

Matthew 6:25-34 • Worry

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Introduction: The Tension of Trust

Have you ever stood at the edge of a swimming pool, peering down into the shimmering water, and felt a knot of anxiety tighten in your stomach? I have. It wasn't a fear of the water itself, but a deeper, more primal fear – the fear of falling, of losing control, of trusting someone else with your well-being. My dad was always there, arms outstretched, promising to catch me as I jumped. Yet, a nagging doubt always lingered.

It wasn't that I doubted my dad's physical ability to catch me. He was a strong man, capable and competent. Nor did I question his knowledge of how to catch a child safely. He knew the physics involved, the angles, and the necessary force. My worry was more insidious. It was a question of his compassion, his willingness to truly sympathize with my fear and alleviate my terror by doing exactly what he promised: catching me before my head went under water.

I worried that he might be trying to teach me a lesson about being tough, about overcoming my fears through sheer force of will. I worried that he might move his hands away at the last moment, leaving me to plunge into the deep water, gasping and struggling to find my way back to the surface. Then, after I breached the surface, sputtering and shaken, he would, in all his fatherly wisdom, tell me that he knew I could do it on my own. Good lesson, perhaps, but a bad method! My worry wasn't about his power or knowledge, but about his heart. Did he truly care for me in a way that brought comfort and reassurance, or was he simply trying to toughen me up?

This tension, this questioning of love and care, is at the heart of much of our anxiety. Jesus, in our passage today, connects much of our worry to our understanding of God's compassion and love toward us. He affirms God's power to provide and his knowledge of our needs, but the majority of his energy and words will be dedicated to assuring us that God is compassionate toward us. He loves us. He loves you! Realizing God's love for you is the remedy for many of our worries and anxieties.

Big Idea: God loves YOU! Yes, you. Despite all your flaws and failures, He finds you beautiful and enjoyable. He has committed Himself to your ultimate good, which is to be close to Him.

Passage:

Matthew 6:25-34, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 'Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.'

God's Power and Knowledge (v. 26, 30, 32)

In this passage, Jesus addresses the pervasive human tendency to worry. He doesn't dismiss our concerns as trivial or unimportant; instead, he reframes them within the context of God's character and His relationship with us. He begins by pointing to God's power and knowledge, reminding us that He is not a distant, detached deity but an active and engaged Creator.

In verse 26, Jesus says that God the Father "feeds" the birds of the air, and in verse 30, Jesus states that God "clothes" the grass. Think about that for a moment. The God of the universe, the one who spoke the stars into existence, is intimately involved in the daily sustenance of even the smallest creatures. He provides for the birds, ensuring they have food to eat. He adorns the lilies with breathtaking beauty, surpassing even the splendor of King Solomon.

This passage highlights the divine intimacy of biblical cosmology. God is close to creation; He didn't just make it and leave it be. He is not a masterful clockmaker who builds a watch and lets it run on its own. While He has established systems, He is within the watch, near each gear as it operates. God is capable of intervening in the lives of His creatures. We must not worry that God is impotent, incapable of providing for us. He is not some absentee landlord, indifferent to the needs of His tenants. He is a loving and attentive Father, actively involved in the lives of His children.

Jesus also assures us that God is aware of our needs. He doesn't need to be informed of what we lack as if He were ignorant. In verse 32, Jesus says that the Father "knows" what we need. These words are almost identical to what he said earlier in his sermon in Matthew 6:7-8. He sees our struggles, understands our fears, and is fully aware of the challenges we face.

Think about the implications of that statement. The God who knows the number of hairs on your head (Matthew 10:30) also knows the desires of your heart. He knows your anxieties, your fears, your deepest longings. He is not surprised by your needs, nor is He overwhelmed by them. He is fully equipped and eager to meet them. Jesus doesn't want his followers to worry that God is unaware of their hardships. We must not worry that God is ignorant, oblivious to our needs. He is not some detached observer, passively watching our lives unfold. He is a compassionate and engaged participant, actively working for our good.

God's Love for YOU (v. 26-30)

But knowing that God is powerful and knowledgeable is not enough to dispel our anxieties. We can acknowledge His ability to provide and His awareness of our needs, yet still struggle with worry. Why? Because at the heart of our anxiety often lies a deeper question: Does God truly care about me? Does He love me?

This is where Jesus' illustrations of the birds and the lilies become so powerful. Both illustrations contain a "how much more" argument. Jesus explains God's care for both the birds and the lilies, feeding and clothing them. They don't fret or worry about having their needs met. He uses these everyday examples to illustrate the depth and breadth of God's love for us.

Consider the birds of the air (v. 26-27). They don't sow, they don't reap, they don't gather into barns. They live day by day, trusting in God's provision. And yet, your heavenly Father feeds them. Jesus is not promoting laziness, as if the birds and the lilies are not exerting some energy. He emphasizes that they are not alone in meeting their own needs. In speaking about the birds of the air, Jesus mentions the methods people use to provide for themselves during those times: "sowing," "reaping," and "gathering." The rest of the scriptures teach us that having a good work ethic is essential. What Jesus is saying is that we should not view ourselves as being alone in meeting our

needs. We play a part, but God plays the larger role. God takes on this burden because He loves us more.

And then comes the crucial question: “Are you not of more value than they?” Of course, we are! We are created in God’s image, endowed with reason, creativity, and the capacity for love and relationship. We are the crown of His creation, and He cherishes us deeply. You have value to God. Is that a challenging phrase for you to consider? I think Jesus knows that it is, which is why he says it again.

Jesus adds to his argument by speaking about the lilies (v. 28-30) and how God clothes them. He highlights their lack of anxious energy, noting that they don’t “toil nor spin,” and then draws a comparison to Solomon’s wardrobe and their frailty of life. Solomon was the wealthiest king in the history of Israel, and to be clothed better than him would be impressive. Jesus then reduces the lilies to the “grass of the field,” mentioning that they are quickly disposed of in the fire. God cares enough to clothe in splendor something that has such a short lifespan. “How much more” does he love us, who live forever? We are more valuable. God really loves YOU!

Illustration of Maddox loving every girl, but really loving Allie.

My son, Maddox, claims to love every girl. When we are on our way to a friend’s house and explain to him who we are going to visit, he asks, after we have named each person, if they are a girl. If we say, “yes,” then he says, “I love her because she is a girl.” Maddox has a general love for all girls, but he loves his big sister, Allie, in a different way.

I saw this last week after her lacrosse game. She was walking toward us after the game, and he turned and ran to her and embraced her. Not every girl gets that. He has a special love for her, specifically. This is how God, the Father, loves you. He has a running-after-you kind of love. He doesn’t just have a general affection for humanity; He has a personal, intimate love for you.

Trouble v. 34

Now, let’s be clear. Believing that God loves you doesn’t mean there won’t be trouble. God cares for us, and we will still find ourselves in crisis. God’s greatest provision is His presence. Jesus wants us to see God’s wonderful provision and protection. He is also a realist, and there will be times when we experience need and face hardship. This is similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 5:11-12 about his followers facing persecution, as well as in his model prayer in Matthew 6:13, where he spoke of facing the temptations of the Evil One. Life is not always easy. There will be days filled with challenges, setbacks, and disappointments. There will be times when you feel overwhelmed, lost, and alone. But even in those moments, God’s love remains steadfast. He does not promise a life free from hardship, but He promises His presence in the midst of it. He promises to walk alongside us, to comfort us, to strengthen us, and to guide us through the valleys of our lives. God loves YOU and will lead you through the valleys of your life. Think of it this way: God’s love is not a guarantee of a trouble-free life, but a guarantee of His unwavering presence in the midst of trouble. He doesn’t promise to remove all the obstacles from our path, but He does promise to equip us to overcome them.

Conclusion: Seeing Your Beauty Through God’s Eyes

God loves YOU! This concept is often difficult for me to fully grasp. I have lived most of my life knowing that God has a general love for me. I struggle to believe that when God sees me, He sees something beautiful. This is similar to how one might view a family heirloom. If I were to show you a chipped cup with a faded floral pattern, you might think it was an item picked up at a garage sale or something destined for the trash during spring cleaning. You would find it hard to see what the family

saw. They see the story behind the cup- a tale of wartime romance between two young lovers. This cup was purchased in a shop in France during the last few weeks of World War II. Its chip resulted from the rough travels in an army-issued rucksack. When we appreciate the story, we can recognize the beauty. Both you and the family can see the chip. The value of the cup comes from seeing more than just the chip.

The Bible clearly depicts our brokenness, and we must acknowledge this, but we can forget to recognize our beauty as well. We see our flaws, our failures, our imperfections. We focus on the “chips” in our lives, the areas where we fall short. But God sees beyond those imperfections. He sees the potential for beauty, the spark of divinity within us. Do you see the value that God places on you?

Steps to Take:

I want to encourage you to do something that I was told to do when I first started following Jesus. Bobby, who shared the gospel with me, asked me to read John 3:16 and put my name in place of the word “world.” “For God so loved *Paul*, that he gave his only Son.” When your mind is filled with doubts and you struggle with anxious thoughts, wondering if pain is on the horizon, agonizing over being abandoned, or questioning if you’re on the right path, remember that God loves YOU! The Scriptures talk about how God sings over those He loves (Zephaniah 3:17). I challenge you to pray this week to see that God sings over you. Ask Him to reveal His love to you in a tangible way. Spend time in prayer and meditation, listening for His voice and allowing His love to wash over you.

Maybe you are here and you are not yet following Jesus. I want you to hear the second half of the verse I just quoted: *John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”* The greatest provision that God has given you is a way to embrace eternal life. I pray that you will “believe in him today.” Open your heart to His love, and experience the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Life Level Application

Head: Read Matthew 6:33, Proverbs 6:6-11, and 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12. Jesus uses the examples of birds and lilies to illustrate God’s provision. Considering that the sermon states God is not promoting laziness, how does the call to “seek first the kingdom of God” practically balance with the need for diligent work, as described in Prov. 6 and 2 Thess. 3, to avoid falling into the trap of presumption rather than trust?

Heart: Read Luke 15:11-32. Can you recall a time when you experienced God’s “running-after-you kind of love?” What emotions did you feel in that experience?

Hand: Read 1 Peter 5:6-10. The sermon encourages putting your name in John 3:16. How can you practically apply this personalized understanding of God’s love to a specific area of your life where you currently struggle with worry, and how might this practice help you to “cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you,” as Peter encourages in 1 Peter 5:7?

Habit: The sermon highlights the importance of recognizing your beauty through God’s eyes, despite your imperfections. What new habit can you cultivate to regularly remind yourself of your value in God’s eyes?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sonrise Youth: UNITE | Sun. Apr. 27 | Rolling Hills Church

Youth Group: Join youth around the greater Portland area for a worship night on April 27th at Rolling Hills Church. Sonrise youth will meet at Sonrise at 4:15 pm and will return at 8:45 pm. Dinner is provided! For more info, please contact Pastor Daniel at danielj@isonrise.com.

First Steps Gathering | Sun. May 4 | After 9AM & 11AM Service | Fireside

Whether you are new to the area and looking for a church or exploring what it means to follow Jesus, this is a great place to start. Our First Steps Gathering happens on the 1st Sunday of each month. In 20 minutes, we would like to give you an overview of what it looks like to make Sonrise your church.

Cultivating Christ-Centered Relationships | Fri. May 9 | 6:30-8:30 PM

All women are invited for an evening of connection and growth, exploring the beautiful and sometimes challenging landscape of relationships. Learn practical ways to foster deeper, more meaningful connections. Dessert provided. *\$5 suggested donation to cover costs*. More details and sign-up available on Church Center.

Men's Breakfast | Sat. May 10 | 8-9:30AM | Dining Hall

Join our monthly gathering for men of all ages to get together around tables for a meal and meaningful conversation.

Night of Worship | Sun. May 18 | 6:30-8:00 PM | Auditorium

Join us for a night of worship, reflection, and response as we seek God's work to break the strongholds of sin in our lives. Through prayer and truth, we will tear down the lies that keep us bound and step into the freedom Christ offers. Come ready to encounter His presence and embrace His victory. Let this be the night of your breakthrough!

Family Campout | Aug. 7-10 | Mt. Hood Village RV Resort

Join us for the Sonrise Family Campout this year at Mt. Hood Village at the base of Mt. Hood. Bring your family, dog, and neighbor for some mountain fun! Registration will close on July 16th. Nonrefundable after July 31st. For more info, please contact Emily Kukis at 503. 309.3534 or email at coreyandemilykukis@gmail.com. Additional details can be found on Church Center.

Songs from this morning:

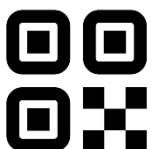
We Praise You – Brandon Lake

Your Love Is Strong – Jon Foreman

It Is Well – Bethel Music

Remember – Bryan and Katie Torwalt

Take You at Your Word – Cody Carnes



For more info or to
register, visit isonrise.com
or explore events/groups
on the Church Center App.

