

INTRODUCTION

Did you sleep well last night? Was your appetite fine recently? If your answers are “no” and you are not having any physical illness, then perhaps you are overcome by worries. I am a routine and simple-minded person. When it is time to eat or sleep I have to do so. When I was in school I went to bed even if I have not prepared well for a big exam the next day. Even now when I have a conflict with my wife I can still sleep at ease. I once joked with someone that I may have the gift of sleeping. I can sleep anywhere – couch, floor, car, hotel room, wherever. That is God’s blessing to me. In our passage today Jesus teaches us not to worry. Perhaps after our study you may be able to eat and sleep better. Jesus’ teaching is part of the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew chapter 5 to 7. Jesus began His teaching with “therefore” in verse 25. We can naturally interpret that Jesus was drawing a conclusion from the immediate preceding context. Jesus said in **verse 24**: “No one can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money.” Jesus was contrasting one’s service to God versus money. If a Christian says that God is his Master then he should serve God whole-heartedly. Jesus then followed the same argument that we should only serve God when He introduced a new subject of not to worry. It is understandable that as humans we concern about the means for our survival – food, clothes, accommodation, health and the like. After those needs are fulfilled then we may worry about some other things – whether our spouses will continue to love us, our career, immigration status, education for our kids, our aging parents, savings, retirement, etc. What do you worry about now? Jesus told us that the antidote to worry is to trust our God. We do not need to worry about life because we have a loving and mighty Father who cares about us. From this passage let us look at three things Jesus taught us – God’s provision, God’s perspective and God’s priority.

EXPLANATION

1. 神的供應 God’s Provision

First, Jesus reminded us of God’s provision. Jesus was teaching from a mountainside. Therefore, He asked His audience to look around in nature. Let us read **verse 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?” Birds are everywhere. They do not like humans who have to work in the field, harvest the crops and stock up food. Jesus reminded us that birds can survive simply because the Heavenly Father provides for their needs. Church reformation pioneer Martin Luther has a famous quote. He said: “God provides food for the birds, but He does not drop it into their beaks.” Therefore, you and I still need to work to provide for our family. Don’t expect money or food to descend from the sky! Jesus not only encouraged us to look at the birds He also told us to study the wild flowers. He said in **verse 28**: “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.” Next, Jesus asked us to ponder the grass. **Verse 30** reads: “If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” While the birds are capable of flying around to look for food, wild flowers

and grass are quite helpless because they are stuck in the mud! How do they survive? It is because the Heavenly Father provides sunshine, air and rain in the atmosphere, and nutrients in the soil. In all three examples Jesus' arguments went from the lesser to the greater. If our Heavenly Father takes care of the birds despite their low economic value how much more will He provide food for His own children? If our Heavenly Father cares about the wild flowers and grass, though they do not live long, then how much more will He care for our clothes? We should not forget that every blessing comes from our Heavenly Father. **James 1:16-17** remind us: 16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights... Brothers and sisters: when you have a degree, a job or money in the bank you should give thanks to God. It is not because you are smarter or more capable than others. It is because you have a Heavenly Father who provides for you. Jesus' answer to our worries is simply asking us to switch our attention from our problems to the nature around us. God takes care of His created world and He will also provide for our needs. Why do we have worries? One reason is because we have anxiety that we may not have enough. It is hard for us to give thanks to God if we put our focus on what we do not have rather than what we already have. There is a famous slogan in a credit card TV commercial: "What's in your wallet?" Take a good look at what is in it. Our sisters can also check what is in your purse. You can find your driver's license, cash, credit cards, medical insurance cards, picture of your loved ones, etc. Where do all that come from? It is God's provision. When you leave the church today I encourage you to take a good look at your car. Yeah, it may not be the latest model with all the fancy features. But it is still God's provision for you. When you arrive home I would also encourage you to look around in the garage, your pantry and closet. If your home is like mine there may be lots of stuff here and there that you have not used in years. Those "junk" are also God's provision. Our Heavenly Father is not only the Creator. After He made us He did not abandon us as orphans. Do not worry because He promises to provide for our needs.

2. 神的觀點 God's Perspective

We have a loving and mighty Father who cares about us. Not only that we have to be thankful of God's provision, we should also learn to see ourselves from God's perspective. Let us go back and read **verse 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 important than food, and the body more important than clothes?" Jesus echoed the same thought in **verse 31**: "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" Previously Jesus argued from the lesser (birds, flowers and grass) to the greater (us). Now He argued from the greater to the lesser. Life is of course more important than food, and body is surely more important than clothes. For if we cannot breathe then we do not need to eat, and if we do not have a body then we do not need to wear clothes. Notice Jesus was not talking about worry over no food or no clothes. It is the worry about what to eat and what to wear. I wonder if you have those worries when you got up this morning. You passed by the kitchen and wondered what to have for breakfast. Perhaps you have too many choices, or you were simply tired of eating the same thing you had yesterday. Then when it was time to get dressed, you starred at your closet and wondered what clothes to wear today. We jokingly say that ladies are always short of an extra piece of garment. Some ladies who are more sophisticated may worry that even after they bought a new dress they have to buy a matching purse, matching shoes, or matching jewelry. No wonder in any department store the ladies' section is always a few times bigger than the men's

section. That is clothes. What about food? Nowadays, people do not just want to be well-fed they want to eat in such a way to prolong their longevity. Things like hormone-free dairy and meat or organic produces are modern hype. I am not saying that we should not take care of our body. We should eat nutritious food, sleep well and exercise more. After all, if we do not have a good health how can we serve God effectively? However, Jesus told us to see ourselves from God's perspective. From God's perspective His relationship with us is more important than all the material possessions we have. In **Luke 12** Jesus told a parable about a landlord who worried that he did not have enough space to store his harvest. He decided to tear down the barns he had and built bigger ones. When he dreamed of the many years to enjoy his wealth he could not help but rejoiced. Then there was a voice from heaven in **verse 20**: "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'" If God did not allow this wealthy man to live another day then what was the use of all his fortune? This world judges us based on what we have. But God cares about us because we are His children. While this world looks at us from the outside God sees us on the inside. We are precious because we were created after God's own image. King David exclaims in **Psalm 8:4-5** – 4 What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? 5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. Next time you look into the mirror see yourself from God's perspective. You are a person with great honor because you are God's dear children. That is not self-inflation. It is Biblical truth. It does not matter how much you earn, your height or weight or what zip code you live in. Brothers and sisters: we have a secure relationship with our Heavenly Father. If we learn to see ourselves from God's perspective it will lift our worries away. Don't worry about the stuff this world can offer. Put your focus on God's love. He loves us because we are His children.

3. 神的次序 God's Priority

We have a loving and mighty Father who cares about us. We should be thankful for God's provision, and we should learn to see ourselves from God's perspective. Besides, Jesus encouraged us to follow God's priority and not to worry about our needs. **Verse 33** reads: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." The verb "seek" means to "look for." Most Christians should be familiar with this verse. What does it mean to seek after God's kingdom and righteousness? The whole point is seeking after God's interest first rather than our own interests. Our purpose in life should be to further His kingdom and make His righteousness known to this fallen world. If serving God becomes the top priority in our life then we should not worry that our Father will not give us what we need. No, God never promises that He will make us millionaires. Someone said it right: God desires to fulfill our need, not our greed. Jesus brought up the contrast between those who live by God's priority and those who do not in **verse 32**: "For the pagans run after all these things..." The pagans are those who do not know God. They seek after material things as if they worshipped their possessions as gods. As Christians we should be using God's blessings as a means to expand God's kingdom and make His righteousness known. Take wealth as an example. Are we serving the Lord like a steward of the money God entrusts us, or has money become our master? Let us hear how Paul taught us about money offering in **2 Corinthians 9:7-8** – 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. In the context, Paul talked

supporting another church with financial needs. If we see money as our personal possession then we may worry that we do not have enough. However, if we see money as a way to bless others then we will gladly share it with needy brothers and sisters. The same principle applies to how we use our home, car, time, etc. if we embrace God's priority and put furthering God's kingdom and His righteousness first.

Jesus gave us another reminder about setting our priority right is in **verse 34**: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Jesus knew how much burden we can bear. When we worry about tomorrow more than likely we will expect the worst scenario. We may ask: what if I am laid-off from work or die unexpectedly then who will take care of my family? What if a tornado sweep away my car or house? We will then be paralyzed by the fear of something that may never happen. Please take note that Jesus was not asking us not to plan for the future. The Bible tells us that preparing for the future is a wise thing to do. For example, **Proverbs 21:5** says - The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty. Therefore, we should save up money for a big purchase, your kids' college tuition or your retirement. But we should not worry about tomorrow. We trust God that His grace is sufficient for our needs today. Then He will continue to give us new grace for tomorrow.

CONCLUSION

We have a loving and mighty Father who cares about us. Therefore, we should not worry about our life. Worry is an expression of disbelief. It indicates we do not trust that our Heavenly Father is constantly watching over us, and we also doubt His ability to provide for our needs. When Jesus was on the earth He established a perfect example for us to imitate after. Jesus completely relied on the Heavenly Father to provide for all of His needs. He saw things from the Father's perspective. Jesus also understood the Father's priority for Him to expand God's Kingdom and administer God's righteousness. Brothers and sisters: what are your worries today? Commit yourself to our Heavenly Father and serve Him only. In closing I would like to share with you a beautiful song called "His Eye Is on the Sparrows."

Why do I feel discouraged? Why do the shadows come?
And why does my heart feel lonely, and long for heaven and home?

When Jesus is my portion; a constant friend is He.
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches over me.
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

So I sing because I'm happy, and I sing because I'm free.
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

So I sing because I'm happy, and I sing because I'm free.
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches...

And I know He watches...
And I know He watches...me

祂看顧麻雀

為何灰心常怨歎？ 為何黑影瀰漫？
為何心靈覺孤單？ 甚至欲脫塵寰。

耶穌是我的良友，萬福賜我享受，
祂既看顧小麻雀，深知我必蒙眷佑，
祂既看顧小麻雀，深知我必蒙眷佑。

我唱因我得自由，我唱因我無憂，
我救主既看顧麻雀，深知我必蒙眷佑。

我唱因我得自由，我唱因我無憂，
我救主既看顧麻雀，深知我必蒙...

深知我必蒙...
深知我必蒙眷佑。