

MATTHEW 6:24–34. (EHV)

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon. For this reason 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 than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? Which of you can add a single moment to his lifespan by worrying? Why do you worry about clothing? Consider how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin, but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not clothe you even more, you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For the unbelievers chase after all these things. Certainly your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

For our final meditation on Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount in this series, I wanted to take us to what I like to call Jesus’s window sermon. I call it Jesus’s “window sermon,” because he impresses powerful truths on our hearts using simple illustrations in nature that most of us can call to mind just by looking out the window.

Jesus’s window sermon is meant to teach us to serve God instead of mammon, or earthly wealth and riches and stuff, and it is meant to teach us not to worry.

Jesus first helps us not to worry by narrowing down our worries. When we worry about food and drink and clothing and shelter in all the various forms those worries come—like whether the harvest will be good, or how quickly the damage to our house or vehicle will be repaired, or where we’re going to get enough money to pay our bills—we’re really worrying about our life and about our body. Those are the bigger worries behind the smaller worries.

Once we have narrowed down those worries, Jesus reminds us that there’s more to life than just food and drink and more to the health of our body than clothing and shelter. God is the one ultimately responsible for the duration of our life and the health of our bodies. Without his blessing, the finest food and drink won’t do any good and the nicest and most expensive clothes won’t protect us. And with his blessing, we can fare well even with very little or inferior food, drink, and clothing.

But how can we be certain that God cares for us and will watch out for us and our needs? This is where Jesus gives us his two-part window sermon. The first part deals with our concerns about food, and the second part deals with our concerns about clothing. Here’s the first part: “Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

In the Bible, “the birds of the air” seems to refer in particular to the large, soaring scavenger birds that were unclean for the Jews to eat at the time. When Jesus preached this window sermon on another occasion, he specifically mentioned the ravens (Luke 12:24). God

cares even for the birds that no one else cares about. I don't know about you, but with all the snow we've gotten this winter, I've seen lots of these types of "birds of the air" eating quite well off of all the animals that have died in the cold. God used all this snow and cold to provide for them.

Guess what? God didn't send his Son to shed a single drop of blood for the birds. He sent his Son to suffer, bleed, and die for you and for me. We are worth infinitely more to God than the birds are. So the next time you see an eagle or a hawk picking at a carcass on the side of the road and looking fat and happy, you can remind yourself that if God provides so richly for that bird, he will certainly also see to your own stomachs and life.

Before going on to the second part of his window sermon, Jesus asks this question: "Which of you can add a single moment to his lifespan by worrying?" We often say this more coarsely by telling people not to worry because it won't do them any good anyway. In fact, how many studies have been done showing that not only does worrying not add any moments to our lives, it shortens our lives. Stress and worry eat away at our lives. It truly does no good to worry.

Now to the second part: "Why do you worry about clothing? Consider how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin, but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not clothe you even more, you of little faith?"

Don't just look out the window at the animate birds. Look out the window at the inanimate flowers. I used to live in Texas, and I loved going on walks with my wife in the spring in the local nature preserve. We would see bluebonnets, primroses, Indian paintbrushes, Indian blankets, silverleaf nightshade, winecups, Mexican hats, prickly poppies, rain lilies, lantana, prairie nymphs, antelope horns, and more. We're looking forward to seeing what flowers cover the South Dakota hills and plains this spring. How much work did those flowers do to get clothed so beautifully? Not a lick. God dressed them more beautifully than wealthy King Solomon would have dressed for one of his daughters' weddings.

Guess what? God didn't send his Son to shed a single drop of blood for the inanimate flowers. He sent his Son to suffer, bleed, and die for you and for me. We are worth infinitely more to God than the flowers are. So the next time you have to pause to look at a beautiful flower whose colors complement each other so wonderfully, you can remind yourself that if God clothes that flower so beautifully, he will certainly also see to your own clothes and body.

"So do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For the unbelievers chase after all these things. Certainly your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Put God and his Word and your spiritual treasures first—your righteousness, joy, peace of conscience, and eternal hope. When those are your foremost concerns and pursuits, God promises that the rest will take care of itself, or rather, he will take care of the rest. Maybe you won't be able to pay the bills this month. Maybe you'll miss a meal. But your life and your body will be taken care of somehow, some way, by God. You can simply continue praying, "Give us this day our daily bread," and God will do just that. He will give you everything you need, in the

amount that you need it, one day at a time. He's spent too much on you and on your eternal salvation to do anything else. Amen.