

Matthew 6

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[0 : 00] Is there something overwhelming me? Is there something bitter that is turning you and I into a frantic individual? Stealing our balance that God intends us to have in our lives.

Let us then look to God's word together. Let us try and see if we can find help in the situation to kick out the habit before it kicks out us.

Because there is a sheer danger that that can happen, friend. Don't underestimate it. Worry can eat into you in a big way. Unhappiness, depression.

Let us thank God that his word does address it. And let us look together. And there are three headings that I would like us to take. The first of these is, there is plenty to worry about.

There's no doubt. Humanly speaking, there's plenty to worry about. We live in a day where everything is changing at a rate of knots that we are not used to.

[1 : 12] Computer companies. I have a son-in-law who's in the computer business. And he tells me that new products are out there advertised. While the company holds the next new product in storage until they get rid of the freshman.

We are living in what has been identified as the three-minute cluster. Television advertising trying to sell you as many as four products within three minutes.

Twenty, thirty years ago. Even more. And I well experienced that. My late father-in-law ran a farm in the Isle of Skye.

In quite a remote sort of place. But I always used to marvel at how reps from companies used to come away back to the farm.

And it wasn't just to go there and sell their product and leave. They would arrive maybe ten, eleven o'clock. And they wouldn't leave till three, four o'clock in the afternoon.

[2 : 21] Having had our lunch together. Various cups of tea together. Discussed family matters. But yet the sale was made. There was no rush. Nowadays it's all down to the three-minute product.

Not necessarily on its quality. But on the cleverness of its advertising. Cleverness is all. In the midst of this hectic life that we live in.

The addiction of worry arises under the pressure of advertising. People who don't worry. Sorry, people do worry they haven't made it.

Young people worry that they do not have the right image or the right dress code. The big question of the hour is, are you busy? We live in a society today that do not seem to be busy.

Whether it's carrying a bit of fever or walking from one office to the other. There's something wrong. If you're quietly relaxing, eating, sitting on a wall and eating an apple.

[3 : 28] You're looked upon as something very sincerely wrong in your life. Because you're relaxing. People are inclined to think there is something wrong with you. And the world out there would almost have you feel guilty.

Because you're relaxed. Of course, frantic living is not the only cause of worry for many people. And I acknowledge the fact there are many other aspects.

There's the aspect of unemployment. Studies have shown that people who lose their employment go through very serious worrying depression. Some get into a vicious circle of declining self-respect.

There are money worries. There's boredom. Such people will often become pessimistic. There's major losses in life.

The loss of a limb. The loss of a loved one in death. Of course, other worries plague people.

[4 : 32] All around us, there are people facing broken relationships. We've never seen it at such a high rate. Failed exams. Frustration of plans foiled by unexpected circumstances.

Society around us are drifting into moral chaos. And that in itself brings its own worries. Old and trusted values have been thrown aside.

It's considered old-fashioned to spend time with people. It's considered old-fashioned even to visit people. And I bring our churches and our Christian brothers and sisters into this.

It's not old-fashioned, friend, to visit someone and give off your time. Excuse me. I recall when I was across in Skye working as a Presby worker.

And I was tasked with trying to renew interest in a congregation which geographically is the biggest area in Europe to cover.

[5 : 38] Glenelg, Glen Shield, right across Mamratigan, right down into Arnes Hill. A huge, huge area. And I'll never forget going into some homes there.

One lady in particular who was in her 80s had never been in church for over 20 years. And I discovered after about two and a half hours that she'd never been in church for over 20 years because she'd been refused baptism for her son.

She was actually a member of the church. And the appreciation shown by that lady of just being willing to spend time with her really got to my heart.

It is well said, was it not, when there are so many gods all competing with one another and claiming first priority, there is no recognition of the supreme God or value.

In terms of which everything else needs to justify itself, society cannot adrift into chaos.

[7 : 01] We see that today as we witness our political system, our judiciary, our industries and business and commerce, moral values too often swamped with vested interest in individual.

You know, I, this last week, I'm in my current job as a driving instructor with the police. Part of our job is to train employees up in a fairly major oil company up in this area.

I'm saying no more about it. Other than I was horrified to hear of this three young lads, the oldest who's 19, that they are not allowed to join a trade union.

They do not get paid holidays. And they have to serve a six-year apprenticeship for what in the industry is commonly a three-year apprenticeship.

But because of the employment demand in the area, they have to work there. I thought these things happened in third world countries.

[8 : 18] Here it is on their own very doorstep. In fact, one of the lads is not even getting the recognized minimum wage. Self-interest.

There is a cynicism about which would cause the best of us to worry. The rise of the occult is surely a cause for worry. It's a well-known fact that the number of witches in this country in America is more than any time since the Reformation.

There's the New Age movement. Astrologers are on the rise. People are starting to live out their lives according to their stars. There's a woman three doors along from my own office.

And I wish I paid the amount of attention to the Bible as she does to our stars. It's her first thing every morning. Her life with them. We reach around our stars. And she can't do this because our stars say this or our stars say that.

I just find it really quite disturbing. Look at the magazines you find today. I just picked one out there. how much advertising there is for the body.

[9 : 38] First page half the sugar not half the fun. Think, forget eating, dressing. And I go right through to page 25 and it's all about personal body how you're going to improve the body how you're going to improve this and how you're going to dress that right through the first quarter of the magazine.

It's about what you can do with the body. Advertising. As we look across the international scene with its wars its terrorism its atrocities its drug trafficking its fraudulent schemes at all levels who of us cannot but feel worry.

Fear for the future grips our minds. Fear for the young fear for earthquakes floods tsunamis disasters and I pose a question is there a place where worry can be swapped for inner peace?

No matter what the circumstances is there an equanimity which can face any disturbance? And to that I would answer yes assuredly there is.

And that brings me to my second point why worry? And I speak to myself more than anybody else why worry when you can trust?

[11 : 16] Imagine the scene a Sunday afternoon a little island off the north coast coast of Northern Ireland people are causing quite a stir arriving as far as the south of England into Wales throughout

Scotland and many from Ireland itself by one means or another including rafts and boats getting to this island on a Sunday afternoon the cause of their interest has not been seen there for hundreds of years everyone is determined to at least get a glance and if possible get a photograph what is happening they're asking migrating from Russia back to Australia back to Australia has landed on this island and people are scrambling breaking their necks to get to it in fact

I remember a pilot in one of the British Airways flights telling me the number of people that travel to Shetland because they hear an unusual bird that's landed in a rock the trouble they put themselves to the greatest teacher the Lord Jesus himself would certainly not ask us just to wait for a rare appearance of a bird but he tells us that we should constantly consider the birds of the air if only to learn from them to trust our heavenly father and not have worried filled lives 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 important than food and the body more important than clothes look at the birds of the air Jesus says they do not sow or reap or store away and burn and yet your heavenly father feeds them and then he goes on to say are you not much more valuable than they that's Jesus' words not mine the Lord Jesus himself saying to you are you and I not more valuable than they what is it that Jesus is saying here about the subject of worry he is saying that most people are preoccupied with a trinity of cares they are primarily concerned with what they will eat what they will drink and what they will wear people are primarily concerned with the welfare of the bodies of their bodies such it is you get a magazine like that with the first 25 pages addressing what you can do for your body if you doubt

Christ's teaching just lift any magazine or newspaper today you watch your TV screen you'll see it how the body is targeted in advertising the common theme running through each one of these advertising is how one can care primarily for the body each advertisement agency you will find concentrates on it how to entertain it how to titillate it how to make it look better what's the next exciting novel to read what's the present in place to take your holidays what's the best airline how to get there the smartest car to drive we're all equally guilty let's face it I hold my hand up we are what's the most potent perfume to buy the body is the object to which all these advertisements are directed take the body away from the scene and there wouldn't be so much to advertise I would ask you when you just think of this city alone on the increase over the past decade and a half and fitness centers I would almost argue with you I could take you to one or two fitness centers within this city today and you would count more people there than there are here it's people's gorge they have to have their fitness fix you can see by a very quick glance that I'm not one of them I do what God permits me to do and work and get my exercise there I'm not denying exercise is good for us but when it becomes like a friend of mine's procession that he spends in excess of 400 pound a month to have a superman egoistic loops I worry is your body its comfort all that you're interested in and Christ is seeing yours is a false view human beings and human life is all about

[17 : 28] Christ centered lives he asks us to look at the birds I spent the last three and a half weeks roughly watching blue tits in two separate nests in my garden I normally get up in the morning at around quarter twenty past six and they're busy at it I normally lock the sheds at night but half past ten to eleven o'clock they're busy at it that's what Jesus asked us to look at I'm not saying we should start working sixteen hour days but the busyness they're going there feeding back in back out busy busy you doubt what I'm saying then think of some young person who has unfortunately been paralyzed or badly hurt in some accident they're lying there in a hospital bed never to walk again they cannot even lift a book to read

I always recall how it struck me many years ago when Rena was nursing and she came home one night obviously quite touched with an incident that had happened she'd been walking through the ward and ARI one day and this patient called her over and asked her to remove a hair from the bridge of his nose he couldn't even do that he was unable to do it and I would ask you to imagine such a person asking the question what is it that life is all about you reply having a good time that passion cannot even move to have a good time you say to him oh life is eating lovely food that passion is dependent on other passions feeding him you answer life is about having wonderful holidays he isn't going anywhere you say to him life is eating about exciting films the best film he's going to get is a DVD or a video then you see in your desperation life is about money money is a thing to live for you say yes money may buy him a better bed physical well-being is not a worthy object for lifetime devotion you are not big enough to be the object of your own life there has got to be more to light or else the longings within us are a mockery those of us who are

Christ's first realize and know very well that food drink and clothes are a preoccupation with him is not our goal in life reality the realists of course would have you think that Christ's teaching is unrealistic they would argue that Christ is forbidding the human being to use their minds or to plan for the future well sorry there is no argument Christ tells you look at the birds who plans more for the future than the birds my goodness me we have a bird flying from Russia to Australia who plans more for the future than the birds yes no creature and Christ answers consider them look at them take your example from them he is not banning thought for poor thought he is not banning anxious thought but what he is banning is self distracting self tormenting corroding destruction worry Christ's argument in this matter is devastatingly logical is not life more important is not life your life my life more important of course people would have you say that we cannot expect God to drop food and clothes and drink to us we have to work for them yes we have to work for them and God gives us hopefully the strength and ability to work for them God provides for the birds it's amazing when you watch birds closely how little distance they have to go to get the necessary food to bring back to the nest it's fascinated me as you can probably realize in these last three weeks watching these blue tits into the eaves of the house into the eaves of the garage getting little insects back to the nest out again back again all day long and there they are now the five little chicks away out into the world

God does the same for us there are ample resources in the earth and the sea but what man ruins them man's self-interest selfishness means that sources are so often wasted or hoarded or spoiled that brings me nicely and I'm sorry boring you with passionate stories but before the sky bridge was erected there used to be the connection to the island was by ferry and it was a well known fact to get across the ferry sometimes you didn't always have to pay the fare in full because there were locals that were on a big scam before age of computers and all the rest of it and half the fare went in their pockets and there was this individual who was well known and renowned for it and he was gathering money for his own drinking habits and hiding it in the barn outside the house in the hay but he was hiding his five pound and ten pound oats and all the rest of it away from his wife and to his horror he went out one day and found the cow had got loose in the barn and eaten the hay the money and all and all his little loot had gone but there he was hoarding up and it was gone Jesus tells us what about the plants even

[24 : 44] Solomon who in all his beauty and glory was not closed like the lilies of the field they don't toil like men Jesus says in a field or spin like women but they draw their sustenance from the sun and the soil and if God clothes the grass and the lilies of the field that are here today were told and gone tomorrow will he not do the same for you and then note this little antidote at the end oh you of little faith me of little faith you of little faith what then is the alternative to worry the alternative is to trust be preoccupied with seeking to put the kingdom of God first and his righteousness first in our lives in our homes in our schooling in our family circumstances in our marriage in our higher education in our business in our lives put God first to have a

God centered life is having a worry free life however to have a self centered life is to have a worry packed life life there's a great story told and this is the last of my stories but there's a well known preacher many many years ago Billy Bray I don't know if any of you know about him or have read about him but he was renowned for his characteristic eccentric sayings as well as his deep and fervent love for the Lord and he would go round and he was known for building little places of worship over particularly predominantly Cornwall in the Devon area and he was in the throes of building one of his little churches in the Curly Downs and the main structure was near completion and the roof was on and they were beginning to finish inside it and he was looking now for something to use as a pulpit materials weren't as readily available so he heard of an auction that was going on in a local village and he went down and looked around and here was a beautiful big cupboard three cornered cupboard that he felt with a bit of tinkering and adjustments this could be ideal for a pulpit not being acquainted with auction sales he inquired with someone who seemed to know all about it and asked him what the procedures were and he eventually told him what he was going to do he was wanting this cupboard to make it into a pulpit for his new church and the man suddenly recognized he was this well known evangelist

Billy Bray so he handed him six shillings thirty pence in our money and he said there you go that should buy you your cupboard so Billy Bray not being acquainted with the auction went up and as the sales started not even his item was being offered just now but he shouted hey Mr.

Auctioneer I'll give ye six shillings and there's the money for the cupboard and the auctioneer of course ignored him and there was a bit of a laugh at Mr.

Bray's expense however the cupboard came up for sale and was sold for seven shillings and poor Mr. Bray did not get his cupboard and of course down went the hammer and to his astonishment he's without it and he was heard to say in prayer well father you know best I'll rely on you so he went to look for the man who gave him the six shillings and he couldn't find him he had left he was gone so he was kind of worried and he started making his way back up to the church where they were building it where on route he comes across the cupboard he was trying to buy being taken up the hill in a truck in a cart so he watches the two men and they get to the house and they can't get the cupboard through the door they struggle and they try this way and they try that way and no way could they get the cupboard into the house and he heard the man say well it's really disappointing having to break this cupboard up that I paid for and now use it for firewood when Billy

[29 : 30] Bray went along and hearing him and he said I'll give you six shillin for your cupboard if you take it down to the wheel church the man was happy to do so and Billy Bray was heard to say bless the Lord it's just like him he knew I could not carry it home so he got that man to take it for me so there it is God's ways are not necessarily our ways that leads me to my final and brief point why worry when we have a guide why worry when we have a guide and Neville Cheeler who was a well recognized translator of the scriptures into unusual foreign languages was once asked how do you translate that passage in Isaiah chapter 26 verse 3 you will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you and he said we translated it to read that God would keep the person's heart lying down whose mind is stayed on him that sometimes can be our trouble our egoism brings us up into ourselves and we lose sight of the

God in whom we trust there was a lady who was dying of cancer in bed was asked by her son how is it that she can go through with such suffering in faith to which she replied read that text on the wall which said there will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me there will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me these two brief translations I would say direct us to what we should be doing in that they both perfectly in their own ways sum up all that God does for the worried mind that rests on him the scriptures are asking us to take our minds beyond the immediate worry of our current lives and to look to the

God in whom we trust so let us not have our minds stop at our worry let our minds go on beyond our worry and to the God in whom we trust and as we permit that then his character and his attributes become more relevant to us and become more important to us think of the psalmist David when he said he leads me beside quiet water what could be more peaceful than the example given he guides me in the path of righteousness why for his name's sake for his name's sake what does that mean for his name God's name I would say to you with all reverence is guaranteed there's no annual inspection required there's no annual testing or MOT required

God's name is your guarantee for his name's sake just think of it very briefly remember the disciples when they went out in the boat and they were suddenly hit by a storm and they were being tossed about there rowing against the storm and getting nowhere where is Jesus Jesus is at a prayer meeting with his father and they must be thinking to themselves where is he now we need his help why isn't he here with us just think of it as we were reminded on Wednesday about Jairus and his daughter he came to Christ in the middle of this crowd and he recognized as a leader of the synagogue which would have taken him a lot to do it would be like our Lord promised coming and falling at his feet and he asked Jesus to come and heal his daughter who was dying and we're told that there's a crowd around

Jesus and then someone touched Jesus the woman who was bleeding touched Jesus touched his garment believing that she would be healed which she was Jesus didn't show any urgency or desire to go quick with Jairus to his daughter what must Jairus have been thinking when the messengers arrived and said don't trouble the master anymore your daughter is dead we find Jesus didn't make any hurry to go Jairus and we very well have been asking what an earth is happening why is he delaying and then let's think of the story of Lazarus who was told was a friend of Jesus Martha and Mary as recorded one night outwardly they actually gave

[35 : 21] Jesus got Jesus into trouble for his delay and we find Jesus had no desire to go there in any urgent way at all no he went the opposite direction and actually increased his time by over two days why did these incidents happen what is God telling us here was he guiding them yes he was guiding them he didn't lose sight of them of course he was he delayed with the storm bound

disciples he came in his perfect timing to show them that he could calm the waters he delayed his visit to Jairus and Jotter just to prove that he didn't only have power over disease he had power over death itself and in Lazarus his case he delayed to show not only did he have power over death but he had power over the decomposition of the body that was in the tomb for four days there was a purpose there was a reality to it and a dependence upon him did Joseph think that God was guiding him when he was thrown down into a pit by his brother did Moses think God was guiding him when Pharaoh threw him out of Egypt did Hannah think God was guiding her when she was childless or Elisha think God was guiding when Jezebel lifted false accusations against him did Daniel think God was giving him guidance when he was thrown into the den of lions or Jonah who ended in the stomach of the great fish God was leading them all the time for a reason and for a purpose and he is leading you and he is leading me today if we will put our faith and our trust in him and we align to him his ways are not our ways I remember reading a story some years ago when that famous pop idol Michael Jackson was being interviewed on our radio and at the time he owned in his young years that famous ranch with its 125,000 acres of ground and his alleged millions of dollars and he was asked the question

Michael what are you sure of to which he replied nothing and so it is just because you see someone with hundreds of millions doesn't make them sure of anything but if you today trust the Lord Jesus Christ as I do you have something to be sure of you have something to be certain of I said it was my last story but this is definitely my last there was a lamp lighter in the days of gas lamps would go along his area and he had this huge number of street lamps to light lighting the gas each one he would switch on as he went on in the evening and at night sorry in the morning again he had to put them all off and he was speaking to one of his many friends that he would meet in the way and he used to relate to how they all came out of their homes and gave them all their troubles and problems and in the mornings he would set off again to put these lights out and he was asked the question did he not get frightened in the dark as he put the lights out no he replied smiling when one light goes out

I keep my eye on the next light and so I keep my eye on the next light and the next light until I get back home and it's dawn so it is friend in our lives we've got to keep our light our eyes on God's light till one day he will take us home to be with him forever walk in the light no matter how dark your circumstances may be God's light of guidance is always ahead of you even when facing death itself we're told it is the valley of the shadow of death and where there is a shadow there's got to be light that's God's light then it will become dawn the dawn of eternity when you and I if you trust in Jesus will realize all his wonderful promises let me close with a question which I feel led to ask do you trust in the

Lord Jesus Christ today if so let us not worry and I include myself but trust in him who is willing and able to keep until that day and if you're not here today find trusting of the Lord Jesus Christ from the youngest to the oldest of you here present I trust you hear God's spirit calling you to put your trust on him to cast your worry aside and to look to him who says to you come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light

[41 : 48] I trust you will know the likeness of that burden today handed over to Christ and if we're spared and well tonight if you're able to come I intend to look at judgment in hell and that will give you good reason to hand it over to Christ because that's the alternative Jesus loves you this I know for the Bible tells me so Amen let us pray