

Worry
Jesus at the Center of the Kingdom • Message 1
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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

1. Ask God to help us trust His provision and release our worries to Him.
2. Pray for God to strengthen our faith and remind us of His care and value for each of us.
3. Ask God to keep our focus on His kingdom and give us peace as we trust Him with tomorrow.

Worship Psalm:

Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Psalm 107:8-9 (NLT)

Scripture Reading:

“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”

Matthew 6:31-33 (NLT)

I. Introduction: This is the 3rd part of *Jesus at the Center of the Kingdom*.

- These message series are based on Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, found at Matthew 5-7.
- Jesus sat on a hillside beside the Sea of Galilee to teach His followers - including us - how to live as citizens of God’s kingdom, to behave as believers in an unbelieving world.

A. Today’s message is titled *Worry* based on Matthew 6:25-34.

1. Theme: **1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)** *Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*
2. In today’s passage, verses 25-34, Jesus focuses on people’s anxiety about having adequate food, drink and clothing - necessities of life.

B. Matthew 6:25a (NLT) - *“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear.”*

1. *“That is why”* (the reason) refers to the previous verse: **Matthew 6:24 (NLT)** - *“No one can serve two masters. ... You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.”*
2. In other words, if you live committed to serve God, He will provide for you (not you providing for yourself materially); He supplies your needs because you belong to Him.
3. We think of worry as unavoidable; it *happens to us*, because of difficult or threatening circumstances, so we are innocent of wrong or responsibility, but that is a misperception.
4. *“Worry is natural and human”* - not for a Christian with a Heavenly Father as Master!
5. Worry is sin! It is the sin of doubting the promises and distrusting the provision of God.
6. The English term *worry* comes from an old German word meaning to strangle, or choke.
7. Worry strangles us mentally and emotionally, it chokes the life out of us, drains our energy, eradicates optimism, eliminates hope, and causes illness.
8. Corrie Ten Boom said, *“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength.”* [Dutch Christian who hid Jews from Nazis, survived concentration camp]
9. Because we have an all-powerful Master who loves us and provides for us appropriately according to His will, we should be calm and peaceful, which is the opposite of worry.
10. **Philippians 4:19 (NLT)** - *And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*
11. The basic needs that Jesus mentions here - what we eat, drink, and wear - are things every person needs but most of us have these essentials in abundance so we are not concerned about scarcity, but throughout Bible times, people were totally dependent on weather, especially sufficient rainfall, to adequately and affordably supply these necessities.
12. After telling His hearers not to worry, Jesus asked rhetorically at **Matthew 6:25b (NLT)** - *“Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?”*
13. For Christians, the most important aspects of life are spiritual, not physical, in nature.

14. What if we spent as much time and effort caring for our souls, developing our spiritual lives, which live forever, as we do caring for our bodies which have a limited lifespan?
15. **1 Timothy 4:8 (NLT)** - *“Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.”*
16. Jesus provided His audience - and us - with examples of our Heavenly Father’s provision.

C. Worry is ...

1. Concern for NOURISHMENT.

1. Jesus illustrated God’s provision of food and water by using birds that live in abundance around the Sea of Galilee - a beautiful freshwater lake (13 miles long, 8 miles wide).
2. **Matthew 6:26a (NLT)** - *“Look at the birds. [Likely pointed to some.] They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them.”*[Psalm 136:25]
3. Jesus wasn’t suggesting that birds do nothing to acquire food, but they don’t cultivate crops or collect and store supplies for the future - and they don’t fret about finding food.
4. God sustains birds He created by preparing food for them and providing them the instinct to locate it; they don’t worry about where their next meal will be found. (Children don’t!)
5. **Matthew 6:26b (NLT)**-*“And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are?”*[Luke 12:6-7]
6. One of the reasons we worry is we don’t know how much God values us!
7. Self-doubt and low self-esteem are significant causes of anxiety because, even if we don’t doubt the power of God to provide, we question whether He *will* provide for *me*!
8. Birds aren’t created in the image of God, they’re not adopted into His family, but you are, so His concern is greater, His care better, for you than them.
9. Jesus also addressed people’s apprehension about their health.
10. **Matthew 6:27 (NLT)** - *“Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?”*
11. Worry will not lengthen our lives; it may shorten them, since anxiety can cause ailments.

12. I believe God's providence controls our lifespans: **Psalm 139:16b (NIV)** - ...
All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.
13. We must be wise about maintaining our health (as stewards of bodies God has given)
but don't waste the time you have worrying about the time you might not have.

2. Care about CLOTHING.

1. Jesus illustrated God's reliability to provide another essential of life - clothing - by using wildflowers.
2. **Matthew 6:28-29 (NLT)** - *"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. [General term for wildflowers growing in Galilee (northern region of Israel).] They don't work or make their clothing [other trans.: labor or spin],"*
3. Jesus' audience likely had little clothing, typically no more than one set of coverings, but He reminded them they matter more to God than the flowers God adorns so beautifully.
4. **Matthew 6:29 (NLT)** - *"... yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are."* [King's attire of gold, linen, purple cloth symbolized authority and status.]
5. Despite Solomon's dazzling grandeur, his clothing could not compete with the brilliance of flowers growing wild at the roadside. (Queen of Sheba impressed: 1 Kings 10:4-5)
6. The varieties of design and vibrant colors of flowers reveal the artistic detail achieved by God in His creation. (Brilliant colors produced by plants utilizing soil, water and light?)
7. **Matthew 6:30a (NLT)** – *"And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow [Gk. oven (klibanos), wildflowers and grass from nearby fields burned in clay ovens to raise the temperature for baking bread]*
8. Jesus declared if God cares for wildflowers [Believe He cares for Creation?], *he will certainly care for you.*" because you are His child who are destined for eternal life.
9. APP.: Do you believe your Heavenly Father will provide for you because of His love?

10. Jesus asked at **Matthew 6:30b (NLT)** - *“Why do you have so little faith?”* [Pistuo]
11. Worry and trust are mutually exclusive; you can’t do both! [Elizabeth Elliot]
12. Jesus questioned why people who saw overwhelming evidence of God’s careful attention in nature would doubt His provision for them.
13. We rely on God to redeem us, save us from sin, secure us a residence in heaven, but lack confidence in His promises to provide essentials on earth during our lifetimes.
14. **Romans 8:32 (NLT)** - *Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else?* [Philippians 4:19]
15. In our culture, we spend a great amount of time, money, and effort to dress ourselves.
16. APP.: Are we as interested in the appearance of our souls to God as we are how our bodies look to other people? [Colossians 3:12]

3. Contrary to KINGDOM living.

1. **Matthew 6:31 (NLT)** - *“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’”*
2. Worry expresses unbelief; for Christians it is unreasonable, unwarranted, as well as sinful.
3. **Psalm 145:15 (NLT)** - *The eyes of all look to you in hope; you give them their food as they need it.*
4. Worry is not unreasonable for unbelievers who deny the reality of God.
5. **Matthew 6:32a (NLT)** - *“These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers...[literally Gentiles]”*
5. Non-Christians must acquire everything for themselves; they don’t have God to supply.
6. With no hope of heaven, unbelievers have only this world to enjoy.
7. With no hope of eternal life, we understand why they indulge themselves, saying with their behaviors, *“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”* (1Cor.15:32, fr, Isaiah 22:13).
8. Jesus continued, **Matthew 6:32b (NLT)** – *“... but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.”* [implied: will provide them]
9. Jesus then issued a challenge with a wonderful promise.
10. **Matthew 6:33 (NLT)** - *“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”*

11. *Seeking God's kingdom and live[ing] righteously [rightly]* is using our lives, focusing our attention, on carrying out God's will in this world and in our personal lives.
12. We spend our energy pursuing God, expending our efforts to reach others for Jesus and meeting needs in His name - as we meet other's needs, God meets ours.
13. We can only be controlled by worry when we are consumed with ourselves.
14. APP.: Have you discovered that serving others is the key to contentment? [Find and help]
15. **Colossians 3:2–3 (NLT)** - *Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.*
16. Jesus concluded this topic at **Matthew 6:34 (NLT)** - *“So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.”*
17. Don't lose today worrying about tomorrow, fretting over negative possibilities; focus on today and trust God with tomorrow's troubles; you can't do anything about it, He can.
18. **Philippians 4:6–7 (NLT)** - *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.* [Isaiah 26:3]