

Sunday School
May 10, 2020

-Read: Matthew 6:25-34

-Questions to consider and discuss:

- Jesus tells us not to be anxious about the everyday necessities of life: food, water, clothing, etc. Depending on one's economic situation or phase of life, it can be difficult *not* to have anxiety regarding those things.
 - To be anxious shows a lack of trust in God to provide for our needs. It should be acknowledged that everyone is going to have some anxiety at one point or another (some people even have clinical anxiety that needs to be medically treated). If we ever get astray from that steadfast trust in God, we need to realign our thinking, in order that we hold fast to our anchor, our solid rock, our mighty fortress (all biblical images for God).
 - God already knows the things you need (Matthew 6:8, 32). Non-believers might worry their heads off chasing after safety and security, but followers of Jesus don't need to do that.
 - If you make wise, good choices and invest in things of eternal significance (see Matthew 6:19-24 from last week), there is no reason to be anxious, as God is a perfect caretaker for God's people.
- Jesus uses two *a fortiori* ("how much more") examples. First, Jesus talks about birds.
 - Birds don't stockpile. Each day, they go out, gather what they need, and feed themselves and their chicks. God provides daily bread (i.e. daily sustenance). God did it for forty years when the Israelites wandered the desert; God provided manna every day.
 - Read: Luke 12:4-7. Here, Jesus tells his disciples not to fear those who will persecute them. He reminds them that sparrows are a dime a dozen, yet God still cares about them. *How much more* does God care about humans, who are made in the image of God. If God is concerned enough to feed and take care of birds, God will certainly take care of feeding and sustaining God's people.
- Jesus' second "how much more" example talks about flowers.
 - Flowers don't use sewing machines or spindles to make clothes for themselves (this is what Jesus means by "toil nor spin"). Rather, God adorns them with beautiful bulbs (more beautiful than the prettiest wedding dress or the finest kingly robes). God provides protection and adornment in various ways for God's people.
 - Read: Isaiah 40:6-8. Grass was a natural source of fuel for fire, and was used as a common biblical metaphor for human frailty. In this passage, Israel is in exile and is at their most vulnerable point. And yet, God's promises to God's people are firm, standing forever. God's Word/proclamation/covenantal promises are able to overcome human frailty. If God adorns flowers that wilt, fade, or are trampled down, God will certainly provide clothing and shelter of God's people.

- What we need is to strive for God's Kingdom work to get done, and for God's righteousness to be made manifest in us, by the way that we live. If we make our priority working for God and caring about the things God cares about, then God will see to all the other things that might seem like big deals to us, but in reality are not hurdles or logistical problems for the God of the universe.
 - Ultimately, there is nothing you can do about tomorrow or the future. Crazy, unpredictable things happen, like illnesses or death, the loss of a job, a natural disaster, or even a pandemic. Seeing as how you can't control things that are very much out of your grasp, take life day by day.
- What is one takeaway from this teaching from the Sermon on the Mount that you can apply this week?