

# “Kingdom Come”

Sermon on the Mount Series: Twelfth Lesson, Matthew 6.25-34

## Introduction

- Missed out **Matt 6.1-4, 16-24**: see the bonus podcasts/videos on the website
  - **Fasting** - Do it, but not with motive to be seen
  - **Store up** - Section about our ambitions.
  - **Eyes** - ‘single eye’, primarily a metaphor for a life totally devoted to service of God.
  - **Masters**. lit. ‘be a slave of’; we can have have two employers, but not two owners.
- Loyalty is strong theme in this chapter.

### Therefore

- Because material treasures unsatisfactory and temporary (**Matthew 6:19-21**), because focus on wrong things (**Matthew 6:22**), because must choose master (**Matthew 6:24**), because kingdom loyalty must be total (**Matthew 6:19-24**).
- Continuing theme of priorities - first things first, i.e. God first.
- Emphasis on trusting God for daily needs cf. **Phil 4:6-7; Heb 13:5; 1 Pet 5:7**.

## 1. What is Worry?

- Everyone worries - Jesus knew even the disciples would, **Matt 10.19**.
  - Merimnaocē (‘to be anxious’) refers to a state of mind (‘be over-concerned about’).
  - “(merimna) is the antithesis of the practical trust in God which is the essential meaning of faith (pistis) in this gospel (**Matt 8:10; 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; 17:20; 21:21**).”<sup>1</sup>
  - There is a sense in which worry is not only evil, but its presence signifies unbelief and disobedience.” Carson, 92
  - Basics / luxuries
    - Perhaps Jesus adds “life” and the basics here because his followers might think it’s only about the luxuries/treasures. It is not only those which can be troublesome to the spiritual well-being of his disciples, it can be worry about the basics.
  - Worry is an investment of the heart. Worry is practical atheism.
- Positive and negative concern
  - Not rule out a responsible concern and provision for one’s own and others’ material needs. **1 Tim 5.8**
  - The natural worriers need to submit their worries to God in prayer (**Phil 4:6; 1 Pet 5:6**).
  - The lazy need to take their responsibilities seriously (**1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:11**).
  - Those under a great burden of strain need to look for support (**Gal 6.2**).
  - Paul had ‘anxiety’ - **Phil 2.27-28**. But not the kind dealt with here.
- **QUESTION**: How can we recognise when we are worrying in a way that breaks this command?

<sup>1</sup> France, R. T. The Gospel of Matthew. NICNT. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.5. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

## 2. Solutions to Worry

- **More, v25**
  - Life to the full - the 'more' life - is not possible if consumed with concern for the material.
  - Remember - life is not only the material
  
- **Birds.** Look at:
  - "John Stott, himself a noted bird-watcher, paraphrases Jesus' command as "Watch birds." Following Luther's comment that "he is making the birds our schoolmasters and teachers," Stott has subsequently coined (only half in jest) the term "ornithology" for the science of drawing theological lessons from the observation of nature (The Birds our Teachers [London: Candle Books, 1999])."<sup>2</sup>
  - Hundreds of species migrate through Jordan valley every year. 500 million birds migrate annually - twice each year. Per square kilometre, the country has one of the highest levels of bird traffic in the world. Flocks of 50,000 Cranes at a time.
  
  - **Feeds** them: Emphasis not on passivity (birds still need to go and find food), but on fact God provides. It is there to be found.
  - Birds live a day-to-day existence. It looks insignificant, but God provides for them. How much more will he do so for us. Jesus has taught us to pray for our "daily bread", and now we must trust God will come through.
  
- **More valuable, v26**
  - Not an excuse to exploit them, but an acknowledgment that humans are the pinnacle: "The assumption that God's human creation is of more importance to him than the non-human (cf. **Matt 10:31; 12:12**) echoes the pattern of the Genesis creation narrative, where human beings constitute the final and climactic act of creation and are given authority over the rest of the animal creation (**Gen 1:26-28**; cf. Adam's naming of the animals in **Gen 2:19-20**)."<sup>3</sup>
  
- **Can any of you...?** Worry does not work.
  
- **Flowers:**
  - Israel exports flowers today. Wild flowers in mind here, not cultivated.
  - katamanthano: to learn or observe thoroughly; to consider accurately & diligently, contemplate.
  - Focus not their survival (birds, above), but their magnificence.
  
- **Do not labour:** Not working, not earning. Passively dependent.
  
- **Solomon** - See **1 Kings 10:5** for the splendour of Solomon.
  - Talked about nature: **1 Kgs 4:32-33**.

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<sup>2</sup> France, R. T. The Gospel of Matthew. NICNT. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.5. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> France, R. T. The Gospel of Matthew. NICNT. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.5. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

- **God clothes**
  - "...biblical cosmology plus observant eyes engender real trust in God." Carson, 100.
  - How much happier we would be if we could give up trying to achieve something we cannot achieve by a method that will not produce what we hope for.
- **Today... Tomorrow**
  - Short duration of wild vegetation proverbial: **Job 8:12; Ps 103:15–16; Isa 40:6–8.**
- **Fire**
  - Wild plants provided a regular fuel for the klibanos, a domestic oven for cooking food. God creates beauty which burns so casually. How much more he cares for the pinnacle of his creation.
- **little faith**
  - See same phrase used of disciples: (**Matt 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20**)
  - "Faith is, for Matthew, a very practical reliance on the care and power of the Father and of Jesus (cf. **Matt 8:8–10; 9:2, 21–22, 28–29**; etc.). Anxiety is therefore its opposite, and is ruled out for the disciple."<sup>4</sup>
  - Faith: opposite to worry
- **pagans run**
  - Another injunction to be different from the rest of the world. "Do not be like them..."
  - If we worry it reveals that our thinking and beliefs are really no different from unbelievers.
- **Father...knows:**
  - Relationship is real. He knows and cares. **Matt 6.6-8.** In contrast with pagan religion where Gods are distant and must be appeased/cajoled. This is one reason anxiety is so inimical to Christian faith, it denies the love of God.
  - For a similar emphasis on trusting God for daily needs cf. **Phil 4:6–7; Heb 13:5; 1 Pet 5:7.** He has promised to take care of our needs, not our wants.

### 3. Seek first the kingdom

- **'But'**: decisive action needed
  - The antidote to anxiety is not so much not being anxious as pursuing the right things - the kingdom and God's righteousness.
- **seek**: present imperative - ongoing
  - Not so much bringing the kingdom into being in an eschatological manner, but living under God's rule, revealing the kingdom.
  - "make it your priority to find"

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<sup>4</sup> France, R. T. Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary. TNTC 1. IVP/Accordance electronic edition, version 2.3. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985.

- **kingdom:**
  - The kingdom deserves greater passion than that shown by any worldly treasure-hunter.
  - “His kingdom” - more personal language about kingdom, perhaps to emphasise seeking him rather than the concept.
  - Seek God’s kingship - “resolving to live under God’s direction and control”<sup>5</sup>
- **righteousness**
  - Emphasis: **Matt 5:6, 10, 20,**
  - Discipleship - real life, real following, real obedience, real loyalty.
  - Doing right by God and other people - as Jesus did.
- **given to you**
  - Basics, not luxuries promised.
  - How do we avoid unhealthy motivation regarding spiritual rewards?
  - Godly ambition is upheld in the Bible, so how does this fit with serving God for His sake?
  - Thinking about **Solomon**? Asked for wisdom and got everything else thrown in too.
- **tomorrow: v33** about today, **v34** about the future.
  - A very pragmatic observation. We cannot predict tomorrow. Today’s bread will do - **Matt 6.11.**
- **QUESTION:** What does this look like today? What is the right response to worry?

## Resources:

- “[Stress, Worry & Faith](#)” - lesson
- Matt 6.25-27, “[Worry](#)” - podcast
- “[What to do when you’re hurried and worried](#)” - podcast
- “[How to Stop Worry from taking over your life](#)”, Matt 6.25-34 - podcast sermon
- [The Worry Book: Finding a Path to Freedom](#), by Will Van Der Hart
- [Insight into Anxiety](#), by Chris Ledger, Clare Blake
- [I'm Not Supposed to Feel Like This: A Christian Approach to Coping with Depression and Anxiety](#), by Chris Williams, Paul Richards, Ingrid Whitton
- [Mind and Soul](#): website with helpful resources

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<sup>5</sup> France, R. T. The Gospel of Matthew. NICNT. Accordance electronic edition, version 1.5. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.