

Do Not Worry

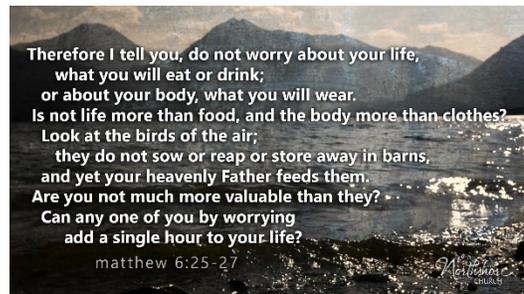
We have been walking through the Words of Jesus from His Sermon on the Mount since the beginning of the year, in a series I'm calling *The King's Speech*; King Jesus describes His Kingdom, and what it means to be a Citizen in His Kingdom, with His famous sermon.



With all that we had planned for today with our missionaries, I knew there would not be the time we typically take for a sermon... but I want to touch on the series at least for a few minutes because I think where we are in the series aligns with our World Missions Emphasis.

Let's stand together and read this passage aloud, starting with Matthew 6:25:

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?" ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?



Jesus said, "**Therefore...** do not worry."

After describing blessing in terms that may not seem obvious to us.

After proclaiming that the Citizens of His Kingdom are like salt and light to a rotting and dark culture (functioning as *dual citizens*, missionaries from God's Kingdom to the people He so loves).



After describing the high demands of God's Holy Law in terms so much higher than mere *rule keeping*.

After calling Citizens of His Kingdom to generosity and love for others that surpasses reason.

After warning Citizens of His Kingdom to practice righteousness with right motives, not praying, giving, fasting and such in order to be seen by others.

And after calling Citizens of His Kingdom to consider our resources, looking beyond what we have and can have now and to what treasure in Heaven might look like... because without the right perspective, all that we *have* can so easily **have us**.

Jesus said, “Therefore... **do not worry**.”

Those are easy words to say... but not so easy to do, and Jesus knows that; Jesus knows us.

We worry about what we don't have, and then once we have it, we worry about how we're going to keep it, and maybe even worry about how we will get more.

We worry about our health. We worry about our kids. We even worry about our church.

Some even are so gifted at worrying that they worry on behalf of others.

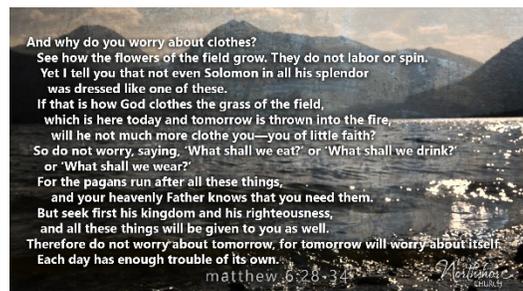
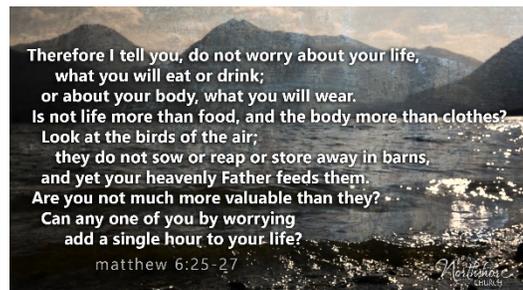
Jesus said, “Do not worry.” Worrying is inconsistent with the life of a Citizen of God's Kingdom because **worry is the opposite of faith**. Worry is evidence that we do not fully trust God, and worry is evidence of self-reliance. Worry says that there is something we can do, or should do, in place of what only God can do.

Jesus said, “Do not worry,” and then He gave us examples.

First He said, “Look at the birds.” Jesus said that as surely as God provides for these creatures, He will certainly provide for the ones He made in His own image. Citizens of God's Kingdom are confident in His provision.

Then He said, “Look at the flowers.” As surely as God provides for the splendor of all nature, He will certainly care for those He calls to be Citizens of His Kingdom.

These are great examples of course; we can learn from the birds and flowers and such. But I wonder if it would be okay for me to offer a third example... an example aligned our emphasis today.



Let's look at the missionaries.

In these weeks of *World Missions Emphasis*, there are all sorts of reasons we welcome missionaries to join us, and highlight the other members of our Word Missions Staff.



In some ways we have them here out of obligation; we are obligated to them as they serve on our behalf, and we are obligated to God, doing our part in spreading the Gospel around the world in both word and deed.

As a practical matter, this is the system we have chosen. This is the way it works. Missionaries take time from their important endeavors to share their work and raise support.

But it is more than that. There is some *enlightened self-interest* in all of this. We look to our missionaries in this way to build **our** faith. Just as Jesus held up the birds and the flowers as examples to build our faith, we can look to these members of our World Missions Staff to build our faith.

They are not, of course, perfect examples; they are only human. In this *specific* matter, I suppose they worry from time to time. Nevertheless, they are great examples of faith.

Maybe when you look at the missionaries, you see something just shy of *superhero* status... with extraordinary talents and faith, smart and beautiful and spiritual. I suppose they are all of that; we rightly hold them in high regard, placing them upon a pedestal. We do honor them.

But be careful not to put them on *too high* a pedestal, because in so doing we might miss something vitally important. They **are** qualified, hardworking, smart, and spiritual... but they are pretty much *just like the rest of us*. One of the important takeaways from having them here *with us* is to be reminded that they are *of us*.

It so happens that in the cases of this weekend and last weekend, our missionaries are literally *of us*. Last Sunday, Justin Hansen was here and he reminisced of his days growing up here at Northshore when his parents served as pastors. Some of the *old-timers* noted how awesome it is that God is using Justin so powerfully, when it seems like just yesterday he was just *one of the kids* around here.

Rosemarie and Waldemar are *of* us as well, from the Pleasant Bay stream that flowed into Northshore not long ago as our congregations came together. Rosemarie served as part of our staff for a few years, both at the piano, and in leading our work in World Missions, while Waldemar *pitched in* preaching and teaching and even playing bass from time to time.

When we remember that these members of our World Missions Staff are *of* us and *like* us... it puts their accomplishments and sacrifices in the right perspective. When we hear about their acts of faith, when we see God doing extraordinary things in them and through them... it should build our faith. If they can climb mountains with God, so can we. If they can walk through low and dangerous valleys with God, so can we. If they can step out in faith, even into the unknown, so can we. If they can so trust in God that even their daily safety and provision and direction are so clearly and directly coming from His hand, so can we.

This is the example set before us over and over again by the members of our World Missions Staff... an example that relates to us and resonates with us because, as awesome as they truly are, they are pretty much just like us.

They have their priorities rightly aligned as Citizens of God's Kingdom. Jesus put it plainly like this:

seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well¹

We would err if we interpreted "do not worry" as "leave it all to God." There is work to be done, work that God calls us to do as He invites the Citizens of His Kingdom to do our part of the grand work of His Kingdom.

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount we hear the Words of Jesus calling us to serve and sacrifice, to pray and fast and give, to consider others above ourselves, and prioritize His Kingdom work above everything else. And here Jesus says to **seek** His Kingdom. With our sights set on His Kingdom, we live and work and have our very being.



¹ The New International Version. (2011). (Mt 6:33). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

And, with His Kingdom as our focus, all that we truly need will be lovingly provided by God. This is the promise of Jesus set before us today.

So today God's Word calls us to not worry, but rather He calls us to faith. The call is for each of us today, whether that step of faith is among our very first steps of faith, or just another step ahead in a long experience of faith.



God's call is to lift our eyes from just our circumstances, to not worry, but be confident in God and His plan for our lives. To seek His Kingdom first, and our place in it.

Our Father, help us to hear your call today. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts open to your call. Give us courage to lay down our worry, and pick up stronger faith, fully trusting in You.