

25\* "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to 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, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27\* "And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? 28\* "And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 30\* "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! 31\* "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32\* "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33\* "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34\* "So do not worry about tomorrow.

I want to begin this morning where we left off last week.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones the respected Welsh preacher tells the story of a farmer who one day went happily and with great joy in his heart to report to his wife and family that their best cow had given birth to twin calves, one brown and one white. And he said, "You know I suddenly had a feeling and impulse that we must dedicate one of these calves to the Lord. We will bring them up together, and when the time comes we will sell one and keep the proceeds, and we will sell the other and give the proceeds to the Lord's work." His wife asked him which he was going to dedicate to the Lord. "There is no need to bother about that now," he replied, "we will treat them both in the same way, and when the time comes we will do as I say." And off he went. In a few months the man entered his kitchen looking very miserable and unhappy. When his wife asked him what was troubling him, he answered, "I have bad news to give you. The Lord's calf is dead."

Why is it always the Lord's calf that dies?

Where is the treasure of your heart?

**Where is the safest place to put your treasure? Where you will have the clearest spiritual sight and where you will be able to serve the right Master. The possession of wealth is not a sin, but it is a great responsibility. John Calvin said, "Where riches hold the dominion of the heart, God has lost His authority."**

It is for just these reasons that Jesus says do not be worried or anxious about the material necessities of life.

How insulting it is to God and how unholy our reasoning if it is the Lord's calf that dies.

Consider the reason. The attitude expressed in the story is one that shows a selfishness and a lack of confidence in the providence of God. Cows may die for many reasons and the risk of being a dairy farmer or a beef rancher always carries with it the possibility of death due to disease or disaster. The heart of man is so wicked that we would always claim what we see to be best for us over that which God does which *is* best for us.

Food and clothing are necessary for life. Nourishment and protection from things that may harm our bodies are essential to good health. Without good health it is very difficult to provide the simple necessities for life and Jesus in no way tells us that we are not to provide these things for ourselves and for our families. But the attitude of the heart in acquiring even the necessities of life is the primary concern of Jesus.

In the previous passage we were reminded that a display of our treasures is not what equals hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of God. The heart is not in a right condition when we are more concerned about displaying the benefits of God's providence for the sake of saying to others "look at my treasure". Rather, the heart is in a right condition when, regardless of how much treasure we have, we manage it properly for the glory of God.

So Jesus in this part of the sermon says if your treasure is in the right place, do not worry about the basics and He is now going to give his people an assurance as to why they need not worry or be anxious about these essentials for living because in the sum of all things life is more than even these basics for living .

He turns to his own creation for an object lesson.

**26\* "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"**

Birds do not plant and then harvest their own food. They are at the mercy of the environmental conditions that they live in. Whenever the balance of their ecosystem is out of order they are at risk. Yet, it is God who is their provider and their caretaker.

Regardless of the conditions that support various birds in our environment, to think in contemporary terms, the birds are alive because of God.

It is true that people set up bird feeders and attract birds with healthy seed and other food but in the end they live or die regardless of the conditions, favorable or unfavorable, as it is in the will and divine purposes of God.

Jesus says that if God will show this much concern for the birds then how much more does He care for His people.

The birds are only a part of the great creation of God. Man is the crown of God's creation. It is man who was given stewardship over the creation. It is man that shares in the image of the creator and sadly it is man that because of his sin causes the earth to suffer and it even cries out for its redemption as a result.

But, it is people that are saved by the grace of God, it is people who are restored into fellowship with God through the blood of the cross, it is people, not the birds, who are the adopted children of God. And because this is so, God has a greater regard for His children than for any other part of His creation. You may say, but doesn't God love all of his creation the same way. The answer is in our text, **Are you not worth much more than they?**

Now, an evolutionist or a pantheist may have some different ideas about the value of animals and the environment, especially those who worship the creation in any of its component parts.

For some, because the environment and its creatures other than man are more numerous and much older, the earth and all it contains is, in the end, more important than man.

There are those who will save the whales and save the seals, and there is nothing wrong in calling for humane treatment of any animal, even chickens on the farm. But it is rather ludicrous to cry for a whale or a seal when the same person advocates the murder of children by abortion without any emotional disturbance other than demanding passionately and vehemently that a woman has a right to choose what to do with her body.

Jesus says we, especially His people, are more important than the birds and provision from God, in one way or another is there for us

Said the Robin to the Sparrow: "I should really like to know Why these anxious human beings Rush about and worry so." Said the Sparrow to the Robin: "Friend, I think that it must be That they have no heavenly Father Such as cares for you and me."  
Elizabeth Cheney

Then Jesus addresses an issue that may as well have been a sermon that He preached in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for the first time.

27 "And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life?

The King James version uses the word cubit. This is a form of linear measurement equal to about 20-21 inches. It pictures length, in other words who can add a length of time to their life span by worrying.

This "don't worry" appeal has been issued by the United States Public Health Service. In a statement presenting statistics on showing the tendency of the worry habit to shorten life this service says: "So far as is known, no bird ever tried to build more nests than its neighbor; no fox ever fretted because he had only one hole in which to hide; no squirrel ever died of anxiety lest he should not lay by enough nuts for two winters instead of one, and no dog ever lost any sleep over the fact that he did not have enough bones laid aside for his declining years." {The Herkimer Citizen}

Long before there was anything like a psychiatrist or a psychologist and the babble they espouse, Solomon expressed the wisdom of God when he wrote  
Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad. (Prov12:25)

The weighing down of the heart is depression. Modern science has proven the Bible to be 100% accurate in understanding the human condition concerning the relationship between anxiety and depression.

Author Lucretia Hanson noticed a mistake in a caption she was proofreading. Instead of "Used Cars" it read, "Used Cares." Hanson wrote, "It made me stop short and reflect on how many of our cares are used ones, dredged up from past memories. "There are the cares of self-pity: the long illness we had, or the unreasonable way people treated us on a certain occasion.... Then there are the used cares of regrets. If I had only gone on to school or been more careful in the selection of my life mate. "We think too of the unavoidable cares. The accident for which we were not to blame, the germ that laid us low and left a trail of pain for years, the physical weakness we cannot remedy, the separation from loved ones that grieves us and the refusal of someone to forgive us for a hasty word or action. We have used these cares so long that they have depressed us and left us powerless."

I submit that is pretty insightful from a secular perspective.

Anxiety has become such an integral part of the human condition in modern times that now anxiety is a disease/disorder instead of a matter of having a wrong attitude of the heart as Jesus is teaching. But listen to the world.

**Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)**

The essential characteristic of Generalized Anxiety Disorder is excessive uncontrollable worry about everyday things. This constant worry affects daily functioning and can cause physical symptoms. GAD can occur with other anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, or substance abuse. GAD is often difficult to diagnose because it lacks some of the dramatic symptoms, such as unprovoked Panic Attacks, that are seen with other anxiety disorders; for a diagnosis to be made, worry must be present more days than not for at least 6 months.

The focus of GAD worry can shift, usually focusing on issues like job, finances, health of both self and family; but it can also include more mundane issues such as, chores, car repairs and being late for appointments. The intensity, duration and frequency of the worry are disproportionate to the issue and interferes with the sufferer's performance of tasks and ability to concentrate.

And of course the primary treatment for GAD is drugs, drugs and more drugs, none of which gets to the heart of the matter. And even worse, so called Christian counselors have jumped on the psychotropic drug bandwagon with no regard for dealing with symptoms that reveal sinful attitudes of the heart.

Jesus says worry will not add anything to your life. But we know that it will take away from your life.

28"And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

The idea of clothing is brought up again because in Jesus' day and in just about every generation in world history clothing and how it is displayed can communicate something about our stature as far as wealth is concerned or at least to give that impression.

He is saying don't worry about the display of it. He will provide clothing as a Father.

Therefore do not worry.

It may not be the most elegant nor does it have to be. The purpose of clothing is primarily for protection from the elements.

He tells them to observe the lilies of the field. No matter how hard the personal tailor of King Solomon worked to provide spectacular garments for the king, the wealthiest man in his day, the beauty of the clothes of the lilies was superior to the king's clothes. Their tailor was God himself. They were arrayed in natural splendor created by God, not by the imagination of men. Nothing that man achieves can ever compare to the things that God does for His own glory, whether it be clothing the lilies, feeding the birds or saving the souls of men.

**"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! (Matthew 6:30, NAS95).**

Anxiety and worry are the evidences of a heart that is not fixed on God. It is a heart that is not, as a first goal, hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of God. It is a heart that is not trusting in the providence of God for all things and sees whatever material wealth we have, either in smaller or greater measure as being the providence of God.

Anxiety and worry are the *enemies of faith*. They are arbiters of doom and gloom for the soul. They have great sway over how people reason about things and wield much authority. That is why they are enemies of the soul. These enemies often times take root in our lives in the matters of our treasures and where our treasures are there are our hearts also.

If we are bound in anxiety and worry over our treasures then our hearts are bound to seek after those things before we seek for the kingdom of God and His righteousness and therefore we are those of little faith. Jesus does not say no faith but it is a faith that we have limited by not fully trusting in God as our provider.

The grass lives a very short life and is burned up. Yet it is clothed. We live a temporal life but we will be clothed by God and even better clothing is ours for we are already clothed in the righteousness of Christ and will be for eternity.

**31\* "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'" 32\* "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

We as God's people do not need to *seek* after these things.

The unbeliever seeks after these things because they have no assurance of anything but that which is temporal whether it be in large or small measure. Many believe that the soul perishes with the body so the need for material satisfaction is a temporary thing and should be sought after because there is nothing else.

But our heavenly Father knows of all our need and this is to encourage us to look to God as our all sufficiency. This is to continue to encourage us that a godly life is the most precious thing any person can possess and it is all by the grace of God our heavenly Father. When we look to ourselves we will wallow in self-pity, fear, worry and anxiety even over the most trivial things. The more we possess the greater the anxiety. Am I more interested in the material treasure I have or the care the Father has for me?

**33\* "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you**

Jesus is challenging us as His disciples to put off the primary concern and pursuit of the unbeliever and to put on the primary pursuit of a follower of Christ. God's people should know which pursuit is of greater value and has a greater reward.

We are to desire and pursue, above all, the entering into the kingdom of God as it now is with its standards of normal Christian living and pursue kingdom living as we have been taught to pray in the model prayer. We are to be a part of the answer to our praying thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We are to store up our treasure in heaven for the day when the kingdom will be consummated, completed for all of eternity.

As we have already studied last week, in the end there are only two kinds of piety. That which engages itself in the theater of piety and all of the self centered exhibition that goes along with it or there is a true and genuine piety that is God centered and is proven by the way we are being seen as salt and light in the world. John Stott writes, "there are only two kinds of ambition: one can be ambitious either for oneself or for God.

**34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

In her book, CELEBRATE JOY!, Velma Seawell Daniels gives a striking new meaning to this familiar phrase, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." She tells of

interviewing a man who had made a trip to Alaska to visit people who live above the Arctic Circle. "Never ask an Eskimo how old he is," the man said. "If you do, he will say, "I don't know and I don't care." And he doesn't. One of them told me that, and I pressed him a bit further. When I asked him the second time, he said, "Almost -- that's all." That still wasn't good enough for me, so I asked him "Almost what?" and he said, "Almost one day." Mrs. Daniels asked him if he could figure out what the Eskimo meant. He answered that he did but only after talking to another man who had lived in the Arctic Circle for about twenty years. "He was a newspaperman who had written a book about the Eskimos and their customs and beliefs. He said the Eskimos believe that when they go to sleep at night they die -- that they are dead to the world. Then, when they wake up in the morning, they have been resurrected and are living a new life. Therefore, no Eskimo is more than one day old. So, that is what the Eskimo meant when he said he was 'almost' a day old. The day wasn't over yet." "Life above the Arctic Circle is harsh and cruel, and mere survival becomes a major accomplishment," he explained. "But, you never see an Eskimo who seems worried or anxious. They have learned to face one day at a time." Have you learned how to put worry and anxiety aside and live one day at a time? Yesterday has past. Tomorrow has not arrived, but Today is the first day of the rest of your life.

We are expected not to have worry about tomorrow. We do not die and then are resurrected when we wake up the next morning but we have died, with Christ at the cross and we are resurrected into newness of life by the grace of God. We should have no expectation for tomorrow other than that which is the will of God according to His pleasure for His purpose and unto the praise of His glorious grace.

It is not that we cannot plan, we cannot save, we cannot be wise in our stewardship and have a little extra in the storehouse, be it food, clothing or drink if we are able. The real question is where is my heart and what is the treasure of my heart. Is my heart above all other things hungering for God and more of the righteousness that I am in Him? Christ is our New Covenant and all He requires of us is written on our hearts. We also have the written Word to teach us about what is written on our hearts and His Spirit to enable We must all ask ourselves the question, "Am I desirous of living out what Christ has already put in my heart?"