



The Anglican Parish of Whangaparaoa Peninsula
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Sermon

Do NOT Worry

Matthew 6:19-34

26th February, 2017

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When I was at university before becoming a Christian I studied philosophy. One famous philosopher who had one of the cleverest minds, was a deep thinker and who really stretched our minds had a really messed up life. At the time I thought what's the use of all this wisdom if he can't get his life together.

This passage in Matthew is highlighting that the Christian life is not just a philosophical viewpoint, a set of beliefs about God, abstract teachings that we hold to. No, it directly impacts nitty gritty down to earth areas of life. Our attitudes towards and how we handle money, food, clothes, possessions.

And this passage gives us a checklist to see where our hearts are really at.

- Two different treasures v19-21
- Two different eyes v22-23
- Two different masters v24
- Two different priorities v32-33

But even though we read these searching words we often don't really know our own hearts and it takes a testing situation to reveal the truth. E.g. the rich young man whose heart was exposed by Jesus' challenge "to sell all and give to the poor"

V25 THEREFORE I tell you do not worry

You see if we really understand what Jesus has been saying it will cut away the ground from under worry. Because treasure in heaven cannot be threatened, is secure and lasting unlike treasure on earth. Because God is a master who can be totally relied on unlike money "which is so uncertain." And His kingdom is a lasting kingdom and his righteousness lasts for eternity.

Now that's all logical and makes perfect sense but what's so striking about this passage is that Jesus doesn't stop there. He now reasons from a completely different perspective that is neither rebuking nor warning but instead is greatly encouraging.

It's like he's saying I know full well your weakness as humans and your proneness to worry and anxiety. So I'm going to encourage you not just from the eternal perspective but from the familiar things of nature and life why worry is so pointless and unnecessary.

V25b Face up to the facts, be real - there are much more important things in life. Be honest we get things so out of proportion. Worry makes mountains out of molehills. Comments from the Christchurch fires. "we might have lost our homes but our families are safe and that's what's important"

V26 Look at how God provides for the birds. They don't have bank accounts, superannuation, fridges or pantries but God provides their needs. Well you are much more valuable than birds so will not your heavenly Father much more provide for you, "In God you live and move and have your being". You are of great value to Him and are under His watchful eye and care continually. **SO WHY WORRY?**

V27 The impotence of worry. It achieves nothing. And it's also a lying voice.

V28-30 This is not just talking about God's provision in nature but God's extravagance in nature. When you look at the world you something that doesn't just meet our needs. It is beautiful, stunning. We know there are laws in nature, rules that are fixed yet still it's so free, such profusion, such variety, colour, texture, always changing. So if this is how God clothes nature so bountifully then consider what "how much more will He clothe you" means.

V30b "O you of little faith." Worry chokes faith so it will not grow. Worry sees problems. Faith sees the God who continually sees us.

V31 "Don't worry saying "What shall we eat ...drink...wear?" You may say these are not the things I worry about. Today in NZ we live in a much more complex society than the one Jesus was talking to. But that's no issue to God. He knows our need of housing, transport [because jobs are 40km away], our need of education etc. etc. And He will provide all we need.

V32-33 You see today's world still running after all these things. Every year in NZ almost \$500 is spent on gambling for every man, woman and child all in the pursuit of more things. Your Heavenly Father knows you actually need the things the world pursues so relentlessly. But God is saying "Don't focus on them. Don't run after them. Don't worry about them." Instead Run after God. Run after the things that remain like faith, hope, love. Serve God, serve His people. Enjoy God, enjoy His people, and He will look after our needs.

V34 Life is not trouble-free but Jesus is saying it should be worry free.

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary , but what is unseen is eternal.