

## Do Not Worry

### A Sermon on Matthew 6:25-33



‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is

thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

#### Sermon

I had planned to preach a different sermon today, from a passage of the Bible that calls us to get out of our comfort zones, but I think we’re far enough out of those comfort zones already as it is.

And over the last couple of days I have felt waaaaay out of my comfort zone. I don’t know about you, but I have been stressed out and anxious. Everywhere I look the headlines give grave warnings, the institutions I have come to trust tell me that they’re shutting down for a month, the people in the store are stockpiling and preparing for the worst. With each new thing I hear my stress levels rise. And speaking with the Worship Committee and Session and preparing to close the church has been the height of it for me. Because, I must have missed the class in seminary about how to respond to a Pandemic Coronavirus. I guess it would be a little ironic if I had been sick that day, and all these other pastors know exactly what to do? But, I worried that I didn’t have a clue.

I spoke with the folks who help lead the church. And we were talking on the phone and I was pacing around my house. I mean seriously, I was wearing a path in the floor, I was finding corners in my house that I'm not sure I've ever been in. I was feeling almost frantic, and not sure what to do.

- But, as I paced, I kept hearing words of wisdom from your worship committee.
- I kept getting emails from Session members who had ideas I had never thought about.
- And as I fretted, the staff of this church was so flexible and hopeful and creative about how we could respond.
- And members of the church reached out to share ways that we could care for one another.
- And friends of the church told me that they were praying for all of us.
- And the Presbytery provided resources and guidelines.

And I realized: As I was worrying, God was working.

- God was right there with me, holding all of us in those trustworthy hands. Drawing us toward one another, even when we couldn't share physical space. Giving us a mission and a purpose and a hope.

And I remembered that even if I missed the Pandemic Response Day in Seminary, I had certainly been there for other school days.

- I **was** there for Sunday School on the day when they taught us to trust in God. I have heard the stories of all the ways that God has cared for God's people - through famine and flood, through oppression and war - God has been there for us. So, maybe I do know how to put my life in God's hands. I have learned that Christ will carry us through whatever we face. In our scripture for today he promises to give us food and drink, even if we cannot go to work. He has promised to provide what we need, even if the stock market crashes, or we get sick, or we end up stuck at home. And I do know we can trust God's promises.
- And I **was** also in that Sunday School class on the day when the preacher told us to strive for the kingdom of God by loving our neighbors. So, it turns out, I do know that worshipping in the same place, in exactly the way that I want to, is not nearly as important as making sure that we don't risk getting the people next to us in the pews sick when they are vulnerable to this disease. I do know how to call that person that I know who is not able to leave her house, just because there is value in talking and sharing fellowship. I do know how to leave some toilet paper for the next person who comes to the supermarket as an act of sharing with them.

And so, maybe I am prepared to respond to this pandemic. And I believe that you are too. Because I have seen the trust you have in God and I have seen the way you love your neighbors. I have seen God working in all of you. And I know that God's work will not be in vain.

So, look at the birds of the air. Consider the lilies of the field. If God will care for them, imagine how much more God will do for you who God loves with all God's heart. Do not worry. Just remember what we learned about how to respond to a pandemic. We learned it in Sunday School and it still serves us today. Trust in God, and love your neighbor - - - and always wash your hands. Amen



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