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Pursuing the Kingdom: Living Under God's Provision

Matthew 6:25-34

Vernon Advent Christian Church

Before we jump into the passage today, we need to remember that these verses do not stand alone by themselves. They flow directly out of what Jesus has just taught in vs. 19–24 about how we, as His followers, are to view our “treasure” and what we, ultimately, put our trust in. In those verses, Jesus confronts us with the question of what we value most. He warns not to store up treasures on earth, where everything fades and fails, but to invest in what is eternal. He reminds us that where our treasure is, our heart will also follow. And He ends with a striking statement that “You cannot serve both God and money.”

Now, almost immediately, Jesus addresses the issue that naturally rises in our heart’s after hearing what He has just said. If I loosen my grip on earthly treasure, if I stop living for money and security, then what about my needs? What about tomorrow? What if I don’t have enough? And in this passage, Jesus connects worry and anxiety to misplaced treasure and divided loyalties. In many ways, our worry reveals what we trust in the most.

The truth is, anxiety is one of the defining struggles of our culture today. We live in a world filled with more information, more convenience and more technology than ever before, yet people are drowning in worry and anxiety. More people, namely our kids, are on anti-anxiety and antidepressants than at any other time in history and the trends are only increasing.

In reality, anxiety and worry are a creation of our own making when we really think about it. We worry about finances, health, relationships, our children, our careers, politics, the future and countless other “what ifs.” Even when one concern disappears, another often takes its place. And in the rare moment when we're not thinking about such things the news and our phones are there to remind us that we should be afraid of and that somebody else has life better and much easier than we do. Lord help us. It’s into this restless, anxious world, Jesus speaks words that are both comforting and deeply challenging, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life.”

Now, before we go any further, we need to understand something. Jesus is not speaking casually here. He is not minimizing real struggles. He is not telling suffering people to simply ignore their problems, as if they don't exist.

The word “therefore” connects this passage to everything He has just said in the previous passage we looked at last week. In other words, anxiety is often tied to what we treasure and where we place our trust. If our security is rooted in earthly things, anxiety will inevitably follow because earthly things are unstable. But if our lives are rooted in the kingdom of God and the care of our heavenly Father, well, now we are invited into a different way of living.

So, in our passage today, Jesus teaches us how kingdom people are to live in the midst of this uncertainty. If you are able, please stand with me in honor of God's Word as I read from the Gospel of Matthew 6:25-34. [Read Passage]

The first truth we see is this, that we, as kingdom people, are to trust God more than our fears (vv. 25–27) Jesus begins, [Read]

Notice how thorough Jesus is here. He is addressing the fundamental concerns of our existence and survival. These are not shallow concerns. They are real needs. But Jesus asks a piercing question, “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

In other words, if God has already given you life itself, can He not also sustain and provide for the life He created? Now, Jesus is not condemning responsible planning. Scripture consistently advocates for wisdom, diligence and being good stewards of the gifts God has given to us. No, the issue at hand is anxious obsession, the kind of worry that consumes the heart and crowds out our trust in God.

The word translated “anxious” here in the text literally carries the idea of “being divided or pulled apart internally.” In this sense, anxiety fractures the heart and it pulls the mind in a hundred directions all at once. You can often see it physically in our restlessness, sleeplessness, exhaustion and irritability. Anxiety promises control but actually it produces the opposite, bondage.

But notice that Jesus does not say, simply, to “Stop worrying.” But He gives real life examples. He says, “Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.” This is one of the beautiful things about Jesus’ words here. He points us to ordinary creation, birds and flowers. Everyday things people often overlook. Most likely there would have been birds and flowers around them on the hillside along the Sea of Galilee.

And He says, “Look carefully.” The birds do not anxiously hoard or obsess over tomorrow, yet God provides for them. Now Jesus is not promoting laziness. Birds still gather food. They still work within God’s design. But they live without the crippling anxiety that we often carry.

And then Jesus asks, “Are you not of more value than they?” That question is meant to settle deeply into our hearts. If God faithfully cares for birds, how much more will He care for His children? You see, the truth is, the worries that many people have in life are rooted in a low understanding of their value before God. They do not comprehend how much He loves and cares for them. Jesus here is challenging the idea of finding your worth in temporary things like money, clothing or worldly status. Your identity and value come entirely from God’s deep, unchanging love for you.

Yes, as part of God’s creation, birds and wildflowers are valuable, but human beings are uniquely created in God’s image. And because of this fact, you are of immense value to God and you do not need to be consumed by worry or fear over your basic needs. God knows exactly what you require and will take care of you.

Then, Jesus presses the point further in vs. 27, “And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?” You see, worry can feel productive because it keeps the mind busy. But Jesus exposes its lack of power. Worry accomplishes nothing. We can add nothing to our lives by worrying. There may be greater sins than worry, but there are none more self-defeating and useless. As Charles Spurgeon once said, “Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength.” Anxiety cannot add life, it drains it.

But Jesus doesn't stop with birds. He next makes the point that as kingdom people we are meant to rest in God's Care (vv. 28–30). [Read]

Jesus points again to creation. Flowers bloom without striving or anxiously working at it. And yet Jesus says, "Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." That comparison would have been striking to the original audience. For the Israelite, King Solomon represented immense wealth, beauty and splendor. He was the richest and wisest man who ever lived and he oversaw the nation of Israel at its highest economic and military might. Yet Jesus says a simple flower surpasses even Solomon's glory because it is clothed by God Himself. So if God takes care of and provides for the flowers which are here today and gone tomorrow, He will certainly take care of His children.

Then comes the heart of the argument, "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" We will see this phrase many more times as we make our way through Matthew, specifically in chs. 8-9, when Jesus points to the contrast of "great faith" and "little faith." But, notice here Jesus identifies worry as a faith issue. Not because anxious believers lack faith entirely, but because anxiety reveals where our trust is struggling.

This is important because many Christians feel guilty for wrestling with anxiety. Jesus is not condemning weakness here, He is inviting us to trust in God as our provider and kind heavenly Father. He is gently exposing the mismatch between God's love and care for us and our fearful hearts and lack of trust in Him.

Now again, this does not mean Christians never struggle emotionally or mentally. There are real struggles and real pain that we all face in this fallen world. But Jesus is speaking about the posture of our hearts. Kingdom people learn to rest in the care of the Father rather than living enslaved to fear.

Jesus, then, contrasts kingdom living with the mindset of the world around us. We are to pursue God's kingdom above our earthly security (vv. 31–33) "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" Then Jesus says something very revealing: "For the Gentiles seek after all these things."

In this context, "Gentiles" here refers to those outside of a covenant relationship with God, people who do not know the Father. Jesus is saying that the obsessive pursuit of material things characterizes those who do not know God. In other words, wealth and materialism is what the world chases after and puts its trust in. This is not the way of the kingdom.

But then comes one of the most comforting lines in the passage, "Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all." We need to pause here for a moment. Our God knows. Not vaguely. Not generally. But Specifically. He knows your needs before you speak them. He knows the burdens you carry this morning. He knows the pressures at work, the financial strain you feel, the medical concerns, the fears about your children, the uncertainty about your future. He knows about them all and He is present and He is with you. You are not alone. And Jesus says that knowledge should reshape how we live and gives the ultimate answer to our fear and anxiety.

For, then, Jesus gives us one of the most important commands in all of scripture, it's also our theme verse in vs. 33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,

and all these things will be added to you.” Now, this verse is not just a comforting promise, it is a reordering of life itself.

Notice first the priority of the command, to “seek first.” Jesus is not saying that God is to be just a part of our lives. He is saying He is to be first and foremost. The kingdom of God is not something added onto an already crowded schedule. It is not to be one priority among many. It is to be the defining pursuit that shapes everything in our lives. To seek first the kingdom means that God’s will, God’s glory and God’s righteousness become more important than our comfort, our success, our financial security, our reputation or even our personal ambition.

And this is connected to everything Jesus has already taught us in ch. 6. He has already warned against storing up treasures on earth because earthly treasure cannot ultimately satisfy or last. Then He said we cannot serve both God and money. Now He brings all of it together. The issue underneath anxiety is often worship. We worry most about what we treasure most. Anxiety exposes where we are looking for security. And Jesus says the solution is not to obsess over earthly needs, but to pursue the kingdom of God above everything else.

That phrase, “the kingdom of God,” refers to the rule and reign of God. To seek, or to pursue, the kingdom means we desire for God to rule fully in our hearts, over our decisions, over our relationships, over our priorities and over our future. It means we no longer build our lives primarily around ourselves, but around the King. Kingdom people live differently because they belong to a different kingdom.

And notice Jesus also says, “and his righteousness.” This is not merely about believing the right things. It is about living under God’s authority. It is pursuing holiness, obedience, integrity and faithfulness. It means our lives begin to reflect the character of the King we follow. As John Stott wrote, “The major reason why people are not kingdom-minded is because they are too self-centered.” Jesus calls us beyond self-centered living into kingdom-centered living.

Now this verse does not mean believers will never face hardship or lack. Jesus is not promising a life of luxury here. He is speaking about the faithful provision of the Father for His children. “All these things will be added to you” refers back to the necessities He mentioned earlier, food, clothing and our daily needs. The point is that when the kingdom becomes our greatest pursuit, we can trust the Father to care for what we truly need.

Think about how radically different this is from the world around us. The world says, “Seek success first. Seek security first. Seek comfort first. Seek yourself first.” But Jesus says kingdom people live by a completely different order. We do not put God after everything else is secured. We seek Him first and trust Him with the rest.

And when this is lived out, this all becomes very practical. Seeking the kingdom first shapes how we spend our money, how we use our time, how we approach relationships, how we make decisions and even how we respond to our worries and anxiety. It changes our desires as they begin to align with His. It changes our calendars and schedules. It changes our perspective on success. Everything changes.

So the question Jesus places before us is simple, “What are you truly seeking first?” Because everyone one of us is pursuing something. Some pursue wealth. Some pursue comfort. Some pursue approval. Some pursue control. But Jesus says the only pursuit that

brings lasting peace is the pursuit of the kingdom of God and then, and only then, will we find what we ultimately are looking for, the peace of God.

And here is the beauty of this invitation. When God's kingdom becomes first, everything else finds its proper place. Anxiety begins to lose its grip because your life is no longer anchored to temporary things. When you begin to realize that your Father already knows what you need, you are free to pursue eternal things because your security rests in Him.

So seek the kingdom first. Not occasionally, not partially, not when its convenient, but above all else. Because at the end of the day, the greatest question is not how much you accumulated or controlled, but whether your life was lived out in the pursuit of the kingdom of God. And according to Jesus, when the kingdom comes first, we discover that the Father is faithful to provide everything we truly need.

Finally, Jesus closes with a practical and deeply freeing perspective on time itself. And that is, that as kingdom people, we live one day at a time (v. 34) [Read]

Jesus is remarkably realistic here. Notice, again, He does not say "life will be trouble-free." He acknowledges that each day has enough trouble of its own. Following Jesus is not a life lived in denial. Again, Jesus is not promising an easy life. He is teaching us not to carry tomorrow's burdens before tomorrow arrives.

You see, most anxiety lives in the future. "What if?" becomes the mantra of the anxious heart. But grace is given daily. Just as God provided manna one day at a time to the Israelites in the OT, which He references in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," God gives grace for today's needs, today. We often want tomorrow's answers today. But God meets us in the present moment and gives daily bread, daily strength and daily grace. And so, we are to live in the present, and in His presence, one day at a time.

So what does this all mean for us? First, we need to identify what consistently feeds your anxiety. What is it that occupies your mind most? What are you most afraid of losing? Anxiety often reveals where we are seeking security apart from God. And then be honest with God about our worries and fears and given them over to Him.

Second, we need to practice daily trust instead of worrying about what we cannot control. Again, bring your concerns honestly to the Father in prayer. Scripture never calls us to deny fear, it calls us to run to the Father when we are afraid.

Third, we need to pursue the kingdom intentionally. Seek God first, not only in theory or only with our words, but in practice. Prioritize prayer, worship, generosity, obedience and time in His Word. Reorder your life around eternal priorities rather than temporary fears. In other words, "set your mind on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." (Col. 3:2)

And finally, we need to remember who our Father is and who he as called us to be. This entire passage rests on the sovereign power and character of God. The same God who created and sustains the entire universe cares deeply and graciously provides for His children. Our worries and anxiety shrinks when our vision of who God really is grows. And so we need to remind ourselves of who God really is and who He says we are, His beloved Child.

As we close, think about the contrast Jesus has been drawing throughout the last few chapters in Matthew. The hypocrites live for human approval. The materialist lives for

earthly treasure. The anxious heart lives controlled by fear. But we, as kingdom people, are to live differently. We are to trust our Heavenly Father. We are to treasure the eternal instead of the earthly. And we are to rest in the provision and care of God.

The invitation of Jesus in this passage is not merely to stop worrying. It's to live under God's provision. Imagine how different life becomes when seeking God's kingdom becomes greater than building your own. Imagine the freedom of no longer carrying burdens you were never meant to carry. Imagine waking up each day trusting that the God who feeds the birds, clothes flowers and rules over all of creation, also holds your life securely in His hands.

That is the life Jesus invites us into. Not a trouble-free life. Not a painless life. But a kingdom-centered life anchored in the faithful and providential care of the Father. So may we hear again the words of Jesus, "Seek first the kingdom of God." Not second. Not eventually. But first. And may we discover that our heavenly Father is actually the One who has been faithfully providing for us all along. Let's pray.

"Father, we confess how easily anxiety captures our hearts. We worry about things we cannot control, carry burdens You never asked us to carry, and often seek security in temporary things rather than in You.

Teach us what it means to seek first Your kingdom. Help us to trust You more deeply, rest in Your care more fully, and walk in daily dependence upon You. When fear rises within us, remind us that You are our Father and that You know our needs before we ask and that Your care for us never fails.

Free us from anxious living and teach us to live with eternal perspective. Shape our hearts so that Your kingdom becomes our greatest pursuit and Your presence our deepest peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen."

Benediction: May you go trusting the Father who knows your every need. May your heart be free from anxious living as you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And may the peace of Christ guard your heart as you rest in the faithful care of your heavenly Father. Amen.