsure of your position, simply talk to Him from wherever you are and ask Him for His forgiveness and tell Him that you are wanting to be His child. He will immediately take you up into His arms. There you will find rest and peace and diminishing anxiety throughout life.

Let us go as believers and now grow in grace and learn daily to more and more trust God.

