

MESSAGES FROM THE MOUNT – *Why Worry*

Continuing in our “*Messages from the Mount*” series, I invite you to join me in taking a closer look at **Matthew 6:25ff**. I’ve entitled this lesson “**Why Worry?**” - and it should be obvious from the text why I chose such a title...

²⁵ I tell you, DO NOT WORRY about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?
²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you BY WORRYING can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸ And WHY DO YOU WORRY about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So DO NOT WORRY, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows you need them. ³³ But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore DO NOT WORRY about tomorrow, for tomorrow will WORRY about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The Scriptures often counsel us not to worry, so it shouldn't surprise us that Jesus does as well. In essence, Jesus tells us not to worry about today or tomorrow – that there's no sense fretting about the present or the future. He implies it is fruitless to do so.

Yet, Jesus does more than just tell us not to worry. He gives us the reason why we shouldn't. And what is it? Why shouldn't we worry?

Quite simply, because *we have a heavenly Father who looks after us*. Far too often, believers worry as much as those who discount the very idea that they have a creator who care about them. The way we wring our hands and pace the floor, you'd think sometime we don't really believe we have a Father who loves us and promises to meet our needs.

Now, it is worth noting the example of the birds of the air. God takes care of them. Jesus says, He feeds them. But, unlike the mother-bird who catches the worm and spoon (beak) feeds her little ones, God provides the food, but expects *the birds* to *forage* for it. God's provision doesn't always drop into our laps. Even the manna from heaven God provided in the wilderness had to be gathered or it would go to waste. Solomon even uses the ant as an example of working hard and storing up what God provides for the winter (**Proverbs 6:6-8**). Having said this, *the lily of the field* that Jesus speaks of, *neither toils or spins*. There are some things that we could never provide for ourselves – not matter how hard we might try - that we need to just trust God for.

Easier said than done? Well, here are a few common sense suggestions for those of us who tend to get weighed down with worry...

Do an honest evaluation – Be realistic. We are often worried about things that will never actually happen. Or anxious about things we have no control over anyway. Remember Jesus said, **“DON'T WORRY about tomorrow, for tomorrow will WORRY about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”** In other words, don't borrow trouble. Try to focus on the reality of today's situation. Take life one day at a time.

Got some legitimate reason to fret? The diagnosis is accurate. The divorce is not just a bad dream. The loss you feel is based upon genuine loss. **Focus on God's promises.** I'm not suggesting mindless mantra, but it's amazing how even repeatedly reciting this simple truth from Jesus can calm your nerves. **“I have a Heavenly Father who cares for me and He will take care of me.”** Read this very text when you feel the worries overwhelming you. Sometimes anxiety can be the result of our personal sin and guilt. The Holy Spirit may actually be causing the unrest. If so, we need to repent, confess our sin, seek God's forgiveness, and set it right. Remember that **Hebrews 11:6** says God **“rewards those who earnestly seek Him”** and the reward He promises those who admit their failures – even if it's our weakness when it comes to worry - is forgiveness. **(1st John 1:5-7)**

And speaking of this, **Listen to re-assuring messages.** There are numerous resources to hear God's truth proclaimed on this matter. And of course, there are plenty of hymns and songs of praise that can serve to reinforce this reality in your spirit. I love the peace that the song *“Blessed Assurance”* can bring to my soul - but so the *“God of Angel Armies.”* When I'm overwhelmed with worry, the Spirit often uses music to lift my spirits. And when the dissenting voices in my head contradict what God plainly says about this, I need to have the attitude of Paul in **Romans 3:4** to boldly say that **“God is true”** – and any voice that says differently is to be discarded as coming from **“a liar.”**

Finally, **PRAY, PRAY, PRAY.** And I don't mean that this is to be a last ditch effort. The Apostle Paul writes in **Philippians 4:5-7:** **“Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”** That's calling for prayer as soon as we sense the worry welling up. He says, peace will displace the worry when we pray in faith. Paul said this while imprisoned – not knowing whether he would be allowed to live to see the next sunrise. So, the indication is that though our circumstances may not change one iota – at least not immediately - our perspective will. We must believe God will get us through it one way or another and pray accordingly.

Let not hurry to worry. Instead: **Let's confess the stress, and trust God for the rest.**