

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Sermon on the Mount

Week 24

Worry...Who? Me?

Matthew 6:25 - 34

Opening Prayer:

God our Father,
Your Son Jesus called his disciples and said,
"You did not choose Me, but I chose You."
I thank You that You consider me
worthy to be a disciple of Jesus.
Transform me, Father, into the image of Jesus

Just like Jesus,
Make my heart long for You in **poverty of spirit**.
Make my heart **mourn** at the misfortune of others.
Make me **meek and humble of heart**.
Make me **hunger and thirst** for what is right.
Make me **merciful** and overflowing with compassion.
Make me **clean of heart** and share in Your holiness.
Make my life an instrument of **peace** and **reconciliation**.
Make me **bold** to face the consequences of discipleship.

Grant me the grace, Father, so that
I may **think** like Jesus, **act** like Jesus, and **talk** like Jesus,
for in this is **Radical Discipleship**

I make this prayer in the name of Jesus,
Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Reflection

Last week we reached the climax of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: choose God over all other things. The very next verse begins with *therefore*, which transitions us into a discussion of how we shall live **if** we follow His teaching:

Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. 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...But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you - you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry...But strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will bring worry of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Matthew 6:25 – 34

Jesus took it for granted that all human beings are seekers. We seek something to live for, something on which to set our hearts and our minds, something to give meaning to our existence. All of this seeking, though, has led to a great deal of anxiety. In fact, anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S. today, affecting 40 million people or 18% of the population. Anxiety has become such an integral part of our human condition that telling us not to worry goes against our very nature. True, our culture certainly provides much to worry about – well beyond the basic necessities Jesus references in the passage above. But the thing about anxiety and worry is that they tend to take over; so much so that we end up being enslaved by them. This obsession with worry is what Jesus is concerned about, and He is so concerned about it that He repeats His *do not worry* warning three times.

Jesus knew that embedded in our tendency to worry is the danger of being so distracted about tomorrow that we no longer trust in God to fulfill our needs today. Jesus' reprimand, *you of little faith*, isn't an expression of the absence of faith but, rather, a commentary on our inadequacy or insufficiency of faith. Jesus wants us to follow His teachings so that we are led to a deeper and deeper faith in God.

We've been reflecting on small ways of detaching from worldly treasures in order to reclaim our true identity. Bit by bit, the choice for God becomes easier and easier; we gradually learn to trust that He will fulfill all of His promises for our lives. As our faith deepens, worry and anxiety diminishes. Choose God and *strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness* and God will provide for all of our needs. When we are right with God, God will look after us.

Reflection: My faith in God deepens as I worry less. What is the one thing today that I will put in God's hands, instead of trying to worry my way through it?

Closing Prayer

Speak to Jesus about what is on your heart, then rest in silence for a few moments listening for His response.