

## Matthew 6:25-34 – “Kingdom Choices: Choose Your Attitude”

(Pew Bible Page: 811-812)

**Intro:** “Why Worry When You Can Pray” is a chorus we teach to our children in Sunday school. Having passed on this bit of Biblical wisdom to them, we leave the classroom and turn our minds to the worries of our own lives. Yikes! Who can escape the plague of worry? Let’s be clear: the Bible plainly teaches us that a proper attention to the necessities of today and needs of tomorrow is our obligation as believers (cf. 2 Cor. 12:14; 1 Tim. 5:8). But worry is something different. Worry, or “being anxious” as is mentioned six times in tonight’s text, goes far beyond looking after the needs of life. When we fall into worry, we elevate the needs of this world over the promises of the next. We raise the demands of mammon over the priorities of the Master. Our focus moves from the eternal into the temporal. In our last study we heard the voice of the Lord telling us that *“You cannot serve God and mammon.”* Tonight, He’s going to take us into the natural consequence of that truth when it comes to the attitude with which we live our lives as believers. Having chosen God as our Master, it makes no sense to choose worry as our attitude. And that’s our big idea...

**Proposition:** Since God is our Master, choosing to worry makes no sense at all!

Our study tonight will be focused around three thoughts: (vv.25-30) Where is Your Faith?; (vv.31-33) Where is Your Focus?; (v.34) Where is Your Future?

(vv.25-30) Where is Your Faith? – A quick look down the page shows that each of our three segments for study tonight begins with the word, *“therefore.”* “Therefore,” as you know, is a connector; it indicates that what will be said next is an explanation, amplification, or implication of what has gone immediately before. In the case of this “Therefore,” the whole understanding of the verses we are looking at tonight is tied intimately to Jesus’ summary of verses 19-24: **Matthew 6:24 - 24** *“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”* Jesus began this set of verses with “therefore,” because His bold statement that our Master will either be God or mammon carried with it an inescapable implication: If God is one’s Master, then a certain attitude toward the things of life should be inevitable. If verses 19-24 speak to us of the Kingdom Choice of who will be our Master, then verses 25-34 demonstrate to us the Kingdom Choice of a proper outlook on life resulting from that supreme commitment. In a word, understanding who God is and committing ourselves to Him as our Master leads inevitably to the conclusion that our attitude toward everything in life must be one of total submission to His sufficiency. Since God is God, and God is our Master, we can depend on Him completely not only for the needs of the “now” of earth, but more importantly for the necessities of the “not yet” of eternity. Our attitude sensibly should be one of trusting God rather than worrying about things. This too, like our choice of a Master is a matter of faith; trusting and obeying God, as Jesus pointed out in verse 30. In these verses Christ gave us three motives for choosing trust in God over worry.

- (v.25) There are things in life more important than earthly necessities: Matthew 6:25 - 25  
*“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?”* Because God is our Master we are released from anxiety about things like food and clothing. This is not to say that we don’t need those things and shouldn’t be diligent in securing them as God enables us. What is in view here is our tendency to set God to one side because of our anxiety about these or other necessities of life. Jesus’ argument here is from the greater to the lesser: *“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”* What He intends for us to understand is that food and clothing are far from necessary for life and bodily existence. The greater issues of life and bodily existence are spiritual in importance, rather than temporal.

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Life for us goes on eternally, whether we have bread for today or not. In His battle with Satan in the wilderness of temptation, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 **Matthew 4:4 - 4** *But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”* Our life doesn’t depend, ultimately, on earthly bread. Similarly, our bodily existence doesn’t depend on clothing and the care we take of our person. The Bible is clear on this subject: everyone born of woman is destined to die physically, and everyone reborn of the Son is destined to be raised to new life eternally (1 Corinthians 15:50-55). So Jesus’ first point is that some things in life are more important than earthly necessities.

- (v.27) Being anxious doesn’t change anything: **Matthew 6:27 - 27** *And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”* Jesus second point was that worrying doesn’t accomplish anything anyway. The object of worrisome preoccupation with earthly things is a desire to prolong our lives. I am amazed at the rigors some people put themselves through trying to live a few years longer! Jesus’ point was that worrying can’t actually add anything to life; rather it subtracts from our lives. Joy that ought to be there goes missing. Restful sleep is lost and can never be regained. It’s probably true that the more we worry, the quicker we age. Ever seen the four famous photographs of Abraham Lincoln? The man seemed to grow old in four year’s time carrying the weight of the Civil War on his sagging shoulders! Worrying doesn’t add anything to life; it takes away from life. So Jesus’ point is that worrying doesn’t help. In fact, if anything, it makes matters worse.
- (vv.26; 28-30) God values you more than you realize: **Matthew 6:26 - 26** *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?... 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 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?”* In verse 25 Jesus argued from the greater to the lesser; in these verses He argues from the lesser to the greater: His point is, God feeds the birds, for heaven’s sake! Don’t you know you’re more important to Him than birds? God cloths the grass of the field, for goodness sake! Don’t you realize that He cares more about meeting your needs than about grass? Verse 30 calls our attention to the heart of our anxieties: anxiety is ultimately a faith problem. In the believer it isn’t an absence of faith, but rather a deficiency of faith. In this case, the question in doubt is whether God values us more than He does birds and grass. When we worry, we reveal that our faith in God, though real, is still small. We need to grow up into full confidence in our Father’s love for us.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] Ultimately, to trust or to worry is a matter of little faith or great faith.

[ILLUSTRATION] Trust is something that has to be earned among people. When we first meet someone, we may be attracted to their outward appearance; they may seem trustworthy and pleasant. But how many of us have learned over the years that first impressions are not always as they seem? Trust is earned. It comes from time spent together, behaviors observed, actions witnessed. Merely to make someone’s acquaintance is not enough. We must come to know them by experience if we are to put our trust in them.

[APPLICATION] How do we grow in confidence that we are loved and valued by our Master? Strange as it may sound, a mature trust in God is not automatic for the believer. Just as in normal earthly relationships, our trust in God grows over the years as we walk with Him in all of life’s various situations.

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In a certain sense, it's all very well for us to observe intellectually that some things are more important than earthly necessities; that worrying doesn't change anything; and that God values us more than we realize. To know those things intellectually may give us mental comfort, but can that knowledge quiet a trembling heart? The answer is “Yes, but probably not right away.” As we noted in our last study, our minds are supposed to rule over our emotions. But if you're like most of us, simply knowing these truths won't make your worries vanish overnight. But knowing these things will make our worries vanish over time as we walk in them by faith. The more experience we have with God, the deeper these truths will penetrate our hearts. Tonight we can tell each other these truths; but it's only through life with God that these sureties will migrate from our heads to our hearts. So, how do we begin the migration? Faith is the key. Knowing these things, we must begin to live our lives based on their reality. At first our hearts will protest. But as truth over rules emotion, our hearts will catch on; become less bothersome; quieter; less liable to react in fear. But, it all begins with faith: choose to live by these truths until your heart learns to trust in these truths.

(vv.31-33) Where is Your Focus? – Jesus told us here that when we trust ourselves, we live like unbelievers; but when we trust God, we live like sons and daughters of the King. **Matthew 6:31–33 - 31** *Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’* **32** *For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.* **33** *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* When we focus on God and His kingdom, we are living a life of trust and can rest assured that God will take care of us. But when we focus on this world, we're really saying, “I don't trust Him. I don't think He can provide for my needs.” Jesus commands us not to worry and gives us the way out of this morass: replacement theology! No, this isn't the replacement theology you may be familiar with. This is true, evangelical replacement theology teaching us to replace the world's way of thinking with God's way of thinking. How do we do this? Acknowledge worldly wisdom for what it is – vanity – and replace it in our thinking and living with godly wisdom – in this case, we are advised to focus on God and His kingdom rather than on the world and its concerns.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] We insult the Savior when we focus on the world's goals rather than on God's.

[ILLUSTRATION] Change your thinking and you'll change your world. We really believe that, don't we? What in the world is the point of 12 years or more of education if not? We send our children to school and we ourselves were sent to school in the hopes that a good education would help us to focus our lives on the things that are most useful, satisfying, and likely to produce a decent, honest life. That's what education is for! It's designed to focus our thinking on that which will most likely produce a good life for the one being educated. Education gives us something worthy to aim at.

[APPLICATION] As believers, we need to keep in mind that “this world is not our home, we're just a passing through” as the old song says. The people of this world focus on the temporary necessities of this world. As believers, we are called to a higher goal. Our focus, while not ignoring or neglecting this present world, is to aim at a higher world than this one. God is our Treasure! He is our Master. We have a whole new kingdom to look forward to living in when it's all said and done. These permanent things should be our focus. To do this is not to neglect this world's necessities, for Jesus here promises us that by focusing on the eternal, God will throw in the temporal things we need too. So, where do we send our minds when worry tries to worm its way into our thinking? Refocus, dear ones. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things (Col. 3:2). Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look to your treasure in

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heaven. Redirect your focus from the kingdom of this world to the King and Kingdom of God. He'll take care of the rest.

(V.34) Where is Your Future? – Is it tomorrow or today? **Matthew 6:34 - 34** *“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”* What does Jesus want us to understand here? I suggest that His point is that worrying about tomorrow doesn't help tomorrow, it ruins today. Think about it! When we are consumed with concern about tomorrow our today goes up in a cloud of anxiety and we lose both tomorrow and today. In contrast to this, where is our future? Our future is not in the tomorrows of the “now” but in the “not yet” of eternity. “Someone has said that the average person is crucifying himself between two thieves: the regrets of yesterday and the worries of tomorrow.”<sup>1</sup> How tragic this is for the believer who falls into its trap! Clearly the Scriptures tell us that it is right to prudently plan and save for our future needs in this life (2 Cor. 12:14; 1 Tim. 5:8). But to become anxious about these things, elevating them into priorities over God is to practice unbelief and to cause ourselves needly misery in the process. Jesus closed this section with some good advice: *“Don't worry at all, then, about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself! One day's trouble is enough for one day.”*<sup>2</sup>

[DOCTRINAL POINT] Trust the providential care of a loving Father with your tomorrows today.

[ILLUSTRATION] Anyone who has ever been so worried about something that was going to happen tomorrow that they couldn't enjoy the pleasures of today knows exactly what Jesus was talking about!

[APPLICATION] All of us who are in the habit of letting the worries of tomorrow pollute our todays, need to hear Christ's exhortation to push that aside. We must begin by faith. Our fearful hearts will try to take our minds captive with tomorrow's concerns. Resist! Set your mind on God's truth. Find a piece of God's truth – almost any piece will do – and set yourself the task of meditating on it. You'll be amazed at how quickly the Spirit of God will quiet the storm in your emotions. And the more often you practice this, the more help you'll receive. As a believer, your future isn't frightening, it's fantastic! Look homeward, dear saint! The troubles of this world have only come, to *pass*.

**Conclusion:** Since God is our Master, choosing to worry makes no sense at all! So, “Why worry when you can pray?”

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from a quote by Warren Wierbe.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Phillips' translation.