

Cares and Worries.

Text: Matt 6:33

Suggested Hymns:

415, 364, 389, 393, 509

1) Seek First ... Righteousness

2) Make Your Soul's Salvation Your Chief Concern

3) God Cares For You

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 6:33, ³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

“There is a difference between the man who does not worry and the man who does not care.”¹ We know that it is right and good that parents care for their children. Scripture says in 1 Timothy 5:8, ⁸ *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

The Government should be concerned about welfare of people. We learn in Romans 12:8 that *he who leads*, or rules should do it *with diligence*.

Pastors as soul-carers, must give an account of their ministry. St. Paul was filled “*daily*” with “*the care of all the churches.*”²

Luther therefore says: “*This Gospel is not for the young people. Thank God, they still have the grace that they would rather eat cherries than count money; a nice apple means more to them than a silver coin ; they do not ask what the grain quotations are, for they are sure in their hearts that they will find something to eat.*

But this sermon is intended especially for the house-fathers and for those in public office; and indeed above all for the preachers, who receive much evil in the world, and some of whom are constrained in their poverty to wonder how they might support themselves, their wife, and children. These the Lord comforts here and would take such worries from them.”³

Yes, our legitimate cares of daily life often become worries. It is easy to tell people not to worry, but not always so easy to stop worrying. Sometimes it is a matter of temperament: some people are more inclined in that direction.

One's physical condition often influences one's outlook on life: those who are ill for a long time will look more pessimistically into the future.

But fundamentally sinful worrying flows from our sinful nature. The message of our text is *Do Not Worry!* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Seek First ... Righteousness

The Lord tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, from which the text is taken, that if we *“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” all these things shall be added to you.* What things? The things that most people worry about.

He describes this in the previous verses, Matthew 6:25–30, ²⁵ *“Therefore I say to you, do not worry 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, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*

²⁷ *Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?* ²⁸ *“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

³⁰ *Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

“Take no thought”, “Do not be anxious.” If we trust God rather than Mammon, we won't worry about the necessities of this life. Worry about such things is sin, for it is an expression of doubt that God will do what he has clearly promised to do.

Yet we frequently worry because of the weakness of our flesh. Here Jesus tells us how to deal with our worries.

First he tells us not to worry about life, food, drink, or clothing, and then he tells us why we need not worry.

His first argument compares the greater to the lesser. If God has given you life, which is far greater than any material possessions, will he not provide you with the lesser gifts of food, drink, clothing, and shelter? Would it make any sense at all for God to give us life and then be unconcerned about sustaining that life? The obvious answer is No.

Then He compares the lesser to the greater. If God provides for the needs of the birds of the air, who don't even sow or reap or store up food in barns, will He not provide for your needs?

You have the advantage over the birds of being able to sow and reap and store up the fruits of the field in barns. You also have the advantage of being far more valuable in God's sight. He created you with an immortal soul.

Can you imagine that God would be less concerned about you than about the birds? Or look at the wild flowers. The lilies of the field do not labour or spin; yet God dresses them in finery that even Solomon in all his splendour could not rival.

We can "labour and spin." We have that advantage over the lilies. So why should we worry about having the necessary clothing? The grass of the field was used as fuel for cooking in areas where firewood was scarce. It is here today and gone tomorrow, and yet God also made the grassy fields a thing of beauty. Can we imagine that God has less concern for us? Impossible!

With these observations and reassurances in mind, Jesus gives us a word of advice that might well serve as our motto for Christian living day after day: *"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

He is telling us to make His kingdom and His righteousness the number-one priority in our lives. We are to remember that God rules the whole world in the interest of His church, His believers. He is all-powerful and infinitely merciful and gracious, and His wisdom knows no bounds.

We should learn from nature. From Luther's robin. *"The birds fly past before our eyes, not much to our honour, that we might well take off our hat*

toward them and say : ‘My dear Doctor (Luther is addressing the birds as learned and wise people), I confess that I do not know the art which you know.

You sleep through the night in your nest without any care; in the morning you get up and are happy and glad, sitting upon a little flower, and singing, praising, and thanking God; then you go in search of food, and you find it.

Shame, what have I, an old fool, learned that I do not do the same, having so much reason for it!”⁴

Why is it wrong to worry? Because thereby we hurt ourselves, and self-inflicted harm is sinful. We read in Psalm 32:10, ¹⁰ ***Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.***

Worry is useless, a waste of time and energy. This is expressed in the second stanza of Georg Neumark’s beautiful hymn “*If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee.*”⁵

What can these anxious cares avail thee,
These never-ceasing moans and sighs?
What can it help, if thou bewail thee.

Worry is trying the impossible, the serving of two masters.⁶ When two people walk together, the dog will follow both. But when they separate, it will be seen who is the dog’s master.

Worry amounts to doubting God’s knowledge (omniscience) and power (omnipotence). ***For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*** Verse 31 says “***Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’*** In other words “take no thought” do not be not filled with cares and worries.

It is repeated in verse 34 ***Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.***

There is a story of widow who after several years of widowhood would say that she had been a widow only one day, meaning that she had taken up her cross one day at a time.

So, don’t worry like children of the world, who do not know God, or like the heathen, who have no comfort.

2. Make Your Soul's Salvation Your Chief Concern

Why do we Christians still worry, when we know it is sinful, useless, and harmful? It is because we are not sufficiently heavenly minded. Remember Philippians 3:20, ²⁰ *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.* We worry too much because we do not make our spiritual life and our soul's eternal salvation our chief and all-engrossing concern.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. A mother who is concerned about her sick child will have little time to worry about petty household problems. So too, is the Christian who is concerned about his soul, the little worries of this life will become insignificant. Remember how Martha was cumbered about with much serving, but Mary sat at Jesus' feet learning the one thing needful.⁷

What is the kingdom of God which we should seek?

Firstly, A living faith in God, a trust in Him for all needs of soul and body, based on the atonement through Jesus Christ. We read in Luke 17:21, *For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.*"

Secondly, we should seek salvation as we read in Philippians 2:12–13, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.* We are admonished in Hebrews 4:11, ¹¹ *Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest.*

Thirdly, seek it first, make it your chief, all-absorbing concern. Then you will not have any other worries, then you will leave all your worries to the Lord.

3. God Cares For You

Our text says, *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* Note the promise, "*All these things shall be added to you.*"

Likewise we read in 1 Peter 5:7, ⁷ *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

And Romans 8:31–32, ³¹ *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all*

things? Again the word “things,” anything and all things we are so inclined to worry and fret about.

With Paul Gerhard we can sing,⁸

Why should cross and trial grieve me?
Need I fear?
Christ is near,
Never will He leave me.

“Queen Elizabeth asked a rich merchant to go on a mission for the crown. The merchant protested, saying that such a long absence would be fatal to his business. ‘You take care of my business,’ replied the Queen, ‘and I will take care of yours.’

When he returned he found that his business, through the patronage and care of the queen, had increased in volume, and he was richer than when he left.”

So every businessman can afford to place the interests of Christ’s kingdom first; for the promise is clear and unmistakable, ***‘But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.’***

Make money for Christ, and He will make money for you. Supply His needs, and He will supply yours. Do His will, and He will look after your welfare. If losses come, He will see that they are ultimate gains.

Value the spiritual above the material. Transmute the seen and temporal into the unseen and eternal. Lay up treasures in heaven, so that death, which impoverishes the rich person, will be your enrichment. Always seek Christ’s ***‘Well done’*** here, and you will receive it hereafter.

In summary, God gives to us all that we need for the support and wants of this body and life. Food and clothing, earthly success and happiness. All joys and pleasures come from God. Let us realise this and receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. Let us not be filled with sinful anxieties, but rather make our soul’s salvation our chief concern.

May God teach us to cast all our cares upon Him, so that the seed of His Word will not fall among the thorns, and our faith be choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to maturity.⁹ Having heard the Word, let us keep it and bring forth fruit with patience.

In conclusion, don't worry about things of this life, but about your soul's salvation, and then leave everything you need for body and soul to God. Remember that this is what we do in Lord's Prayer when we pray "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Bruce Barton

² 2 Cor. 11:28

³ XIII a, 870

⁴ XIII a, 877

⁵ Hymn 407

⁶ Matthew 6:24

⁷ Luke 10:38-42

⁸ Hymn 413

⁹ Luke 8:14