

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, 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, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

We are all coming together this morning for a reason, maybe many reasons. Maybe we are coming because it is a discipline of ours. This is **what you do** on Sunday. It is the **right** thing to do. So we do it.

Maybe we want to please God by **presenting our worship to Him** together this morning.

Maybe you are coming because you want to hear from God. You feel your **need of God** in your life and you want to **hear a message** that He has for you this morning.

There could be lots of other reasons. But we are all here. And what I am **certain of** is that Jesus's desire for us is **to do business** with **worry about stuff** and He wants us to more completely **trust in Him**.

Last week we got this far-

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life

I spoke about the fact that this is a command. It is a command coming from God. This means it is something that **must be** obeyed and it is something that **can be** obeyed.

Then we looked at worry, what it is and how it divides our mind. It gets us going in two directions and distracts us. I quoted lots of quotes about how **useless** worry is, no matter how **compelling** it seems to be.

And I talked about this great opportunity that Jesus is giving us to get this monkey off our back. He is going to tell us **how** and **why** to refuse to worry. This brings us up to this morning. You and I are here this morning. And more are listening from home due to the Covid virus. No matter **how** we are attending this morning, Christ desires that **we hear** what **He has to say**. OK let's look at an outline of sorts.

25a Command 1 Do not worry about your life, your food, drink, and clothing.

25b Reason 1 Life is more than food and clothes.

26 Reason 2 God cares for the lower creation—the birds. You are more valuable than they.

27 Reason 3 Worry changes nothing.

28–30 Reason 4 God cares for the lower creation—even lilies and grass, short-lived as they are. We are more valuable, as even men of little faith should know.

31 Command 2 Do not worry about what you will eat, drink, and wear.

32 Reason 5 The pagans (sensibly) chase these things, since they are godless. But your Father knows your needs, so that you need not chase them.

33a Command 3 Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness.

33b–34 Reason 6 All the things the Gentiles chase will be given to you.

34 Command 4 Therefore do not worry.

Reformed Expository Commentary - Reformed Expository Commentary – Matthew, Volumes 1 & 2.

My brother used to get very irritated with me, and mostly because, well, **I was irritating**. But his responses weren't always exceedingly helpful. I remember him telling me to "**THINK**" and "**GROW UP**". That was very good advice and surely what **I needed to do**, and was **quite eager** to do. But he did not tell me how.

Isn't it wonderful that King Jesus doesn't tell us just to **stop worrying**. He tells us **how**. He tells us **what to focus on**. He tells us **how to think**. And if we are ever to stop worrying it will only be by changing how we think. If you have trouble with **worrying**, and you **want God's help**, it is always good to pray. But it is never good to pray **instead of** obeying. Christ is going to tell us what to think. If we stubbornly refuse to **think correctly**, we cannot

expect that God will answer our prayer for deliverance. But if we **obey** and **pray**, we will find that **He will deliver us** from this evil of worry.

OK, let's go back to the first verse in today's text.

²⁵ **"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"**

Ok. So Jesus starts by saying, do not worry about your life. He starts very broadly. Your life. That is essentially **everything about us**. That includes **everything** in our lives. It includes our **futures**, our **present**, our **relationships**, our **health**. We could go on and on. It is everything in our lives.

But it might be easy for us to think, I don't worry about my life. Nope, I am good.

So Jesus puts it in terms we understand. He puts it in terms that will grab our imaginations if we **allow ourselves just a few minutes** to reflect on them.

He gives examples of things we **might worry about having**. They are examples of what we **would be prone to worry about** if we did not have them. For us we may have to use our imaginations. For those who are persecuted or those living in poverty, no imagination would be required.

He says,

What you will eat.

I know that sometimes I may appear to be more negative than I need to be. And maybe that is a valid criticism. But I think for us to really get this, we need to imagine bad things. For right now, no one in our church is going to go hungry except by choice. As long as some of us have income I believe all of us share a sense of responsibility to share our goods with those in need. So living in hunger, except for intentional dieting, is not a likelihood. So it is difficult to take this admonition seriously.

But from what I understand a condition on the sun could easily send out an electrical disturbance that could wipe out all of the unprotected electronics on whole countries. It is called an EMP. Electrical Magnetic Impulse. **Monica** might want to tune out here.

If that were to happen there would be no food in grocery stores within a couple of days. All vehicles and electrical devices would not operate.

In that circumstance we could find out what we **really think** of Christ's command. We would see how much we **really believe** His promises and **trust** His character.

Food, water and clothing are really **survival** commodities. And I believe Jesus used those examples because they are. No one survives if they lack food,

water or protection from the elements for a length of time. When **we** think of clothes we tend to think of **style**. Not having clothes would be embarrassing. I think it would be more accurate to think of it as not having **a coat or blanket of any kind** and having to live through a Garrett County winter. That is the kind of impression the listener probably got.

The examples Jesus gave were not just things in life we would **prefer** over other things. Like we would prefer a nice spouse over a nasty spouse. Or a caring child over an inconsiderate one. Or a good job over a bad job. Or good health over bad health. **Jesus is saying** don't worry about the things that **keep your heart ticking** and **keep you in the land of the living**. He is essentially saying, do not worry about those things that **enable you to survive**.

How can that be? How can a human even **do** that? Our **instincts** are to survive. How can what He is commanding not **devastate our world**? How can that not become the **only** thing we focus on? That is **our life**.

And that is **EXACTLY** Jesus point. Don't worry about your **own physical survival** or the **means** to that survival.

Again, I welcome discussion on that in Sunday School or Bible Study or privately. Please show me how that is not what Christ means. I am confident that you can't do it. Christ is saying, don't worry about the things you need to survive.

OK. Then **WHY**? Why should we not **worry** about things that **allow our survival** on planet earth? What could Jesus possibly say that would give us good enough reason to stop worrying?

Let's look. He says-

Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Let me ask you. Do you remember the day that you asked God to allow you to be **conceived** and eventually **be born** by your mother?

Do you remember when you asked God to have you born in the **location** you were born? How about your **hair color**? How about your **intellect**? How about **your looks**? Do you remember asking God to make you pretty or handsome? Mark, do you remember asking God to make you the kind of person who can move houses with a tractor, and roller skate them into position? Or Ruth, do you remember asking God to make you like Dickens humor?

No. We might laugh because it is absurd. Our lives did not **come from** our **efforts** or even **our suggestions**. They happened **to us** completely devoid of our decisions. We had no choice and were given no choice. They were given to us **from God** and **by God**.

Now why would we suddenly think that our lives were **something else**? Why would we think now that my life is solely dependent upon **my choice**, my **ability to provide**, my use of the **assets** that I had **no part in creating**.

No. Jesus point was, **our lives are bigger than that**.

Now I would have thought that Jesus would immediately appeal to the fact that **even if we lose our lives we keep them** if we are in Christ. Our lives are more because they last forever. I would have thought He would appeal to our eternal destiny. And while that is true, that is **not** the argument that Jesus makes. And that is actually quite wonderful. His argument is for here and now, in the day that we live.

Our brother Jones says it very clearly.

If God has given you the gift of life—the greater gift—do you think He is now suddenly going to deny Himself and His own methods, and not see to it that that life is sustained and enabled to continue? God has His own ways of doing that, but the argument is that I need never become anxious about it.¹

Essentially, there is more about our lives that is true than what the naturalistic materialists say. Life is **more** than surviving and mating. We are not like the animals. And even the animals have more meaning than the naturalistic materialists give to them. Even the animals were intentionally created and placed here. Even their lives are **more** than food and water and survival.

In order to not worry, our first action would be **refuse to accept** what the **bad eye** sees. We need to refuse to allow our first impulse as truth. We must climb Jacob's ladder and see our lives from God's perspective. Our natural perspective will **deceive us** and **fill us with darkness**. God's will not. It will fill us **with light**. And light is what we need in order not to worry.

We need to see that if God has **given us life**, he has kept it going **until now** and he will keep it going **as long as He sees fit**. It never was dependent **primarily** on our efforts and it **never will be**. Our efforts are **necessary** but they are brought on first by **what God wills**. We must see our lives as being **bigger than ourselves**, bigger than **our talents** or **abilities** or **provisions**. We are a creature **created** by God, **sustained** by God, and **loved** by God. And we live in bodies that God created and He knows if we are to survive on earth, that body needs provided for. That is how our life is bigger than food and clothes.

¹ Lloyd-Jones, D. M. (1976). [*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*](#) (Second edition, p. 429). Inter-Varsity Press.

It may be good for us to stop here and consider this truth. What are you **good at**? How hard did you work at being good at it? Isn't it hard wired in us to slap ourselves on the back as if all the credit goes to us for that thing? But when we reduce it all, we only worked within the realm that we were given. There are so many people that God did not have born in a **prosperous country** with **healthy bodies** and a **decent education** of some sort. Whatever we have, we were blessed by God with it. It is very good, when we are giving thanks to God, that we **acknowledge this truth** about our lives. Because of God, our lives are way bigger than those meager things that keep us alive. In God we live and move and have our being. God had a **purpose** for putting us here and His purpose cannot be thwarted. Even if the whole world around us starves, if God has a purpose for us to continue breathing, He will provide food. He fed a whole nation of people for years impossibly. Why do we think He is now not **able** or **willing** to sustain us. And do any of us want to live longer than than the purpose God has for us? If this is our week to die, so be it. Faith is always hoping. It is always looking for that which cannot be seen. And even though we have sentimental attachments to this life, a believer knows deep in his heart that dying is better. So our bodies are more than food and clothing.

Now let's look at verse 26

26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Our world is in deep confusion about the animals. It has more scientific tools and facts than it has ever had, but it is more confused about living things than it ever **has been**.

At least our world is not yet confused about the **sexuality** of animals. We reserve that confusion for human beings. We still depend on science to determine the sexuality of an animal. But as for the **importance** of animals, our culture is beginning to miss that by a mile.

Listen to this from the PETA website.

Ethical treatment—the Golden Rule—must be extended to *all* living beings: reptiles, mammals, fish, insects, birds, amphibians, and crustaceans.

Would we imprison our children in cages too small for them to move? Would we violate our sisters and steal their babies? Would we deliberately infect our friends with diseases and leave them untreated? Of course not—so why would we do the same to other beings? We must

abandon the archaic and incorrect boundary of “human,” which we use to justify the ongoing massacre of *billions* of beings.

More than a century ago, Charles Darwin showed that *all* beings had the same common ancestor. All beings share the desire to *live*. We all feel pain, joy, grief, and pleasure. We all have worth.

So these people at PETA are saying, love the slug in your garden like you love yourself. And implied is not only do all **have worth** but all have **equal** worth. They believe that laws should equally apply to a **beast** or a **person**.

I wonder if God sees that and laughs. Only people without a concept of the true God could believe such ridiculous ideas. If I had a moment with one of the leaders I would ask one question. **Who says?** By what authority do you make these statements? I guess they would say Darwin. A man with an idea. The next question might be, **what do you think of Jesus?** If they think nothing of Jesus, that would be consistent. But if they say **anything good** about Him we could ask what it means when Jesus says, **“Are you people of mine not of more value than the birds?”**

Godlessness is driving our culture mad. And that is not a surprise.

The point that birds are **not as valuable to God** as **humans** are is the basis for the argument that Jesus is making. So it was good for us to establish that at the start.

²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Here is reason 2 to help us not worry. And it has two parts.

Notice first that we are to look at the birds of the air. When I was a kid I used to go out into the woods with a bird book and binoculars. I don't know if that was the **cause** or **effect** of me not understanding people too well back then. But I would look at the birds and it had little spiritual effect. The effect comes in **how** we look. And Jesus is telling us **how** to look. He is telling us what to **think about when we look**.

When you look at the birds, think about how **they are kept alive**. Have you ever seen a sparrow's barn? Have you ever seen a Cardinal weeding a garden? That is silly, as Katrina would say. So the **birds eat** what **God provides for them**. Or another way to see that is to see **God provides what the birds eat**. God created the birds. He had a purpose for them. And it is **He alone** who sustains them.

But that is **not enough fuel** to help us stop worrying. Our Savior gives us even more mental help than that. He inspires us further.

Look at that first sentence in verse 26 again. Notice “Whose” Father feeds them? Notice that it is not **THEIR** Father. No. God does not claim to be the father to the animals. That would actually be **degrading** to Him. He is their Creator for sure. He is the sovereign God over them. But He provides for them in His **general grace**. This is the same kind of grace that provides rain on the righteous and unrighteous. While He may do it because it **pleases Him to do so**, He does not do it because He is intimate relationship with them. They are not the dearly loved children that He gave **His life** to save. No God is kind to the creatures He created because He is **that kind of God**. But they do not have the **status** or **relationship** with God that **we do**.

That is the first point, the first encouraging emphasis. If God feeds animals that are **simply animals**, not **beloved children**, why would we ever think that He will **fail to feed** those who are his **dearly beloved Children** that He bought with the price of His Son. It is utterly **illogical** to think that way. Jesus is proving that worry about provision is **not even smart**. You have to **ignore facts** that you **CAN** see in order to do it. Who of us has not seen a bird eat? Consider all the things that had to be in place for them to have something to eat. Even the fact that earthworms surface so Robins can eat them. When we watch that process we should say to ourselves, see. **I have no reason to worry**. God loves me more than He loves that bird. So if He takes care of **that bird**, I have even **greater assurance** that He will **take care of me**. He never promised that bird that He would feed him. He just does so **out of His own goodness**. But He **promises** to provide me everything He determines I need. So I have **greater reason** not to worry than that bird does. God intimately cares about my welfare. Why, because **I am His child**.

And then we see that **Are you not of more value than they?**

We started this verse talking about evil views of nature, false views. This comes from the idea that we exist due to **time and chance**. Logically then they must believe that everything that exists is of **equal importance**. I would argue that this is **extremely hypocritical** and the proponents of this animal love would largely **not kill themselves** so the animals have more resources. They may suggest that some humans should die in that effort, but not the one making that decree. But nonetheless, they believe that they believe it. But scripture reveals this wonderful truth. **We** are of **more value** than the animals. In the garden of Eden it was **Adam** who **named** the creatures. That displayed his superiority to them. Then they were told to take dominion over the earth. That is man’s rightful place.

Being made in the image of God makes us special on this earth. We, by nature, have **more value** than the animals. There is no crime in killing a cow for selfish reasons. There is great evil in killing a human for selfish reasons. Let's look at what the Psalms say. This is from one of my favorite psalms, one we have often read.

Psalm 8:1-9 (NKJV)

- 1 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!**
- 2 Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.**
- 3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,**
- 4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?**
- 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.**
- 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all *things* under his feet,**
- 7 All sheep and oxen-- Even the beasts of the field,**
- 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.**
- 9 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!**

Humans are special of all God's creation. And those who were **bought by the blood of Jesus Christ** are even **special-er**. We are not only humans, who are of more value than birds, but we are **born again humans** and the **apple of God's eye**.

Are you wrestling with worry? Put up a bird feeder. And then consider the **effort** that God has placed in **keeping those birds alive**, those birds that have a very short lifespan. Given the number of birds, we must conclude that God is pretty good at this job. Even with all the things that must come together to feed them. But scripture, to my knowledge never says the **He loves them**. It does however tell us **He loves us** over and over again.

Now try to come up with an argument for why God is **unlikely to provide for your needs**, whom **He loves**, when he is feeding the birds in that feeder that have **no relational importance to Him**.

Isn't it just wonderful, this lesson He gives us in every day life? We look out our windows to watch birds feed. It really doesn't matter much where we live. Birds are nearly everywhere.

I remember thinking recently when I was by the ocean, “what do all those seagulls eat? How are there so many? How do they stay alive?” I failed to consider, it is truly our God that keeps them fed. I think the safe bet is that God will do **even better** for us.

That is our fuel for thought this week. This is our **worry remedy lesson** from Jesus Himself. He is so very good toward us.