

## **Well-Invested: Seek First**

Matthew 6:25-34

Here's a blast from the past. Some of you, and I realize not all of you will remember the 1970's Broadway musical, *Godspell*.

It loosely tells the story of Christ's life as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. It is essentially based on the parables of Christ. There's also a segment from the Sermon on the Mount.

You might remember the song, *Day by Day*.

*"O dear Lord three things I pray—to see thee more clearly, to love thee more dearly, to follow thee more nearly, day by day."*

Of course, that song is based upon the great words of Christ when he said, *"Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."* (Matthew 6:34)

## **Day by Day**

It's not easy living day by day, but that's the very way God has designed things. It is the way he wants us to live—in total dependence upon him, day by day.

In our scripture for today from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says to you and me that we can be well-assured of God's provision each and every day.

In Exodus we learn that God provided daily for the Children of Israel during their sojourn in the wilderness. He offered manna in the morning and quail at night.

There was just enough for the day and double for the Sabbath. What was provided couldn't be saved or otherwise hoarded. What was given was sufficient for the day.

Jesus himself in offering The Lord's Prayer encourages us to pray for "our daily bread." He knew that, by so doing, we would recognize God's every desire to meet our needs on a *daily* basis.

The stuff of living day by day is a stance of faith.

It's a strong stand affirming God's every desire to meet us at the very point of our need and because of that we really don't have anything to worry about.

*“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” (Matthew 6:34)*

### ***Don’t Worry about Tomorrow***

I repeat that verse a lot. I will often tell persons facing the prospect of a long illness to take it one day at a time. *“Don’t worry about tomorrow,”* I’ll tell them. *“God will help you deal with what’s ahead. What God wants you to do is trust him right now.”*

I’ll even go on and quote the rest of the passage, *“for tomorrow will have enough trouble of its own.”*

On face value the last part of that passage is not all that hopeful, save for the fact that God will be with us no matter what trouble tomorrow brings

God’s provision is for today and tomorrow.

During worship last Sunday Cheryl and I received word that one of our dearest friends had died in her sleep the night before. The news has really pulled the rug out from under us. It’s been tough trying to make sense of it all. I’m not sure that’s possible in this instance, so we simply live in the blessing and provision of God’s love.

Our real concern is for her husband. The two were quite a team and he will miss her terribly.

We had the funeral yesterday. He’s spent the last few days planning the funeral and greeting the hundreds of people who have reached out. As he put it, he’s been *“running on adrenaline.”*

The tough part comes now as all that dies down and he’s left with an empty house, the birth of a grandchild in a couple of weeks, and treatments for prostate cancer during the months of November and December.

All I can do is encourage him to live day by day in God’s warm embrace. After all, living day by day in God’s warm embrace is the only thing that will sustain him and, if we are honest with ourselves, is the only thing that will sustain us in our own hour of trouble.

One of our friend’s favorite verses and one we highlighted yesterday is from Isaiah 41:10.

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)*

That's God's way day by day.

### **Divided Allegiances Get Us Nowhere**

Last week we talked a good deal about storing up treasure in heaven. We said it was one of those "*where the rubber meets the road issues*" Jesus so often talked about.

Last week we heard from Christ very clearly, challenging us not to be so concerned with storing up things here on earth.

Jesus knew that doing so was nothing more than an attempt at building our own security at the expense of resting in the true security God stands to offer.

Jesus knew that divided allegiances get us nowhere.

*"You can't serve two masters. You will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."* (Matthew 6:24)

Jesus would much rather that you and I are well-invested in the things of God. Those that have their focus on him are less likely to be attached to the things of this world that bring so much care and concern—at least that's the way it ought to be.

In all honesty I am challenged by that, and I figure you are as well. It's all too easy to be much too invested in the things of this world and everything that comes along with that, all at the expense of a healthy relationship with God.

*"Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness,"* says Jesus, *"and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matthew 6:33)

### **What We Actually Think about God**

Our scripture for today continues right where we left off last week. Here Jesus talks about the things of this earth and, in the same breath, recognizes how worried we can be about them.

Jesus challenges us to consider what we think about God and his provision for our lives.

What do we say about God when we get all worked up about the things we will eat, or the things we will drink, or the things we will wear?

And, if perchance, we are not concerned about any of these, then what about the other stuff we're worried about?

Let's face it, for most of us, worry is way too much a part of our lives and the effects are not all that pretty.

We waste all sorts of energy worrying when the things we're worried about most often never even happen.

Worry keeps us our focus stayed upon the things of this world, instead of upon God, the very one who seeks to meet our every need in the first place.

You and I can certainly be counted among those who are the, "*O, ye of little faith.*"

At best, we are like the man who approached Jesus about healing his son of an evil spirit. "I believe," he said, "help me overcome my unbelief." (Mark 9:24)

Worry is best overcome by a strong assurance that God is at work to bring about his good purposes for our lives. A God of love can do no other.

Worry is best defeated when we stand with faith and trust. Worry loses its sway when trust in God stands first and the cares and concerns of this world become a distant second.

It's a "*seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you*" sort of thing.

Jesus offers a stern challenge to those who worry. If you are going to be a part of the God's Kingdom, you've got to decide what you believe about him and his ability to provide for your life.

It comes down to this: Is God worthy of your trust or not?

Those rightly invested in him know he is.

A life founded upon God

- Sees things from God's perspective
- Engages life aware of God's presence
- Meets any and every challenge assured that God's every desire is to provide just what's needed.

God is sufficient to meet our every need—spiritually and otherwise.

### **Living in the Provision of God**

The birds of the air and the lilies of the field are a radiant expression of what it means to live in God's provision and Jesus lifts them up as such.

If God provides for them, why would he not provide for us, particularly when Jesus himself says that in God's sight we are much more valuable than they are?

In Matthew 10:29-31 Jesus says, *“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”* (Matthew 10:29-31)

God cares that much. He's that interested in what's going on. His every desire is to lean into our lives.

Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of our passage for today hits it right on when it comes to Christ's challenge to trust in God.

*“If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don't fuss about what's on the table at meal-times or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion.*

*There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body.*

*Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.*

*“What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax and not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving.*

*People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works.*

*Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.”*

## **Giving God Our Full Attention**

It comes to us then to give our full attention to what God is doing in our midst, right now. We'd do well not to get so worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow.

We'd do well to live faithfully day by day

In other words, we would do well to "*seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness,*" and live with the confidence that all the things necessary for life will be "*added unto us.*"

If we are to invest ourselves, we'd do well to invest in God. Doing so is the wisest investment of all. It far exceeds any investment on Wall Street. His return is far greater than anything here on earth.

You and I will never go wrong striving after God as a matter of first order.

## **Trust, Not Worry, As a Way of Life**

Jesus is quick to assert that worry won't add a single hour to our lives.

In fact, it's pretty much proven that worry, if anything, shortens life. And if it doesn't shorten life, it surely robs it of its vitality.

It comes to us to invest ourselves wisely in "*God's Kingdom and his righteousness*" to the end that the things of this life aren't so much a concern, but seen as a daily provision from the very One who loves us dearly.