



October 29, 2023

“Dealing With Fear and Anxiety”

### Context

At the beginning of Matthew 6 Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray. Then he talks about fasting and finally he talks about how we handle our possessions. In doing this he is building a foundation for his teaching on worry which comes in verses 25-34. If we can get our prayer life right, and if we practice the disciplines of the faith, and if we learn how to handle our possessions, then, Jesus says, you can live a worry-free life.

Jesus talks about the birds of the air and the flowers of the field and how much God cares for them. Then he says if God cares that much about the birds and the flowers, consider how much more God must care about those whom he made in his own image. Thus, we don't need to worry about the things of this world. Even if things are not going our way, God still sees us and cares about us.

Jesus recognizes that each day will have trouble of its own and our calling is to be focused on how we are living in the moment and not be concerned or worried about what might happen at some future date.

Worry and anxiety and fear steal our peace. In John 14:27 Jesus says, “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.*” Jesus recognizes that worry is a reality for his disciples, but he longs for them to be able to experience his peace. Worry keeps us from experiencing God's peace and thus according to Jesus we must seek after two things: God's kingdom and God's righteousness.

If we put God's kingdom first in our lives, things will go well for us. We need to be intentional about spending time with God and making God our priority. We are also to work for God's righteousness in our world. It comes back to the two great commandments of loving God and loving neighbor. When we put God first and when we love and care for our neighbors Jesus says that we do not need to worry about tomorrow.



## Scripture:

### Matthew 6:25-34

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 than food, and the body more than clothes? 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? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 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—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

### Matthew 13:22

22 The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. Luke 10:38-42

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” 41 “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

### 1 Peter 5:7

7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

### Matthew 8:23-27

23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24 Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” 26 He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. 27 The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

### Philippians 4:6-9

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.



## Questions:

1. Pastor Paul referenced several different Scriptures this week that dealt with worry and anxiety. What did you learn about worry from these Scriptures?
2. In Matthew 13:22, we are told that the “worries of this life. . .choke the word, making it unfruitful.” What does that mean to you?
3. What does it mean when Jesus uses the phrase “of little faith” in both Matthew 6:30 and Matthew 8:26? What does this tell you about the relationship between faith and worry?
4. Pastor Paul told us that the word “cast” as used in 1 Peter 5:7, means to give all our worries and cares to God in a “once and for all” manner. Why does that seem so hard for most of us to do? What keeps us from giving our worries to God “once and for all”?
5. In Matthew 8:23-27, we read that Jesus slept in the midst of the storm, and Pastor Paul told us that we must learn to rest in Jesus. What does it mean to rest in Jesus?
6. In Philippians 4:6, the Apostle Paul says “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Pastor Paul followed this up by saying that gratitude is the great “worry-buster.” How does gratitude help free us from worry and anxiety?
7. The Apostle Paul goes on in Philippians 4:8 to tell us that we need to focus our minds on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. If you were to focus your mind in this way, what would you think about? For example, if you think about things that are true, what kind of things are you thinking about?
8. What does it mean when Jesus tells us to “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness”? How does this help us deal with worry and anxiety?
9. In addition to this week’s Scriptures, can you identify one or more Bible verses that can help you to deal with any worries or anxieties you may be feeling?

