

Sermon on the Mount: Jesus' Challenge to Authentic Discipleship – Week Thirteen

Disciples Exchange Worry with Kingdom Passion

Matthew 6:24-34

Introduction: While the world obsesses over money, often descending into compulsive worry, Jesus calls his disciples to a different focus. Disciples should replace catastrophizing worry with a consuming passion for advancing God's kingdom. And the promise is that God will meet our needs in the process.

1. THE PRESSING QUESTION – If I serve Jesus rather than money, will I still be able to meet my financial needs? Matthew 6:24-25

- A. *Immediate context* – Disciples must make choices about whom we're going to serve. 6:24
 - 1. The problem back then: living hand to mouth.
 - 2. The problem now: using money for status and independence.
 - 3. The crux: God and money have the power of transcendence. We cannot serve both.
- B. *Implied question* – If I serve God over money, how will that affect my income? 6:25a
 - 1. Note the connecting phrase: "For this reason..."
 - 2. The assumption is that worry drives harder work; I don't want to lose that motivation.
- C. *Urgent command* – Jesus commands us to stop the worry habit. 6:25b
 - 1. This *is not* the worry of legitimate concern. 2 Cor. 11:23; 11:28.
 - 2. This *is* the worry of obsessing and even catastrophizing over the future.
 - 3. This worry *is not* just limited to food, drink and clothing. Jesus is teaching by triad.
 - 4. This worry is inconsistent because of a core theological truth: We live in an open universe.

2. THE ANTIDOTE TO WORRY – To replace worry with trust, we need to engage in two important spiritual disciplines. Matthew 6:26-32

- A. *1st discipline: self-confrontation* – To address worry, we need to confront ourselves. 6:26; 30b
 - 1. Notice that Jesus makes two loving confrontations: 6:26 & 6:30.
 - 2. The assumption is we tend to default toward worry. It's the way of the world (32a).
 - 3. Application: We need the regular discipline of loving self-confrontation.
 - 4. Method: We self-confront through meditation. *Jesus gives four illustrations.*
- B. *2nd discipline: meditating on God's providence* – Jesus provides four examples. 6:26-30a
 - 1. 1st illustration: Birds teach that God provides through productive activity. 6:26
 - 2. 2nd illustration: The cubit teaches that worry doesn't make our life longer. 6:27
 - 3. 3rd illustration: The lilies teach God wants to provide for our clothing. 6:28-29
 - 4. 4th illustration: God, as *Father*, knows what we need. 6:30-31
- C. *Putting it together* – Self-confrontation & meditation in the crucible of worry works on the principle of exchange. We exchange one emotion for another.

3. THE PROMISE – If our top priority is advancing Jesus' kingdom, Jesus promises he will meet our needs. Matthew 6:33-34

- A. The *form* of this command suggests kingdom-seeking should be our top priority in our life. 6:33
- B. The *content* of this command suggests we focus on two things: his kingdom and his righteousness.
 - 1. Seeking his kingdom means spreading Jesus' reign in our sphere of influence. *Mission!*
 - 2. Seeking his righteousness is submitting all areas of life to Jesus' Lordship. *Discipleship!*
- C. The *promise* in this command is that God will meet our needs. *What this does not mean!*
- D. The *follow-up* to the command is that we need to focus on *present* kingdom priorities. 6:34

1. This final verse sounds almost anticlimactic and repetitive. This is proverbial language.
2. Jesus focuses on the daily nature and the personal nature of kingdom-seeking.