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The Gospel According to Matthew

Getting Free From Worry

June 24, 2018

Sermon Text: Matthew 6:25-34

Scripture Reading: Luke 16:1-13

Last time we heard Jesus teach us about real treasure:

Mat 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Mat 6:24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be

devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

The Bible very frequently warns us about the danger to our eternal souls that comes from the love of money.

Heb 13:5-6 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (6) So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

And just as the author of Hebrews connects freedom from the love of money with *contentment and freedom from fear and worry*, so Jesus makes the very same connection here in our text this morning:

Mat 6:25-34 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

(26) Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

(27) And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

(28) And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

(31) Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

(33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (34) "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Jesus moves on to warn us and encourage us in respect to matters

closely related to the love of money trap: *worry, anxiety, fear about the basic essentials for life such as food and clothing.*

You see the connection? The love of money is a trap, but the rich are not the only ones liable to this snare. Poor people and average people like us can spend their lives focused on living paycheck to paycheck. Specifically, worrying about having enough income to pay the bills – the house payment, the utilities, school clothes for the kids, medical bills, car repairs, groceries, and on and on. This too is a trap that will rob us of the comfort that is ours as Christ's own people.

Essentially, Jesus is telling us that it is typical for human beings to get their ultimate priorities all turned around. THIS is how it should be:

1. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness
2. Trust Him to provide for our daily needs

But this is how it typically is:

1. Worry about our daily needs being met
2. In our spare time and with whatever energy we have left, think now and then about Christ and His kingdom and the

righteousness that is true treasure.

Jesus' promise to us is profound:

(33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Let's go back and work our way through Jesus' reasoning and instruction, then conclude by thinking more about this matter of seeking as first priority the kingdom of God and His righteousness:

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

There is no need for a Christian to worry about the essentials necessary for life in this world. Why? Because our Father has promised to provide them. You have God's own word on it.

Pro 10:3 The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

Psa 37:25 I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.

The question is, do we, will we, believe Him?

And look at this again:

Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

In a sense, a life lived only in a quest for food and clothing and stuff, is no more than an animal life. And in a sense it is more miserable than an animal life because, as Jesus says here, animals don't fret and worry about it! Life is more than food and things. The pagans (any person who refuses to serve the Living and true God) are characterized by such seeking:

(31) Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) **For the Gentiles seek after all these things,** and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

We are the children of God in Christ. It must not be said that we live like the pagans, pouring out energies and thoughts into what we shall eat or what we shall wear! God is our Father! He knows what we need and He has promised to take care of it all.

Jesus, in order to help our weak faith, calls on us to think this through. Take a look at creation. Look at the birds for

instance flying around. Do they plant crops? Do they work hard harvesting so they have enough food for winter? No. They are care free. The Lord takes note of each one of them and feeds them.

Then He turns our attention to flowers in the field. Wild flowers, I suspect.

(28) And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Argument from the lesser to the greater. From the short-lived flower to the children of God. If...then... He clothes the wild flowers in beauty, do we not think that He will clothe us? And then Jesus reminds us of our fundamental problem:

“O you of little faith?”

The latter years of our lives come with certain unique fears, do they not? As we grow older and our bodies grow weaker and more infirm, we begin to worry. How will I take care of myself? Who will fix my leaky roof? Who will repair the plumbing? When I can't

drive anymore, how will I get to the store? What if I have a mountain of medical bills? And what if I end up lonely? My friends die one after another. Fretting. Worrying.

Jesus is making certain and sure promises to us here – *don't worry about those things. I will provide for you. I know all about what you are going to need.*

Of course, the *life* Jesus is speaking of is *human life as intended by God*. Life that not only involves the body, the the soul as well. We are the children of God. We are citizens of His kingdom, heirs of the new creation. *It is vital that right now we focus our lives upon these things He has given us in Christ.* This is what this means:

(33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Christian, you must be certain that the life you are now living in this world is one that is lived with the kingdom of God and His righteousness as your ultimate priority and focus. Don't live like the pagans live – living that really is not living at all.

Let's see if we can break verse 33 down some more. How do you seek the kingdom of God? Well, *first of all*

you must know what it is. The kingdom of God is –

- The King
- His subjects
- His Land
- His Law or Rule

The King of course is Christ. His subjects are us, His people. His Land is the New Creation – the new heavens and earth. And His Law is His Word given to us. His instruction and His commandments. Every real citizen of Christ’s kingdom therefore:

- Loves the King
- Understands they belong to Him as His subject
- Loves and strives to obey His Law, submitting themselves to His Rule
- Is looking for our new and eternal home, the new heavens and earth.

Seeking first His kingdom is simply being who you are in Christ and living your present life in light of each one of these qualities. Seeking his *righteousness* is living in obedience to what the King has declared to be righteous and good.

Let me read you a great example of a life lived out seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness:

Psa 37:1-40 Of David. Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! (2) For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb. (3) **Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. (4) Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. (5) Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.**

(6) He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. (7) Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! (8) Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. (9) For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

(10) In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there. (11) But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.

(12) The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him, (13) but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that his day is coming. (14) The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows to bring down the poor and

needy, to slay those whose way is upright; (15) their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

(16) Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked. (17) For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous. (18) The LORD knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will remain forever; (19) they are not put to shame in evil times; in the days of famine they have abundance.

(20) But the wicked will perish; the enemies of the LORD are like the glory of the pastures; they vanish--like smoke they vanish away. (21) The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives; (22) for those blessed by the LORD shall inherit the land, but those cursed by him shall be cut off.

(23) The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way; (24) though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the LORD upholds his hand. (25) I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. (26) He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing.

(27) Turn away from evil and do good;

so shall you dwell forever. (28) For the LORD loves justice; he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. (29) The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever.

(30) The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. (31) The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip. (32) The wicked watches for the righteous and seeks to put him to death. (33) The LORD will not abandon him to his power or let him be condemned when he is brought to trial. (34) Wait for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off.

(35) I have seen a wicked, ruthless man, spreading himself like a green laurel tree. (36) But he passed away, and behold, he was no more; though I sought him, he could not be found.

(37) Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace. (38) But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed; the future of the wicked shall be cut off. (39) The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble. (40) The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge

in him.

And this really is a perfect description of the man that Jesus is speaking of. The man who seeks first God's kingdom and God's righteousness. Notice the very same promises given by God here that Jesus is reiterating in the Sermon on the Mount:

...and all these things will be added to you.

Finally, two additional points Jesus makes:

(27) And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

And....

(34) "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

The first point is a rhetorical question – the answer is obvious – *no one*. Our days in this present world are numbered by the Lord alone. *Worrying about tomorrow is counterproductive. It will not make our life longer. In fact, it may well shorten it.* Verse 34 reiterates that same point and develops it. Don't be anxious about tomorrow. Yes, make plans.

Yes, work hard. But then leave things to the Lord and trust Him.

Notice this point carefully as well. ***The Lord provides for us daily, not annually.*** That is to say, His practice is to give us (and this is what we are to pray for) our daily bread. You see it in the account of the manna:

Exo 16:11-20 And the LORD said to Moses, (12) "I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

(13) In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. (14) And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. (15) When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.

(16) This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.'" (17) And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some

more, some less. (18) But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. (19) And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over till the morning."

(20) But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

This is the same thing Jesus is telling us. Our daily bread. Trust Him for it today. Do not fret over tomorrow. His promise to us is that tomorrow is in His hands and He will see us through it.