

**“The Antidote to Apprehension  
Over Meeting Our Daily Needs”  
Sermon on Matthew 6:25-34  
Saint Mark's, Watertown, WI  
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**Introduction: Do You Worry Over Money?**

Scripture says: *God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.* Amen.

Dear fellow Christians—who are sometimes apprehensive over meeting your daily needs:

Do you worry? ...Of course, you worry! Regrettably, so do I. I think I'm safe in saying that all of us find ourselves apprehensive sometimes—over this situation or that problem. And of course, it's a sin, and the sign of the sinfulness that dwells within us.

Do you worry about money? ...Yeah, you worry about money. Unfortunately, so do I. Unless you're very, very rich – and then, very frugal besides – there's never enough money to do everything we really want to do. So, we sin by worrying about money. And it's a demonstration of the sinfulness that lives deep within us.

That's not to say, of course, that our money worries don't differ from one another. I mean: Some of us have earned our money worries by spending too much. That's why foreclosures on houses are at an all time high; that's why credit card debt is eight thousand five hundred dollars per person: thirty four thousand dollars for an average American family of four! But others of us have earned our money worries by trusting God too little to provide for us—or by making our plans for our financial future, without considering that God could have different plans for our money.

**Theme: The Antidote to Apprehension Over Meeting Our Daily Needs**

God's Word to us today – part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount – speaks to all of us: who worry about money, who have spent too much, who trust too little. It provides THE ANTIDOTE TO APPREHENSION OVER MEETING OUR DAILY NEEDS. There are two steps to this. Jesus says: Step One (1) DO NOT WORRY. Jesus says: Step Two (2) DO SEEK CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

**Part One: Do Not Worry**

Do you worry? Do you worry about money? Jesus meets that apprehension of yours head on, when he says—and this is God's Word to us today: **I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.** And then Jesus gives us a half a dozen reasons not to worry....

He says: **Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?** There is reason number one not to worry about money. Jesus says, “If you are going to worry, at least worry about something more important than your eats and your threads. Get concerned about food for your spirit. Get concerned about clothes for your soul.” And obviously, we'll want to talk more about that later.

Reason number two not to worry: Jesus says, **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?** I mean: think of the couple of sparrows you saw in your yard this morning. Think of the blackbirds you scared up on your way to

church. Did any one of them plant a crop last spring? Did any one of them wake up this morning to harvest the fields they planted? The big beautiful barns scattered across the countryside—are any of them owned by the birds? Of course not! Yet how many birds you’ve seen are starving to death? None! The dear Lord feeds them, for whom he did not die. Surely, the dear Lord will feed you, whom he loved enough to die for.

A third reason not to worry: Jesus says, **Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?** Probably more accurately translated: *Who of you by worrying can add a foot and a half to his stature?* Worry as we might – “I want to live an hour longer!” “I want to grow a foot and a half taller!” – worry will get us nowhere. In fact, the worrying is likely to shorten our life and hurt our health. So, don’t worry!

Jesus’ fourth reason not to worry: **Why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow.** These aren’t even the flowers in the flower shops! **They do not labor or spin** wool into thread for clothing. Can you imagine a little flower doing that?! **Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor** – the wealthiest man who every lived! – **was dressed like one of these** beautiful little lilies. **If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is,** finally, so unimportant that it is **here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire** to stoke the stove to cook your bread, **will God not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?** Jesus is saying, “Exercise your faith in me! Trust me to clothe you and take care of your needs. Don’t worry about money!”

**So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'** And reason number five not to worry: Jesus says, **the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.** To anybody who is not a Christian, all there is to life are tasty meals. What an empty existence! All there is to life is the next drink. All there is to life is looking good—nice clothes, decent car, spacious house. Finally, what an empty existence! And it’s not that God doesn’t know that his dear children – through faith in Jesus Christ – also need food and water and clothes. So, don’t worry! Jesus will handle you.

And the sixth and final reason Jesus gives not to worry?—it comes at the end. **...Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.** In a sinful world, each day is an obstacle course for a Christian. It’s enough to handle each obstacle as it comes, without guessing at the problems over the course of the next few days of the race.

So, you who worry over money – and I who worry over money – don’t worry! Other things are more important. Worry doesn’t work. Jesus takes care of the birds and the flowers; he knows what we need. And once you start to worry, there’s never an end to all the worries you can worry yourself over!

## **Part Two: Do Seek Christ’s Kingdom**

But...: Jesus did say that there is something we should be worried about. Or let’s not use the word *worry*. Jesus says there is something else with which we should really concern ourselves (that’s better!). He hinted at it when he said, way at the beginning: *Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?* And now he says more positively: **Seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

*Seek first God’s kingdom ...* The *kingdom of God*—what’s that? It is God’s saving, ruling activity through the Gospel, the good news that Jesus is our Savior! That good news is that Jesus did the work – thirty three years worth of work! – and Jesus paid the price – his blood and bruises! his own damnation and dying! – to renounce for us our citizenship in hell. He has brought us into a new and better kingdom. In this kingdom – the kingdom of God! –our Heavenly Father now rules us. In this kingdom God

orchestrates every event in the universe for our eternal good. In this kingdom God protects us from marauders without and criminals within; in fact, there are no criminals within this kingdom, because Jesus has wiped out our every sin. And it's that way forever!

*Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness.... The righteousness of God—* what's that? It's God's declaration, for Jesus' sake, that we are right in his sight forever. God considers you and me entirely acceptable to him. It's not the way it is between friends on earth: where they don't know each other's faults very well, or where they pretend not to see the faults, or where they overlook each other's faults. No! God knows – and he has felt! – every time we have punched him in the nose with our rebellion. It's just that God felt that on the cross. And now he has forgiven it, just as if it never happened. That's the way we are righteous in his sight—forever!

That's God's kingdom. That's Christ's righteousness. Now: *Seek God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you as well.* As earnestly as the pagans pursue their food and drink and clothes, their money and toys and fun—all the more earnestly we will pursue God's kingdom and his righteousness.

It means that we will devour the Scriptures as eagerly as we once devoured our food. It means that we will drink more deeply from the Word of God than we drink other liquids. It means that we would rather be clothed in earthly rags plus the robes of Christ's righteousness than to be clothed in the finest fashion but also the nakedness of unbelief.

It also means that we will live as citizens of Christ's kingdom, as Christ's righteous people. Enough with sin! We won't consume what the pagans do, and we won't resemble the pagans in the way that we live—any more!

### **Conclusion: Defy the Devil by Giving a Generous Offering!**

See, worrying is no fun, and the anxiety of apprehension over our money and food and clothes is just plain aggravating. So, as Jesus says: Don't worry! Do seek Christ's kingdom.

To conclude: as you know, it is that “stewardship time of year”. And I am remiss if I don't conclude with one final thought on our offerings to our Savior in this holy place. See, there are many good reasons to bring generous offerings to God. He has loved us very much and has given us all things. We love him and owe him all things back to him. Besides, our church makes very fine and effective use of our offerings.

But here's one more thought. Every time we bring an offering – and the more generous the offering, the more this is true – we are defying the devil. We are saying to Satan, “Satan, you want me to think that I cannot live without this money. You want me to worry that now that I've given a generous offering, I won't have food and drink, clothing and shelter—or at least enough money to keep me happy. Well, off to hell with you Satan! I'm going to put a pile of money into the offering plate, and the dear Lord will still take care of me just fine. And I may not live like a king (although most of us still do), but The King is going to take care of me just fine, thank you. You can't have me. He bought and paid for me! And I'm going to serve him.” Amen.

Scripture says: *You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.* Amen.