

Worthy of Your Trust

By Don Green

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Matthew 6:31-34
Preached on: Sunday, October 22, 2017

Truth Community Church
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

We come to the final section of Jesus' teaching on anxiety found in Matthew 6 and I invite you to turn to Matthew 6 as we conclude our consideration of Jesus' teaching on a topic that hits all of us exactly where we live. All of us to one degree or another know something of the measure of anxiety, of an anxious concern over things that are happening in life and what's going forward, and what Jesus has done here is to give us exactly what we need to have the mindset to move forward in trust and to grow spiritually despite the uncertainties that we face in this world.

And you know, just by way of introduction, I think that if we step back from it and thought about ourselves in our lesser moments, when we face anxiety, our temptation and our desire is to more tightly control our circumstances: to plan more tightly, to get things under control, to have this person do that or to make accommodations for whatever is going on and we tend to want to control the circumstances so that we have a sense that we know what's going to happen in the future and, therefore, we can let our anxieties go away. Well, that's understandable on a human level, perhaps, but it's entirely contrary to the way that Jesus tells us to deal with anxiety. The battle for anxiety is won in your mind, not in your external circumstances. That's the most important thing that you could understand. Anxiety flows from wrong thinking. Speaking specifically to Christians, to brothers and sisters in Christ here, it flows from wrong thinking. It flows, as we are going to see Jesus says, from little faith. Not that you have no faith, not that you're not a Christian simply because you're anxious, but anxiety in the Christian life is a failure to follow through on everything that you know to be true and to work it out in all of its implications. If you can work out and think through all the implications of what it means to be saved, then you realize that anxiety has been dealt with already in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross for you.

Think about it. To greatly oversimplify the effects of salvation, salvation means that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has saved you from sin with the certain intention to bless you forever and ever throughout all of eternity as you fellowship with Christ and believers throughout all the ages around his throne in heaven. That is what salvation has done for you. That's the great big picture of things. God has lovingly, mercifully, graciously saved you from sin when you had no claim on him, and he did so in order to bestow blessings on you not only in this life but far more in the life to come. The plan of God is eternal, beloved. The plan of God is established for all time and he is

God over all. He is omnipotent. And the fact that he has saved you shows you conclusively that he intends to bless you forever. Everything in life, every uncertainty, every sorrow, every failed relationship, everything that goes wrong, everything is subsumed, is submitted under that greater plan and actually contributes to the greater plan. You know, one of the blessings of our final salvation is going to be the recognition that God has saved us through it all and that everything that went wrong in life, speaking now from the past, speaking now going into the future, it's all simply a contributing element to the greater glory of God, to the full greater blessing that he has to bestow upon you. That's where everything in life is moving toward, is toward a final glory where Christ is glorified, Christ is honored for his work in us, and we will find complete absolute satisfaction that every aspect of his work was perfect without exception. That's the big picture of salvation.

Now, the teaching of Scripture and the mindset that you are to bring to life is that those great realities, those great eternal spiritual realities are to inform the way that you consider everything else in your passing earthly existence. Everything else is informed by that. This is to be the controlling thought, the controlling principle in everything in life to you. And along with that is just the recognition, I guess you could say as we said last time, that the God who has done this, the God who is great and mighty and powerful, is the God who is your heavenly Father; the God who protects you; provides for you; who guides you; who watches over you, speaking to Christians here. This God who runs the universe, who sets the planets in orbit, this God who is faithful, this God who has revealed himself in the written word and in the Incarnate Word, this great God is your heavenly Father who protects, provides and guides you in life.

Now if that's true, beloved, well, let's back up. Let's approach it this way. That's true, isn't it? Since that is true, then, this changes the way that you think about everything that troubles you in life. Everything is under the hand of God. Everything is under his watchful care. Even the most extreme difficulties and challenges are all under his care and that is to be the controlling thought in life. When the difficulties come, when relationships betray you, when health starts to fail and you start to move toward the advanced years that can be so difficult for some. You know, I think often, having spent time in pastoral visitation in nursing homes and just realizing these people who are in a failing shell of a body were once in the prime of life like you and I have been and are, but their outcome is failing and it is passing because this flesh was never meant to be our permanent home. Well, in all of that, in all of that, we are not to look at the circumstances and say, "But what about this circumstance? What's going to happen here?" The prevailing controlling thought is, "The God of the Bible is my heavenly Father. He loves me. He saved me. He's going to carry me into heaven." And that is what is supposed to be the cornerstone of your entire worldview as a Christian. That is everything to us. Nothing else matters in comparison.

So we come to Jesus' teaching with that background. We're going to look at the final four verses of Matthew 6, kind of presupposing what we've said in the prior two weeks from verses 25 through 30. Jesus says in Matthew 6:31, he says,

31 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Now, in light of everything that Jesus has said here and the way that we have introduced things this morning, I want you to think about it this way. You know, Jesus frames this teaching in Scripture on the daily level of what we eat, what we drink, what we clothe ourselves with, you know, "How am I going to survive in this life?" And he rebukes the disciples there and he tells them that they are of little faith, "You of little faith," and he warns them that, "Your problem is little faith." And you might think that, "Okay, I can see that in the daily matters of life, that it's little faith not to trust God for those things, but I'm dealing with a major issue. All of life is at stake with what I've got going on here. All of my loved ones are at stake. They are not in Christ and they are rebellious toward him. Or you don't realize that my world has just collapsed. Or the people closest to me have betrayed me. What about that?" And the challenge and the opportunity of Jesus' teaching is best seen when you see how he uses the term, "You of little faith. You of little faith."

If you'll turn in your Scriptures to, well, start right now at chapter 6, verse 30 since we are right there, and then I want to show you something else on this term. Jesus says in Matthew 6:30, "if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!" He says, "You are anxious over the daily provision of life," and he says, "You are anxious this way because you are of little faith." Not of no faith. He's not saying that you're not in the kingdom at all but he's saying that your faith needs to grow in order to appropriate the things of which I'm saying.

And you say, "But this is more than daily life that's at stake." Well, fair enough. Turn over to Matthew 8, if you would. You'll remember that the disciples were in a boat that was about to sink in the midst of a terrible storm and in Matthew 8:23, it says, "When [Jesus] got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep." He wasn't doing anything, which is sometimes your experience, right? You're in the midst of a really bad crisis and it seems like nothing is happening. You pray and there seems to be no answer from God as if he were asleep.

"And they came to Him," in verse 25, "and woke Him, saying, 'Save us, Lord; we are perishing!'" They are in the midst, think of being on the seas with the rising and falling waves and the swells and it makes me nauseous just kind of describing it. I'm vulnerable to those things. And the water is crashing into the boat and they wake up and say, "Lord, we're going to die here!" And from all human expectations and understandings, their life was in immediate jeopardy. They could die the next moment from the way everything appeared circumstantially to them.

And what did Jesus do? Look at verse 26 and look at how he addresses them. "He said to them, 'Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?' Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm." The point being that Jesus said even in the midst of that extreme circumstance, their panic was unjustified. Their panic could not be consistent with true faith in him. Jesus said, "Why are you panicked when I am in the boat with you? Why are you panicked when I am in perfect control?" So even when water was crashing in the boat, their faith should have been higher than to panic in the midst of such circumstances.

Beloved, there we go. For us in less extreme circumstances than theirs, we see that even when life is immediately on the line, Christ calls us to a trusting faith in him that does away with panic, that does away with fear, that does away with anxiety. This is a great challenge, in one sense, and I sympathize with you in the midst of this because I feel the weakness of it also, realizing, do you know what? I don't always rise up and attain to that. But what you and I both need to see is that what Scripture says about Christ and what it says about his salvation is designed to control our thinking and our reactions even to the most extreme circumstances in life, and that little faith panics, little faith is anxious because it doesn't respond in that way, it doesn't appropriate who Christ is.

Matthew 14:31 when our brother Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on water. Matthew 14, we'll start in verse 28, "Peter said to Him, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.' And He said, 'Come!' And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?'" Here Peter is on water starting to sink and the Lord says, "You of little faith. Your failure of faith here was not justified. I am right here with you. There is no reason for you to panic."

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus said to the disciples, said to us by extension, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." So we are to take that and before we think anything else about our circumstances, we are to say, "The Lord is with me. The Lord has saved me. The Lord will keep me. The Lord is good. The Lord loves me. The Lord is merciful." And let that be the controlling response to life. And I emphasize these extreme examples, Peter sinking into the sea, the disciples in the boat that is about to go down, so that we all walk away from here realizing that there is no excuse for panic and anxiety in the Christian life; that this can be overcome. There is not an exception clause in it that says, "Well, for really extreme circumstances, you know, run around and scream in panic because, after all, you know, this is really important." No, it is especially at those times where you are to respond in faith, remember who has saved you, remember his eternal character, and trust him in a way that puts your heart at rest.

So this is what Jesus is teaching us. Jesus says that a true knowledge of your heavenly Father frees you from anxiety even in times of greatest distress so that, we could say it this way, whether it's a momentary crisis like a violent bumpy plane ride coming in for a landing, those of you that travel know the sick feeling that gives you, "Is this the end?"

Could this be it?" Or if it's simply the relentless pressure of daily life, Jesus intends to put anxiety to rest with the things that he's teaching here. Anxiety is not meant to be the state in which the Christian life is lived. It is not an acceptable state of life. It's not an acceptable state of mind. And what I mean by that is that you are not to accept it, you are not to acquiesce to it and just say, "Well, this is just the way it is. This is the way that I am. And you know, it's really uncomfortable but that's the way it is." No, no, Jesus teaches this so that you would learn not to be anxious, so that you would learn to trust him in place of your anxiety and move forward in a proper way of life, and in these final four verses of Matthew 6, we're going to see how he clinches his argument with what is said.

Go back to Matthew 6 now. What Jesus does in these four verses is he uses a simple contrast to show that God is worthy of your trust no matter what. It's a simple contrast to show that God is worthy of your trust no matter what. The contrast is between the worries of an unbeliever versus the wealth that you have as a believer in Christ. And let's look first at the unbelievers worries and see what Jesus has to say about that.

Jesus reinforces his command against anxiety with reasons that you are to grasp and apply to your heart. Look at verse 31 with me. He says, "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For," he says, here's the reason supporting his command against this anxiety, he says, "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things." Now how is that something that helps you develop a trusting peaceful heart? Well, let's just think through what it is and realize the significance of what Jesus is saying. To a Jew as we have seen in the past when we studied from Ephesians 2 and other places, to a Jew Gentiles were cut off from God. They were pagan unbelievers. They had no share in anything pertaining to the kingdom of God and Jesus takes that and says, "Think about life from the perspective of an unbeliever, somebody who has no regard for Christ and his kingdom, no regard for the revelation of God. What is their life like?" Jesus says that they are seeking what they are going to eat, what they are going to drink, and what they are going to put on.

That's what they do and they do it from this perspective, beloved, they do it from a godless perspective. They have no eye on God in what they're doing. Scripture says in fact in other places, that they suppress the knowledge of God. They want nothing to do with him. They live as if he doesn't exist. Contrary to the testimony of their own conscience, often they deny that he exists. That's what they do. That's how they live and everything about their life – here's the point – everything about an unbeliever's life is geared toward the things that are happening here and now. They eagerly seek for these things with intense seeking, with an anxious longing.

Beloved, here's the thing, here's the simplicity of his point: unbelievers are preoccupied with the things of this world. They are preoccupied with material things and their immediate problems. They are viewing life apart from the God of the Bible. It's not a factor in their thinking and what Jesus is saying here is that unbelievers live at that level, and then he addresses you as a believer in Christ and says, "Don't you understand that that's not the level at which you live? Don't you understand that there is more to life than

the things that you eat and the things that you drink and what you put on by way of material clothing? Don't you understand that? Don't you see that when you are preoccupied and anxious over the things that are involved in this life and that's what's consuming your thinking, that you are living exactly like a Gentile, you are living exactly like an unbeliever?" To which he says, "Children of the King, don't live that way." You as a child of your heavenly Father, you don't live life from that fundamental perspective. This isn't simply about getting rid of the anxious feelings in your heart, this is about the whole way that you think about life. This is about the entire perspective in which you view the world and the purpose of your existence. The purpose of your existence, beloved, is not to maximize your material prosperity. It is not to live in utter comfort and to minimize the problems that come into life. It is not to go away like the monks of old did and to just withdraw from the world and just avoid everything. That's not it. That's not why God saved you. That's not the purpose of the Christian life.

You must understand this because this anxiety flows from the fundamental nature of your worldview. Children of the King, children of Christ, those of us that have been redeemed by him realize that we have a vertical perspective on life that is far more important than what happens to us in our 70 years of this earthly existence. So, my brother, my sister in Christ, when money is tight, when health or relationships fail, when life profoundly disappoints you, the question is: who are you then? What is it that guides your thinking? What is it that feeds your perspective on life?

I will never forget, this was nearly 20 years ago now, I had an older friend named Mac McCurdy. Mac was probably in his seventies. He was married to a wife with the lovely name of Nancy. Mac and Nancy McCurdy, and they were starting to get bad news from their doctors. They were at that time of life where the doctor starts to tell you, you know, "This is cancer. This is going to be terminal." And Mac had just gotten the news and he was relaying it to me and he knew it was serious and I will never forget, we were standing in a doorway in one of the fulfillment rooms at Grace To You, Mac and Nancy were volunteers at Grace To You, and so I knew them in that capacity as well as in a pastoral way. And in the midst of telling me that they were both facing terminal illnesses, he calmly told me, he said, "We're getting ready to walk through the forest." No fear. His life was in jeopardy, he had every reason to expect it to be terminal, and with that knowledge of his earthly circumstances, informed by a vertical perspective cultivated by years of godly living, he could look at me and say, "We're just going to walk through the forest." There was no fear. There was no panic. There was serenity in the midst of it.

Life was in jeopardy but his trust was intact and that's the way all of us as Christians are supposed to approach life. And we should not accept, we should not tolerate from our own heart anything else. I realize that we are going to struggle with it, we're going to battle these internal wars with our heart, but we should not accept it as though that is the level at which the Christian life is to be lived. "Don't you understand?" Jesus says. Jesus says, "Unbelievers live at that level. Unbelievers panic when the doctors tell them bad news. Unbelievers give up when their family falls apart. Unbelievers go crazy when they lose what's at stake." And don't you see, those of you that are in Christ, that you have been lifted out of the kingdom of Satan, transferred into the kingdom of God's beloved

Son and therefore everything about life is different for you? The way that you think, the way that you respond, everything is different. Your life response, your response to life should not be a mirror of what any unbeliever could do. Jesus says this is what Gentiles do, this is what unbelievers do. It's to be different with you.

Now the question is, especially for those of you maybe that have suffered from anxiety for years and years and you have lived with that and you sought help, I understand. You say, "It's always been this way for me," and the question is: can you live with that kind of trust that Jesus describes? Can you know something about the serenity that can look death in the face and say, "I'm just walking through the forest. I'm not afraid here." Can you look at life like a man, like a Christian man, like a Christian woman, and say, "I'm confident in God despite what is happening around me"? Can you do that? And the answer is: yes, absolutely. This is not the province, this realm of life is not intended to be the province of a select few of so-called saints. Every believer is a saint but I realize that you've been or your thinking has been twisted by false teaching that calls a saint an exclusive club of really godly people. No, this is to be the realm of Christian existence for all of us. Can you live with that kind of trust? The answer is: yes, absolutely. And Jesus wouldn't command it if it wasn't intended to be.

So how does he deal with this? Well, we'll spend most of our time, the rest of our time now looking at the believer's wealth. We've seen an unbeliever's worries. We see that they approach life from a godless mindset. Jesus now points out your wealth in Christ that enables you to live differently. Here's the overall point: that you as a believer in Christ have a treasure house of spiritual resources to draw upon to help you understand how it is that you can walk through life this way, and when you embrace these things, it changes the way that you think, and when you change the way that you think, it changes the way that you respond to the circumstances that used to produce anxiety in your life.

First of all, and we talked about this a little bit last time, what is the wealth, what is the storehouse of wealth available to you? First of all, it's the Father's person. The Father's person. I'm going to give you three subpoints here. The Father's person. You must always remember that a good God is your heavenly Father.

Look at verse 32. This is where Jesus takes you and points you to. He said in verse 31, "Don't worry then, For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things." To make the connection, you'd say, "Do not worry then," verse 31, verse 32, "For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." Your heavenly Father who provides for you, who protects you, who guides you, is thoroughly acquainted with every need in your life and all the ones that you're not aware of that you carry with you as well, and that good God is your heavenly Father. That sovereign God, my brother and sister in Christ, watches over you. That sovereign God sees you, knows you, knows the number of hairs on your head, to that level of detail. Jesus says, "Do you understand that when you know your heavenly Father, that he guides, protects and provides for you and that he knows everything that you need? Don't you understand that the way forward for you is clear even if it's difficult? That the hand of God will be upon you as you go?"

Now look, I'm very mindful of the fact that some of you have grown up in circles that treated God like a distant angry guy who was just waiting to smack you down if you failed, if you missed your quiet time or if you said a bad word or whatever, and you just kind of lived with your arms protecting your face in a defensive posture, "God, don't hurt me too much." That's a completely un-biblical view of who your heavenly Father is. God loves you. God cares for you. Doesn't the cross of Christ prove that to you conclusively in a way that could never be refuted? Isn't that true?

Well, if God loved you in Christ and loved you at the cross and forgave all of your sins and did the greater thing, is it possible that having saved you he's going to abandon you in the middle of your difficulties, in the middle of your life? It's unthinkable. We think such unworthy thoughts of who God is. Jesus says the God of the Bible, the Father of your Lord Jesus Christ is your heavenly Father and he intends for you to believe that with great faith, not meager faith, not little faith, and says, "Because that's true, God will take care of me through this. And even if this challenge that I'm facing becomes the end of my earthly life, I trust him enough. I trust him with my soul, I trust him with my earthly life, I trust him with my family. I'm going to give it all to him and just trust him completely. Not because I know how it's going to come out but because he is worthy of that heart response from me because that's who he is and he is worthy of my trust." In light of that Jesus says, "Therefore you should not be anxious like any old unbeliever." Christian, your privilege and your responsibility is to trust this God always in every circumstance that comes into your life or the lives of those that you love. He is sovereign over all. He is good over all. You belong to him, therefore, you trust him with all. That's the argument that Jesus is making here. The Father's person.

Take a look at the Father's priorities in verse 33. The Father's priorities. What are we to do with this, then? How are we to arrange our life? How are we to fundamentally think and desire in our Christian life, then? Verse 33 lays it out for us. The children sang it for us a short while ago. Verse 33, Jesus says, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Let me show you the context so that you get it here. In verse 31 he said, "Do not worry then." That's the negative command. In verse 33, he gives the positive command by way of contrast. Instead of worry, "But," contrast, instead do this, "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness." Interesting that his command is positive and it is oriented in vertical ways that is foreign to the thinking of an unbeliever.

How is it that God dispenses this care? How is it that you live in the realm of this confident trust, this blessing of mind? Jesus says that God dispenses this care to you as you are seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness. What does that mean? That's pretty important, then. Stated a little bit differently, Jesus says, "You make God's kingdom and his righteousness the guiding priority of your life so that it is more important to you than how your problems work out. It's more important to you than how earthly relationships work out. What God's kingdom and his righteousness call upon you," we'll explain this in a moment, "is more important to you than anything else."

So we see here that Jesus is addressing us at the most fundamental level of our existence. He is calling upon you to think about what it is that matters to you most in life and so this is why Jesus' teaching is so transforming when he comes to us and address us us this way in his word, it is so transforming because he is addressing the very core of our existence here. This isn't, going back to how I introduced this series three weeks ago, two weeks ago, whatever, this isn't the internet telling you to learn how to do breathing therapy or to take more vitamins or to just manage your emotions in some kind of superficial way. Jesus goes to the core of the problem and says, "Your anxieties flow from the fact that you are treasuring the wrong things. The things that you love are not put in their proper sequence," you might say, and he says, "The way out of anxiety is to recognize that the kingdom of God and his righteousness are the guiding priorities in your life."

So if that's the case and if that's the key to unlocking anxiety, now I want to know what it means. What is this kingdom of which he speaks? What is this realm of God's rule that changes the way that I live life, that changes my perspective on anxiety and the things that happen to me? Here's what it means, beloved. You want to know? Here's what it is. You want to know what changes everything for you? What is this kingdom? Beloved, it comes down to this, it comes down to this: you settle in your heart and you cherish and love and value in your heart the future blessing of God in heaven more than you value anything in this life, and if you think about it, it could be no other way. What has God given us? A gift of salvation that results in eternal blessing to us forever and ever amen, as I like to say. We're going to see Christ. We are going to see him face-to-face. We're going to be transformed into his image. We're going to be like him, free from sin. All of the sorrows and difficulties of this life forgotten, swallowed up in the consuming majesty of the glory of seeing Christ face-to-face. That's what lays ahead for us. And don't you see that that is far more valuable than anything that could ever happen in this life? The best things that you want out of this life, the things that you most would want, whether it's the healing of your body or the salvation of your loved ones or financial prosperity and security, all of that is dung in comparison to the glory of Christ, and being there secure with him, perfected in glory, never to be taken away. That's more valuable than anything on this earth. That's just true.

That's far better than the present and if you are Christian here today, that is your destiny. That is your future. That is the gift that God appointed for you to receive before the foundation of the world. Nothing in your life compares in preciousness to that. And the way that you are to think and the way that you are to process life is that, "The most precious thing to me is far more valuable than anything in my circumstances here. It can never be taken away and I am settled on that as the thing that I most look forward to in life." Your King will reign. He will reign on this earth for a thousand years. He'll ultimately bring us into an eternal kingdom and we will see his glory and his majesty and his power manifested and we will belong to him. Scripture even says we will reign with him in some manner.

So, beloved, what you have to do, you're here and you have struggled with anxiety all of your life, have you come to understand, have you come to see that the future is far more valuable to you than anything in the present? And that future that matters is secure,

bought for you by the blood of Christ. Never to be taken away. No one can pluck you out of his hand. Don't you see the security and the confidence and the hope that that floods your heart with? This is the outcome of life for you. So when you are thinking rightly about it, and I realize the challenge as we go through day by day and life is right in our face, we have to come back to this again and again. That future is far more valuable to you than any human relationship on earth. If you had all of the world's wealth, it wouldn't be worthy of comparison to what that's going to be like in the future.

Beloved, think about it from this perspective knowing that many fear death and the process of dying and all of that: don't you understand that death is merely going to be the gateway that introduces you to this glory by way of first-hand personal experience? So why are we anxious about finances? Why are we anxious about earthly relationships? Why are we anxious about our earthly life when all of it, all of it eventually yields into this great glorious kingdom that Christ has deemed pleasing to bring you into and include in the plan? Oh, that's awesome. That takes the weight off of everything.

So we long for heaven, not the comforts of this earth. We don't go out running around looking for this world to satisfy the longings of our heart, we realize that there is no corner of the world that we can run to and flee to that keeps out all of the problems. You know, even if you found a place like that, do you know what would happen? Sin is still going to be in you there. You could run to a place but the person that you are is still going to be with you and you're still going to die. Even if you go to the most perfect place on earth, you're still going to die. So you can't look for sanctuary anyplace in this earth and hope that that's going to deliver you from your anxiety because this uncertainty and the temporary nature of life is wound into our existence in a way that we cannot escape and we are not meant to escape it. We are meant to look beyond it and say, "It's that future glory that matters to me. It's that that thrills my heart. It's that which gives me my comfort. Oh, life here is bad, well, yeah, that's a bummer but look at what's coming." The uncertainties that attend your existence here on earth are secondary, my Christian friend, to a far greater reality that is certain and cannot be taken away.

Look over at Philippians 3 and you'll see both of these themes, an earthly mindset and a heavenly mindset, side-by-side in this passage as well. Paul says in Philippians 3:17, "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things." Do you see it? Jesus said, "Gentiles are seeking food, clothing and drink." Paul says, "Their minds are set on earthly things," and it causes him to weep as he thinks about the ultimate end of their destruction.

Verse 20, you by contrast, my brother and sister in Christ, this is the realm in which we live and think, verse 20 and 21, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." Christ has power over all. He subjects all

things to his will. That includes your temporary earthly existence, your passing, fading, earthly body. Christ can transform that and he will transform that by that power that he exerts over all things so that your hope is what lies in the future and that is the priority of your heart. That is what you set your heart on.

Go back to Matthew 6 now, if you would. The kingdom, the coming kingdom, the future reign of Christ, seek that first. Set your heart on that and everything earthly falls into a different perspective. "You say it's going to be taken away from me. Okay, that will be sad. That will be difficult. There will be challenges attendant to that but do you know what? You can't take away the thing that is most precious to me, the thing that most matters to me. The thing that is most valuable, no one can touch it." If everybody in this room got up and walked out chanting, "We hate Don Green." I know you're not going to do that but just to be extreme by example, everybody walked out, I would still have the same great blessed hope whether you are here or whether you are not. What's true of me is true of you. Take away the things closest and dearest to you, Christian, they cannot touch the most valuable thing and that brings peace to your heart when you set your heart on the things to come, not on the things of this world.

Go back to verse 33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness," there is a double object there, isn't there? His kingdom and his righteousness. Everything we've talked about is still future to us as we've talked about it so far. What is this righteousness of which Jesus spoke? Well, here's the daily application of it. This is where your mind dwells in daily exercise and in your daily thinking while you are waiting for the greater future gift to come. Do you know what? If that gift came today, it would be fine by me, wouldn't it? If Christ came today, wouldn't that be awesome? Any plans I have for today or for the future, I'd gladly set them aside if he would just descend from heaven down to earth. I'd run to that, wouldn't you? But we live in the midst of a realm where we don't assume that and so we say, "Well, what is this righteousness of which he speaks?" What is it, then, that occupies your thinking and your attitudes day by day while you are waiting for the fulfillment of your salvation to be brought to you? What is this righteousness?

Well, beloved, the whole context of the Sermon on the Mount tells you, I won't review it all but Jesus and if we just talked about it here in chapter 6, just what we've looked at in chapter 6, Jesus calls you to be preoccupied in your thinking with a sincere worship of your heavenly Father, obedience to him, to trust him, to be indifferent to the opinions of men about you and seek your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. You can read through all of chapter 6 and let that set the context. To reject hypocrisy and sinful anger and sinful lusts. To reject retaliation. To love your enemies as well as your friends, if we drift back into chapter 5. Here's the whole point: this righteousness of which he speaks goes to how you respond to the life that he has even to you day by day, and that day by day you realize, "My priority in life here is to respond righteously to what is in front of me. For me to respond in a humble sincere faith in my Savior, a faith in my heavenly Father, and to live in a way that he has instructed me to do that he finds pleasing." So that you realize that the important thing is not what So-and-so did to you but how you respond to it. "Oh, I can't retaliate. I'm supposed to love

my enemies and pray for them. Oh, that changes the way that I look at things. That's what I want to seek." Those of you that are younger in life and dealing with the desires of the flesh, realizing that you trust in Christ and you look to him as your supreme desire and you seek to put those things to death rather than to engage them.

You see, beloved, you seek this righteousness first by cultivating your inner man no matter what your external circumstances can be. Your external circumstances are great or they are really bad, the response is the same. The responsibility is the same. "Oh, I need to love God and glorify him here." And that's what preoccupies you. Gratitude and holiness and humility are the priority, not manipulating circumstances so that they come out right as you would define it in your earthly thing. Where is your heart? Is your heart grateful? Are you pursuing holiness? Are you humble in the sense that more and more you realize that God is great and you are small? That he must increase and you must decrease, John 3:30? That is the pursuit of life for the Christian and these other things come and go as they may. Seek first his kingdom, the glory to come. Set your heart on that and his righteousness. "Here today I want my heart to be a mirror of gratitude and honor back to the one who purchased that future kingdom for me." Jesus says, "That will cure anxiety for you because your mind will be preoccupied with the right things."

The kingdom of God is the focal point of Christian priority. To seek the kingdom is to pursue its priorities. To seek the righteousness of God is to pursue personal holiness. Stated differently, last perspective. I'll provide on this: seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. The question is: how can I please God no matter what my future holds? How can I please God no matter what my future holds? That's the question of seeking.

Now finally, we've seen the Father's person, the Father's priorities, finally in terms of the believer's wealth, we have the Father's promise. The Father's promise. Look at verse 33 with me again. He says, "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." All these things will be added. It's a passive voice. It's what they call a divine passive meaning that it is God who adds these things to you. And the whole point of it is this, the point of what Jesus is saying here in verse 33 is this: you belong to Christ and you have set your heart on the kingdom to come, you belong to Christ and you set your heart on personal holiness, here is God's perspective on it, God honors that kind of life. God provides in that kind of life. He provides for his trusting child far more infinitely more than an earthly father provides for the son who pleases him. Parents, fathers, your children and you love them, don't you provide for them? Don't you protect them? Don't you delight in them when they are responding to you in love and obedience? Well, the Father delights in those that he calls his own and he doesn't abandon us. He provides for us in the midst of it. He said, "Do you need life? Do you need food? Do you need clothing? Do you need drink? My child, I'll take care of it. Just focus on me. Focus on my kingdom."

And isn't it true, my Christian brother, my Christian sister, isn't it true that God has done exactly that for you? When was the last time any of you missed a meal? Didn't have anything to eat whatsoever? When was the last time that you had nothing to drink? That you had no place to lay your head at all? Isn't it true when you look back on your life that

what Jesus has said here in this context of food and drink and clothing and the needs of life, isn't it true that God has provided that to you and for many, in abundance? Your life is a living testimony of the truth of what Jesus has said here. What you are to do, then, is to take all of this and say, "I know who God is. I know him by his attributes revealed in Scripture. I know him revealed in Christ. My Father is a great one, The great one. His person is worthy of my worship and devotion. His priorities. He set the kingdom before me. I'm going to be a part of that. I'm going to be there. I'm going to seek Christ face-to-face and be like him. Oh, that's magnificent. Here in this life, then, let me just live for his glory and do you know what? I see his promise that he's going to provide for me. All of my life is a living testimony that he has done exactly that. There were times when I didn't know, there were times when the road had a tight curve and I couldn't see very far down the way, but all the way my Savior led me. What have I to ask beside? And how can I doubt his tender mercy who through life has been my guide?" Heavenly peace, divine his comfort. That's speaking of the spiritual place that Jesus' teaching takes you when you embrace these things. This allows you to put anxiety to rest. Brother and sister in Christ, get it down, write it down, seal it to your inner heart and your inner mind: lesser matters fade into nothingness compared to the wealth that you have as a believer.

Now, Jesus doesn't tell us how the Father will fulfill the promise, he just says it will be done. Your job here today, your job in life is to settle the priority. God will take care of what he says his end of the deal is and then you can let the details fall in place as they may. Yes, we still work. Yes, we still go out and earn our living. That's simply the means by which God fulfills the promise to us.

So where does this contrast between worry and anxiety leave you? Look at verse 34 as we close. I say we are closing, I've still got more notes. Wow. Verse 34 Jesus says, "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Beloved, you can trust God today despite your uncertain future because of this: the God that is in control today, the God who is sovereign in all the ways that we've talked about here today, that God of today is also the God of tomorrow. You do not need to know what happens tomorrow in order to trust him. You don't need to know what happens tomorrow in order to be at peace. You don't. You just need to remember that the God who has blessed you now, who is blessing you today, is the God who has tomorrow in his hand as well. And what has he said about tomorrow? What has he said about himself? He said to the Apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you," 2 Corinthians 12:9. "My grace is sufficient for you." Christian friend, that is all you need to know to look forward to the future with confidence and without anxiety. Whatever happens tomorrow, my God will still be reigning and his grace will still be sufficient. Settle that in your heart and the anxiety of which Jesus speaks begins to be driven out again and again and again, and even if the worst thing comes to pass, his grace is still sufficient for you.

Men and women, boys and girls, I would be a fool and a liar to stand up and promise you what life is going to be like for you tomorrow. Your life may change tomorrow, it may change dramatically, it may break your heart, but your heavenly Father still reigns. Your heavenly Father will not change. He will be the same tomorrow as he is today. That's

why you do not need to fear the future. And notice, you just teach these things positive and negative from all kinds of different perspectives. Christian trust, godly living, a godly heart is far more than simply saying, "Well, I guess this may never happen. Maybe what I'm afraid of won't happen." That's not trust. That's not biblical trust. Christian trust is not a fatalistic view that says, "Well, whatever will be, will be. You know, I can't do anything about it so I might as well not worry about it." No, no, no, no. Christian trust is an active confidence in God and his promise to care for you so that even if sorrow comes, you face the future with serenity. Why can we say all of this? It all boils down to one simple statement. This is your anchor in life. This is the call to your heart. This is your responsibility to believe: the God of the Bible, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of your salvation, is worthy of your trust and that trust is the birthright of all true Christians.

So my believing friends, take these things and dwell on them and meditate on them. Is the future hope of heaven that which is most precious in your heart? If it's not, you need to rethink life. Is the promise of the Father that he will care for you, do you believe that enough to rest in it? That's what Jesus says to do.

For those of you that are here and you are not a Christian, you're kind of on the outside looking in, you should be thinking about it this way: you should be recognizing in what we've said here the wonder and the beauty and the grandeur of the Christian life, the grandeur of Christ, the grandeur of living for him, belonging to him. And you should have this sense in your mind and in your thinking: you should feel like you're on the outside looking in at the candy store and your nose is pressed against the glass, "Boy, I wish I could have some of that," realizing that you are missing everything in life that matters, everything in your existence that matters. There should be a longing in your heart welling up that says, "I want to know this Christ." Well, Jesus says to come to him and he will save you. Jesus invites you to come to him and enter into this kingdom. He who believes in him will never be disappointed. If you stand on the outside today, if you walk out of this room on the outside not belonging to Christ, understand it's your own fault. You can't blame that on Jesus because Jesus says, "Come and I will save you." Why don't you come and join with the rest of us in this hope that looks to a glorious future and satisfies our hearts today? Christ would have you if you would come.

Let's pray together.

Our dear God, take these things and seal them to our hearts. Thank you for our salvation in Christ, for the sufficiency of your grace, for your promise. And Father, the wonder of it all is that as wonderful as the Christian life is, as wonderful as it is to belong to you at this moment, in this hour, in this place with other believers, it fades into nothingness in comparison to the glory that will be yet revealed to us. The best is yet to come and, Lord, we thank you that you will certainly deliver on that promise to us in the end. In the meantime, help us to seek your righteousness and live for the glory of the one who has showered us with such immense undeserved grace. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thanks for listening to Pastor Don Green from Truth Community Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. You can find church information, Don's complete sermon library and other helpful materials at thetruthpulpit.com. This message is copyrighted by Don Green. All rights reserved.