

Great Question Series

Matthew 6:25-34

"Why do you worry about...."

This morning we're continuing with our summer series, "Great Questions", but after considering 5 key questions that God asked – we're now continuing on by considering 5 key questions Jesus asked. And our first key question is as pertinent today as it was when Jesus asked it back in the first century. And the question is: *"Why do you worry about...."*(you fill in your own blanks for what you're particular flavor or color of worry is today). I would imagine that most of us here today could quite easily fill in that blank because hardly a day goes by that many of us don't worry about something. And maybe for you, your blank could be filled with several items that continually crop up each and every week.

According to **WEBMD.com** "Chronic worrying affects your daily life so much that it interferes with your appetite, lifestyle habits, relationships, sleep, and job performance. Many people who worry excessively are so anxiety ridden that they seek relief in harmful lifestyle habits such as overeating, eating junk food, cigarette smoking or using alcohol and drugs."

Preacher Vance Havner said: *"Worry, like a rocking chair, will give you something to do, but it won't get you anywhere."*

Corrie Ten Boom said: *"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."*

Is worry a sin? Well in the Bible, there is a distinction drawn between being concerned about something or someone and worrying about someone or something. The person who is concerned, out of his or her faith prays to God and trusts Him for the outcome and with God's leading and direction may actually become part of the solution.

The person who worries, tries to solve the problem on their own or simply sits and worries about it.

Romans 14:23b says that *"...everything that does not come from faith is sin."* And I would say that worry, at its core, is really a lack of trust in God. We don't believe that God will take care of this concern. Or, we don't trust that God will take care of it in our timing and in our way and so we can't live at peace until the situation is resolved our way and in our timing. We tend to be a very self-reliant people and usually have great difficulty trusting in God to work.

When we're worrying about how we're going to pay the bills we're not trusting the promise of **Philippians 4:19** *"My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."*

Nor do we believe the promise of Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28 (NIV) *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

When we worry we're saying to God – "I don't believe that phrase *"all things"* applies to my situation.

When we worry we don't believe David's advice given in Psalm 55:22

Psalms 55:22 (NIV) *Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.*

I find it fascinating in my study of worry the instructions given in **1 Peter 5:6-7** which instructs us to: *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."*

The word for *"cast"* means to unload a heavy burden, to get rid of something. That's what we're being told to do here. When you feel a burden for a situation in life, our first response ought to be to turn first to God and say, *"God, I've got this concern that I don't know what to do with. But you're the wisest and*

kindest being who's ever existed. So, I need You to deal with this while I go on living each moment for Your glory."

But what I also find fascinating about this passage is the larger context it falls within. Look at the larger context in the verses that follow this.

1 Peter 5:8-11 (NIV) *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Worry and anxiety are a fertile ground for the Devil to do his best work. He can use the concerns in our lives to consume us and take our focus off of God and onto our problems. And then we find ourselves unable to focus at work and unable to sleep. It can even creep into our daily devotional time where you technically read the passage of Scripture designated for that day but the whole time you're reading your worrying about some issue in your life. And you may even lift it up to God in prayer – but then you continue to worry about it, rather than trusting that God is in complete control and is already now working out His solution.

Please turn in your Bibles to **Matthew 6:24** which is where I'd like to spend the remainder of our time this morning, focusing on Jesus instruction regarding worry. This passage is a part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in which He's describing the type of people and behavior that occurs in those individuals who are part of his kingdom. His teaching is profoundly simple and very practical. As you'll see, Jesus often uses very common ordinary things to explain profound truths and we'll certainly see that here in this teaching as he uses birds and flowers to show how senseless worrying is.

Matthew 6:24 (NIV) *"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*

Let me stop briefly right here. Most of your Bibles will break right here and the next section about worry begins with verse 25. But the problem with that division is that verse 25 begins with the word, "Therefore" which means that it's the logical conclusion to what preceded it. So the lead in to Jesus' teaching on worry is that there are two ways to live your life. You can spend it focusing and oriented around God or you spend it focusing on and oriented around the things of this world such as money. However, the word translated "money" doesn't actually mean money. The Greek word is "mammon" and some of your translations might have simply translated it that way. "Mammon" simply refers to things of this world rather than things related to God. So, the contrast here is focusing on God vs. focusing on the things related to this world. And that's the core of worry – choosing to become consumed with the details of this life and disconnect them from God. So, before we move on let me ask you, what is the core of your life. Is it God or is it this world? If it's this world, then you'll approach most every situation with the perspective of how can I deal with this. If it's God, then you'll deal with situations by trusting in God's love and sovereignty the attention He has promised to focus on the details of our lives. 3 verses prior to this, Jesus said, *"Where your treasure is there will your heart be also."* Is your treasure in the things of this world or is your ultimate treasure Jesus? You can say Jesus, but if you only focus on Jesus for a few hours on Sunday morning and perhaps during your brief quiet time each day, then is Jesus really your ultimate treasure? When a crisis enters your life where do you go first? To your reasoning and cunning and resources or to God's wisdom and goodness and love?

Let's read the remainder of this passage.

Matthew 6:25-34 (NIV) *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more 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 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?*

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers 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—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 that 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.

Did you notice that Jesus mentions **"worry"** 6 times in these 10 verses. And he starts off with a **command**: *"I tell you, do not worry about your life"* and then he breaks down each of our lives to the very basics: what we eat, drink or wear and he asks the probing question, *"Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes."* To a person who is mostly consumed with this life and the challenges that come along with it life is pretty much that existence. But to the person who's treasure is really God, that's their focus and the rest of life falls under that very large umbrella. When they see a challenge come into their life, rather than seeing it as something to worry about, they look to God and can't wait to see how God works this out for His glory and their benefit. It may not always be easy but if we let God be in charge He will get the glory and we'll grow through it.

In verses 26-30 he uses the very practical examples of birds and flowers and grass. Birds don't worry about where their next meal will come from – God consistently takes care of providing for it and they live worry free. And the logical conclusion is – aren't you more valuable to God than one of these birds and so wouldn't God also take care of you. And consider the flowers. They don't worry about growing. They just let their roots go down into the soil and moisture God provides and then they just naturally grow and look beautiful. And flowers and grass are here for a brief time and then winter comes and they are gone for several months. Wouldn't God also be capable of taking care of you. Birds and flowers don't need to worry, they just live in dependency upon God and they live fine day after day. Why wouldn't you also?

He concludes in verse 31 by saying that "pagans" live life consumed with trying to figure out where they are going to get their food or drink or clothes from. And he says, don't live life that way. Instead live life according to the principle set forth in verse 33. *"Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well."* Seeking His kingdom means living under God's glorious reign in every area of your life. Trusting that your king knows you and loves you and promises to care for you and that He's the very best provider that you could ever have. So, living under His reign you can live each day confident in His care for you. It doesn't mean troubles won't come your way but that God will handle each and every one as it comes. Sometimes He might allow troubles to come into your life but He promises to be with you when they do and He promises to walk with you through each and every one of them. And secondly, see His righteousness. That means to discover anew every single day what it means to be clothed in Christ's righteousness. We're not trying to become righteous because the moment you accept Jesus Christ you are clothed in His righteousness. Your sinful dirty rags of clothes have been replaced with Christ's spotless robe of righteousness. And we spend each and every day discovering anew what that looks like on you. We wake up and learn what it looks like to be wearing patience and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness etc. If you focus on walking out the door each and every day clothed in Christ's character and holiness it will begin to change the way you walk and live. You'll walk with the swagger of Christ. Christ's promise is that if you spend your life focusing on those things – God will take care of the rest.

Jesus ends with an extremely true and practical statement: *“Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”* Can I get an Amen to that truth? So, you can choose to focus on the many troubles of this world – or you can focus primarily on God and living life fully in His righteousness draped all over you and develop a sense of wonder and excitement as to what that’s going to look like on you today. Step out of that door of your house and apartment excited to see what God has planned for you that day. Notice Jesus didn’t say that living this type of approach to life would eliminate worries. He’s very blunt in admitting that they will still be there. But they don’t throw you off of your Christ swagger because what you know is that while troubles may come your way so also will come God’s love and goodness and compassion.

Remember that tremendous promise of Lamentations 3:21

Lamentations 3:21-26 (NIV) *“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: 22 Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’ 25 The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; 26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”*

That’s a truth worth remembering and living in. And yet did you notice how this well known section starts. It starts with the word “Yet”. That means that what he says here is a reaction to something he’d said first.

Here’s what Jeremiah the prophet said previous to this;

Lamentations 3:17-20 (NIV) *I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. 18 So I say, ‘My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the Lord.’ 19 I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. 20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.*

The great promise of God’s love and compassions and faithfulness was preceded by great affliction and bitterness and pain. But this is a man who’s trained himself to seek God’s kingdom and righteousness in the midst of even very difficult circumstances. He’s learned in the midst of challenges and concerns and potential worries to refocus his attention on God and allow His heart to follow. That’s how you handle worry when it’s preparing to invade and take over your life.

The words of the popular hymn “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” capture well the remedy to worry. *“Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”*

Great Question Series
Matthew 6:24-34
“Why do you worry about....”

What “worry” are you currently spending time on?

Preacher Vance Havner: “Worry, like a _____, will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere.”

Corrie Ten Boom: “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its _____.”

Is worry a sin?

According to 1 Peter 5:6-7, what should we do with our worries?

What’s the relationship between worry and 1 Peter 5:8-11?

What does “*Therefore*” refer to in Matthew 6:25?

Where would you say is your greatest treasure? (see Mt. 6:21)

What does Jesus teach with the following illustrations about worry?

- Birds of the air
- Flowers of the field and grass

What is the antidote to worry in Mt. 6:31?

Seek first:

- His _____
- His _____

Application

Philippians 4:4-9 is a *peace sandwich*. Peace is in the middle, what’s on both sides of peace:

Worry is about control. Either you try to control a situation or you let God control it. What are you currently trying to control that you need to let go of? Pray asking God to help you release it to Him.

Great Question Series
Matthew 6:24-34
“Why do you worry about....”

What “worry” are you currently spending time on?

Preacher Vance Havner: “Worry, like a _____, will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere.”

Corrie Ten Boom: “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its _____.”

Is worry a sin?

According to 1 Peter 5:6-7, what should we do with our worries?

What’s the relationship between worry and 1 Peter 5:8-11?

What does “*Therefore*” refer to in Matthew 6:25?

Where would you say is your greatest treasure? (see Mt. 6:21)

What does Jesus teach with the following illustrations about worry?

- Birds of the air
- Flowers of the field and grass

What is the antidote to worry in Mt. 6:31?

Seek first:

- His _____
- His _____

Application

Philippians 4:4-9 is a *peace sandwich*. Peace is in the middle, what’s on both sides of peace:

Worry is about control. Either you try to control a situation or you let God control it. What are you currently trying to control that you need to let go of? Pray asking God to help you release it to Him.