
MATTHEW 6:24 to end
GALATIANS 6:11 to end

TRUSTING YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER
24 September 2017
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Worry!

I want to tell you about a woman who had for years been having trouble getting to sleep at night because she was worrying about burglars.

If she heard the slightest noise she would wake her husband and ask him to check that everything was alright.

One night she heard a noise downstairs, so her husband went to look. When he got to the kitchen, there was a stranger rummaging through the draws.

They both looked at each other a bit stunned and then the man of the house said;

'Good evening, I'm really pleased to see you. Come and meet my wife. She has been waiting to greet you for the last 10yrs.'

Of course, no one would suggest it isn't natural to worry about the possibility of intruders in our homes but the point here is that this woman had let her fear and anxiety take over her life.

One of the most common and destructive daily habits that people get caught up in is the habit of worrying.

It's a problem which can ensnare us all.

The story

Worry is what Jesus is talking to his disciples about in Matthew's Gospel today.

Jesus has been teaching about not storing up treasures for ourselves and now he emphasises the folly of trying to serve 2 masters. In verse 24 he says;

'You cannot serve God and Mammon'

Mammon – a Greek word that brings a negative connotation associated with confidence in wealth and greed. It signifies unrighteousness, things obtained with avarice.

In the Gospel of Matthew mammon is used to signify the unwise and misdirected use of wealth.

After that initial reference to wealth Jesus turns to the misdirected and inappropriateness of worry in true discipleship.

He tells them to, 'take no thought' for unnecessary needs, worries and desires.

'Don't worry about your life', he says.....

There is an insistent repetition in this reading to 'take no thought' for the cares of tomorrow, with the striking example drawn from God's plentiful provision for Creation using the simple analogy of birds and flowers.

Jesus addresses the disposition to constant worry.

He uses the analogy of God's provision. Creation provides food for the birds and flowers and the grass forms their lush green carpet.

The birds trust in the provision that God's Creation provides.

And the Flowers are dressed in splendour more gloriously adorned than any monarch.

If God will provide for Creation so abundantly then can we not trust that he will also provide for us when we are gifted with the privilege of participating in his kingdom through the 'finished work' of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Those who take more thought for the things of tomorrow, those who worry so, do not trust and are deemed of 'little faith',
A faith less than a mustard seed.
No faith.

Does that pose questions for you?

Is this though a form of idealism?

Does God always provide, so bountifully?

Birds are killed in huge numbers every year.

Floods, hurricanes and earthquakes devastate Creation.

War and terror destroy people and places.

And bad things creep into our lives and create understandable worrying thoughts of tomorrow.

Daily cares and provision can be a very real issue for all of us.

Worries can wear us down and cause us to question who God really is.....

So, what is Jesus teaching the disciples?

And What is Jesus teaching us?

Jesus teaches Confidence in Faith and Trust of our Heavenly Father

In our reading from Galatians Paul's concluding words, teaches that because of the Cross our old selves are irrelevant.

In the Cross, we die to sin and in the resurrection, we were made new.

Our relationship with God is based on our connection with Christ,

not on fleshly concerns.

Paul tells the Galatians not to allow the cares of the world to distract them from their commitment to Christ

Jesus is teaching his disciples and us how the world and our lives should be, not how it is.

Jesus urges us to focus on faith and trust in the Grace and Love of God

Both in the good times and in the bad.

Handing over to God our worries and thoughts of tomorrow in Trust and Faith.

To have confidence in God's provision.

And Trust in our Heavenly Father

Many of you will know that I've started ordination training at St Hild College, Mirfield.

As new students, we have been visiting and worrying about;

Personal targets

What formation really means

Freezing rooms

Hot water bottles

And Mugs. You must remember to take a mug

There were no Donald Trump ones though!

Last weekend was our first residential together and 140 of us turned up from different parts of the country all converging to take this incredible journey together.

One thing was very clear though.

We all looked lost,

scared rabbits in the headlights!

But, when we were shown into our rooms we all found an individual card, a little holding cross and an individual reference for each of us to different aspects of scripture.

Mine was from *Psalm 56*,

'When I am, afraid I put my trust in you!'

And this morning we are talking about very much the same thing.

We can choose to let the handle of worry, fear and anxiety distract us or we can hand that worry over to God in trust and faith!

Trust in God with a sure confidence his Grace and love will sustain us.

Amen

