



Matthew 6:25–27

25 “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?”

Reflection

(Today's AYWJ is written by Justin Moffatt.)

The passage we are up to is Matthew 6:25-27. Take a minute to pause and read these remarkable words from Jesus again.

Jesus said:

25 '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?

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ther 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?

“Do not worry about your life”. That’s what Jesus said. It is challenging, disturbing and comforting and liberating, all at the same time. How can we NOT worry about our life? It seems so natural to worry about what we eat, drink and wear; about ‘normal life’ and ‘normal living’. Who doesn’t worry? Worrying about ‘our bodies’ is what we do: young, old and in-between. In part, it is because we simply don’t know what tomorrow will bring in this broken world. We can’t control the future, and yet our fears and dreams, our loves, remain embedded in our hearts. What will happen if my great

fears are realised? What will happen if my hopes are dashed?

So what do we often do? We 'mitigate'. To 'mitigate' is a perfectly natural activity of trying to make something bad less severe, less serious, or less painful; less brutal. One of the natural reactions to fears is to mitigate against potential problems by worrying. And with the energy provided by the worry within, we are sometimes fired up to control, to chase after, to fix and then to organise our way to happiness. But sometimes it all seems too hard, and we freeze and get sad. Sometimes so sad we can no longer function.

What does Jesus we can do about it? Jesus tells us to do something supernatural

in Matthew 6:25 to verse 34, where Jesus sums up his thesis with these words: 'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.' How about that?

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

We are in in the middle of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. If this is your first time here: Just read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.

It takes 15 minutes to read. 30 if you are doing it slowly. 60 if you are meditating on the words. The Sermon on the Mount is famous. It's short and sharp. It's provoc-

ative and liberating. But the best thing is this: We have had the chance to examine how to live our lives in light of God our creator, in light of a ‘father in heaven’. Jesus offers a breathtaking vision of living a Kingdom life in a complex world; of living in light of his Kingship.

Danish writer and theologian Soren Kierkegaard once wrote:

“The human race in the course of time has taken the liberty of softening and softening Christianity until at last we have contrived to make it exactly the opposite of what it is in the New Testament.”

What did Jesus say? (Let’s not soften it.)

24 ‘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.

That is the context for the ‘therefore’ in V25. “Therefore, do not worry..’

John Stott wrote:

“In other words, our basic choice of which of two masters we intend to serve will radically affect our attitude to both. We shall not be anxious about the one (for we have rejected it), but concentrate our mind and energy on the other (for we have chosen him); we shall refuse to become engrossed in our own concerns, but instead seek first the concerns of God.”

When you serve one master (God), when you seek first the Kingdom, your heart is reorientated in the right way. Jesus says you'll get your priorities in order in a way that speaks not so much into the 'trouble', but into the worry. Jesus is all for 'your life', and 'your body', even what you eat, drink and wear. It's the worrying about it, the chasing after it that he warns us against. Why? Because excessive worry shows you that you may have stopped believing in a heavenly father who takes care of you. That's what makes this a challenge.

He says: Look up. Look at the birds of the air (verse 26.) They are industrious. Sure. But they don't do all the mitigating and worrying and controlling and fretting that we humans do. Verse 26,

‘... they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.’

Let the birds be your teacher. And more: Are you not much more valuable than they?

If God looks after the less valuable (the birds) he'll look after you. So fret no more, Jesus says. Relax. It's not all up to you. Your wellbeing and happiness is not, as many say, entirely in your hands. Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? Verse 27, 'No, You can't. In fact, it will take away hours from your life. Years maybe.'

We've got more time in the next two days to ponder all this. But for today – take a

spiritual assessment of your heart. Do you worry too much? Are you praying: “Give us this day our daily bread”? And ‘tomorrow can worry about itself’? Today, I will trust God. He is good. He cares. He feeds. He gives you the clothes. There’s no need to ‘chase after’ the things that are his to give you.

Jesus is speaking in a time and a place where life was even more fragile than it is now. We fret, even though we have so much that at least looks guaranteed.

Peter Bolt wrote: “Without God, there is no certain future and this leads to a profound anxiety about survival. And so life becomes the pursuit of things that might stave off the grave, to add some security in an anxiety-ridden world.”

But with God, and with the Jesus' resurrection behind us, and the general resurrection to come, we can give all our life: fears, hopes and dreams to God. 'Put the world first, and you'll find it gets moth-eaten in your hands. Put God first, and you'll get the world thrown in.'

Today, I have offered a ten-minute reflection. But my suggestion is to get a pen out now and write down these verses: Read them meditate on them and pray over them and into your heart:

Psalm 37:1-4, Hebrews 13:5 and Philippians 4:4-7.

I'll join you again tomorrow and the next day.