Passage: Matthew 6:25-34

Pray:

About a year ago I started my first week at HCC, and I was hopeful for my time here.

until that evening of my first day. I joined a gym, and I assumed naively that this gym would be friendly, since the world is a happy place, right? So after I finish my workout and return to the locker room--open up my locker, and I notice…

Hey...Where is...my bag? My backpack with my cell phone, wallet, car keys/apartment keys/Church keys, credit card, license etc...I can’t seem to find it. I check every locker in the gym. Nothing. I’m freaking out, and mad at the same time. I only left my backpack with all my worldly possessions in the locker unsupervised and without a lock for maybe 50 minutes...So where could it go? People couldn't possibly reach in and take somebody else’s bag out? Isn’t that theft?

I freak out, gym managers are not helpful, I don’t know whether to cry or to go insane. And reality sinks in. I am, for the time being--Homeless. I don’t have a car, as my keys are gone--I don’t have a home, as my other keys are gone--I don’t have communication--my phone is gone--I don’t have money-as my wallet is gone. I don’t even have an identity-no license, nothing!

I play worst case scenarios--what if the Church fire me cuz I’m homeless? What if I never see Gracia again and I die? Who’s she gonna marry? What if I get on local news- ‘Local youth minister gets robbed at gym because of stupidity; story to follow’. I don’t know if I’ll ever get my life back--How do I even pray-- “God, it’s Eun Soo--You sent me to Houston, and you want me to live at the gym and beg for money? How will I survive?”

I worried and kep thinking- “Am I going to be ok?” All these what if scenarios...It was not a happy time. Welcome to Houston, Eun Soo.

That’s not everybody’s story of worry. Perhaps yours wasn’t caused by naivety but you’ve still seen worry. Maybe you are facing with worry today. Have you been in a situation like this? you’ve lost control, and can’t help but be anxious-expect the worst, and instead of praying, you worry and start freaking out? I hope that I’m not the only one like that in here. All of us face different trials that tempt us to worry.

Context:

we have been walking through the King’s Sermon. we are walking through what a kingdom citizen looks like, as a child of the king, and the character they should exhibit. Not that they earn this merit on their own, but by the righteousness already given by the King, we obey the Word.

Today we will be addressing this topic of worry. But before we do, think about why we worry, what is our motivations behind worry?

A big question for you I have today is this: Do I trust God more than I trust myself and my circumstances? worry is not just a psychological or emotional or situational response. It is a deeply theological problem. What we believe about worrying reflects what we believe about our Heavenly Father.

Here are three points we will be visiting today:

1. The reality of worry
2. The reason for worry
3. The response to worry

Main Point: Worry is forgetting that our Heavenly Father cares for us.

But I do want to make a distinction between a medically diagnosed member that suffers from anxiety or a disorder with the rest of us that are worrying about the troubles of this life.

We want to be sensitive about these severe cases, and please know that I’m not here to belittle the problems. We live in a broken world, and God is restoring us to be new. But as we live in the in between, we have to face certain ugly realities such as severe anxieties. So if that is you, please apply the truths from this text, but know that we are still supportive of you. And know that it will require perhaps medicine and professional help, but the motivations behind worries and anxieties are stemming from our brokenness. So please listen with an open mind, and we will be asking God to heal all of us, and freeing us from fears.

So we start, with.

-The Reality of worry: (25-26)

Last week we heard a sermon about how the treasures on earth will rust. But the eternal gift is found in God alone. His audience is already aware that they are to serve one master--either you serve money or God, not both.

It’s natural that with serving Jesus, that you would need to put total trust in Him. Jesus says--Don’t be anxious---Can you trust in God more than your wallet, possessions, and circumstances? let’s read with the previous verse in context.

“Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

Jesus mentions three things we worry about. Food, drink, and clothes. We need these things to survive, but it becomes a problem when we become worrisome about these details.

There are two types of people this could apply to: one is the people that are actually in need of food and clothing. Many didn’t live with luxuries like we do today. some might have been anxious waiting day to day, surviving on just enough, barely enough clothing, finding barely enough water to survive.

The other group of people are like us--people who live comfortably, if not abundantly. And the worry comes from preoccupation with our desires and having too much. Worrying about “what to wear to a social gathering”, or other trivial worries about where to eat and what to decide.

Whether it’s an issue of you lack and have not, or you have too much to choose from and you worry, Jesus says that it is not worth it. That life is more than food, and that body more than clothing. For God provided us life, as well as food. Jesus knows our tendencies-- prone towards worry, expecting the worst or living in fear of what might happen.

The question when we are faced with worry, once again, is: “Do I trust myself/my circumstance over God?” Do I believe that God has what is in my best interest?

Verse 26 “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?” Jesus gives clear illustrations of reasons not to worry. Jesus, who made both man and animal, points out that even the birds of the air, God cares for.

Unlike us, who might save up for retirement or college, and work endless amount of hours and still worry whether we have “enough”; these birds--they do not worry. They fly, they survive, and as insignificant and simple minded as they are--God feeds them. I wonder if we shouldn’t let what Jesus says sink in….“Are you not of more value than they?”

When put into application, how do we deal with worry? It’s so much easier, saying up here to follow this Book and to not worry--you might say: “Easy for you to say, you don’t know what I’m going through”--Or others of you might say “Jesus talked about food and clothing--what about my issue? It goes so much deeper than that--”

Examples of worry:

Perhaps you are worried because you are faithfully serving God, day in and day out, praying to the God who listens and you seek for a companion, you long for marriage, worried if mr. or ms. right will every come along--

maybe you are a father who cares for his family, you responsibly try to provide--but lack of stability and the long hours make you anxious whether you need to look for a new opportunity in work, money is tight.

perhaps you’re worried because you have no job while you’ve tried so long to look for one. You wonder if anything will change.

Another of you, you are going to college, leaving home for the first time--you worry about adjustments, worry if you’ll make friends, find a community, as well as your future.

Some of you might be mothers who worry about your kids, -you want so much what is best for them and want them to walk with God...and yet you don’t see it, so you pray but also you worry as you see little progress…

Maybe you have parents who are aging...Perhaps family members who have been so good to you, and you know that they haven’t been doing too well...You worry, wondering when their last days will be, worrying if they will make it through another week. You just want them to be at peace, and you’re uneasy.

Among others, you might be worried about finances, or your health...about relationships and the unpredictable curveballs that life throws at you, and for you, it’s not just a cliche, it’s a reality that you hope you can get out of, but in the meantime what do you do? You seem to not have many options besides worrying.

it’s interesting that Jesus mentioned that our lives are more than just food or clothing. Our bodies and lives are about so much more than that. I am sure it is hard for you, as it is hard for me, to not worry when a crisis comes where we don’t know the outcome. Don’t you hate that? I like knowing what’s coming up next. I hate waiting. I hate not being able to do anything about it, while I worry.

Have you met a constant worrier? this is how we tend to think: in the morning, we are look at our phone to check our emails or news feed or bank account--and we see something we don’t like-oh shoot, my funds are running low, oh shoot, my boss didn’t respond to my request to get a vacation, oh shoot, somebody commented negatively on my facebook post. And then as you go through the day, there are countless number of things to worry about--Ah, my package didn’t arrive this week, what if it never comes and I never get my new sunglasses? Oh man, the Astros lost again-what if they get out of the pennant race? Oh darn, my parents are coming over this weekend and I forgot to vacuum the house, what if they yell at me? And these are trivial things, but even in big things, sometimes the “what ifs” of life tend to speak louder to us rather than Jesus’ simple command to not worry.

Perhaps “Are you not of more value than they?” doesn’t resonate with you as much as it should. Its because we don’t understand the full impact. If we realize that the God of all we see, values us, despite our continual disobedience,...I still trust myself and my situation over God most days. despite all of that, He calls us child, and He calls you to this intimate relationship: a Father to a child--should that not comfort you and me?

Perhaps that is comforting for some of you, but for others, you go “that doesn’t change anything! I’m still worried about my future,my education, my family, my relationships, the fact that God loves me or cares for me--what does that do for me?”

To address that, we transition now as Jesus points out the reason for worry

-The Reason for worry: (verses 27-29), (34)

Often our worry comes from mixed motivations. We like having control over situations. So we worry. Others of us are preoccupied with ourselves, we are very self centered. We worry because we are too busy thinking and worrying about “what about my money?” “what about my future?” “What about my circumstance that you could possibly not know about?” well, in the end--we often do make it about ourselves.

27-29 “And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

What do we gain from worrying, Jesus asks us rhetorically and a very good question at that--Is there anything done by worrying? These lilies, they neither toil nor spin, meaning they don’t go hour to hour worrying, being anxious, hoping and expecting the worst--They don’t even work! Their environment dictates their lives…And yet, they are beautiful and taken care of! They grow, they blossom--and here we are, worrying over every little detail of our lives...

Are we achieving anything, adding any seconds to our precious lives, by worrying about our situations? There are much more important things to be doing rather than worrying--There is God’s mission to be completed, there are souls to be saved, there is work to be done. And not as if by worrying we do anything to our health or our mental state that is actually helpful. Actually, it can be quite harmful.

Am I not more valuable than that bird or the flowers the Father takes care of? Are you not more valuable than an animal or a plant who God feeds? The reason why we worry, is because we either forget or don’t believe in this truth. We believe that God has forgotten about me, or think that We need to be in control over our lives, and somehow by us worrying about a circumstance/person, that somehow we can change that.

Every time we are faced with a temptation to worry, we face that question: “Do I trust that my Heavenly Father cares for me?” do you believe that? In a time where you are questioning or waiting, trust that God values you and deeply loves you more than you know. He doesn’t want your faith being choked up by the worries of this world.

And sometimes the worries choke us out more than the great assurance of promise Jesus gives in that our Heavenly Father will take care of us. We expect the worst, we worriers. Instead of praying about it or doing something about it, we get anxious. And if it’s out of our control, why do we worry? Do we not trust that God indeed is sovereign and has this situation under His control?

30-32 “But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘what shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.”

The examples of the lilies and the grass--would have been common to the audience. Jesus compares the flowers that God has made to King Solomon’s wealth and splendor. Look at the flowers up here on stage-Quite lovely, right? Clearly, it’s no contest in which is more beautiful. Solomon, even with his wealth and power, could not outmatch God’s beauty displayed in the simple lilies that they found in the majesty of the outdoors.

A simple point demonstrated powerfully in our lives. If we know that God, who made the oceans and the mountains, sustains all of nature and creation, in such majesty, certainly He has the power to keep and care for us, weak and broken people. Is it because we doubt God’s strength? Do we doubt God, who could do with us anything He chose? By showing the lilies and the sparrows out in the air, Jesus is showing that God the Father made all and owns all. So why do we worry? Why do we freak out when we know who the owner is?

Unlike the Gentiles, the non believers, we know who owns it all-and who made it all. Not just the lilies or the birds, but this Church-this body, all these cars and the land--all belongs to Him, and at anytime He can take it away. So if that’s the case, why do we worry like we don’t believe? Like we don’t know the Creator and Sustainer of it all?

We have so much to worry about because we have too much, in our materialistic driven complicated lives. Never in history have we had so much to worry about, from our bodies to the type of coffee we buy to the schools our children will go to the type of Netflix show we will binge watch to the kind of medications we need to relieve our anxieties. Jesus, when he was saying to not worry about food or drink or clothing, knew how our hearts would make idols of things and get too attached in our fast paced complicated lives.

Imagine this: a High school senior who desperately wants to get into that college of her dreams. She worries because she’s not sure if her essay; test scores and her letter of recommendation were enough to get into that college. Now, do you think she would still be worrying if she knew that the President of that College was none other than her own dad? No, she would say: “my dad--he’s got this. Why am I worrying?” Now with our Heavenly Father, although he rules over all, it doesn’t mean we will get anything we want, if we stop worrying about it. But He does have the power to do as He wills, and whether He delivers us or not from the circumstance, is out of our control. We pray for rescue, but also say “Your will be done, Lord, I trust in your care.”

And as you pray and wait, remember the Father who made you, gave you gifting and personality. The Father who gave you His own Son so that you might be freed from your shame and sin. so that you might cry out to Him in temptation and trials. The Father who values you more than any other creature: Remember that the Father cares for you, and will take care of you.

That should ease our burden. I hope that this week, as we wrestle with different topics of worry-over the relational conflict we might have, over the financial situation that stresses us, over the future that seems to be so uncertain, we put it in perspective--that the God who made all of the things we enjoy and stress out about, He cares about us deeply. And indeed we rest in His care. And we would put our trust in Him.

So let’s talk, now that we’ve covered the reality that we worry, and we’ve covered the reason for our worries, due to a lack of trust in our Father, let’s go to

-The Response to worry: (30-32)

“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all”

worry is forgetting that our Heavenly Father cares for us. Do we trust Him? That He is enough? Even if it doesn’t make sense? If God clothes the grass, despite its frailty and here today and gone tomorrow-should we not trust Him to take care of us even more? grass was expendable, and it still is compared to human life--grass which was here and alive, and then tomorrow it could be thrown into the oven for fire or for fuel or whatever purpose it served. But God clothes us and cares for us way more than for some grass, which has no intimate relationship with Him unlike we do.

Commanded again is for us to not be anxious, for even the Gentiles, or the rest of the world, the non believing world, do so often. Should not a Christian act differently? Should not our family of believers, who proclaim Christ, trust deeply in a God who cares? The world can fret, go about being anxious daily--But that’s because they trust in their own might and gifting rather than on the Father who knows over every circumstance. Our God knows our immediate needs, as well as our desires, pure and impure. He knows our worries, our concerns and prayers. As the old hymn says: “What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer--” So we trust in this God, who provides for our needs.

And now, what we should do instead: v 33-34: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Instead of worrying, we are called to seek first God’s kingdom.

Culture’s response to worry is to take pills, to seek some counseling, and leave it at that. Our culture says: go take a vacation, think happy thoughts.Don’t worry about a thing, cuz everything gonna be alright, the theologian Bob Marley said. seek hobbies to distract you, go do something or buy something nice for yourself. Treat yo self. But you know what? All these cultural solutions have one thing in common: It is all about me. My comforts.

The Gospel solution is much different: with the time you are wasting worrying about your worries and the details of this life, Jesus says proactively, go out and seek His kingdom. You were made with a purpose, a mission. Your Father put you on the earth to make disciples for Christ. You were put in your job, your school, to glorify God and to show others what a kingdom citizen looks like. You were given gifts, talents, and treasures not to worry about or hoard it, but to use to advance God’s kingdom on earth.

Seeking His kingdom by daily living for One purpose--to glorify Jesus Christ in all that you do. It doesn’t mean you have to be a pastor or an evangelist--You don’t have to go to Kenya or Iraq to seek His kingdom here--Seeking His kingdom mean that as a citizen of earth, you live out your dual citizenship as also as a citizen of heaven. Seeking the beauty of your family, as they know and proclaim Christ. Seeking the beauty of your workplace as you work with integrity and passion. Seeking the beauty of your city as by building relationships and help it thrive for God’s sake, not just for our sake.

I can’t tell you exactly how to seek His kingdom specifically for you,as you know your schedule and talents better. As we seek His kingdom, what happens/ Really, we don’t have time to worry. Our priorities change. Instead of worrying and living in fear of the future, we live for God--His kingdom, His will first. Our mission changes from “ self preservation” to “God’s glorification” and our sanctification. Our priority is God’s kingdom over our little idols and comforts. And yes, that doesn’t mean that it diminishes our problems--As it’s quite possible we still have fears and temptations and things to worry about, things that hurt us. And God doesn't minimize that either, but He does say that there is a priority--and we must know what comes first, even amidst our troubles. But He will supply all that we need.

Some have misinterpreted this passage as “if I seek God, then I will get a job.” “If I seek God’s kingdom, I’ll get a girlfriend.” “If I seek God’s kingdom, my health will return.” And some prosperity teachers might use this to trick us into thinking we can get an abundance of finances and things we desire. But that is not at all what Jesus means--He means as we go about doing our duty as kingdom citizens, all these things--of food, drink, and clothing--the necessities of life, of sustaining our bodies and souls, will be added to us.

He will sustain you, kingdom citizen. He will give you all that you need to live and thrive--so don’t worry! You do your job of being the best baker, engineer, teacher, doctor, missionary, pastor, wife, father, student, to God’s glory--and He will most definitely take care of all your basic needs. What more can we ask for?

And in closing, Jesus tells us once more--do not worry about tomorrow, as tomorrow has enough to worry about---He states “sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” We have enough going on, day to day. don’t worry about today, no need to worry about tomorrow either--The more you think ahead and start stressing out, the more distracted you will be from what you were made for--as kingdom advancers, as agents going out for His mission. So live for today, seeking His kingdom and goodness in all that you do.

Gospel Response/Christ Connection:

Perhaps you come here this morning and are worried--as you heard this sermon you questioned whether you know this Heavenly Father. you are worried because you really have nobody to trust besides yourself. For you, we encourage you as we worship and pray, to consider this Jesus that we keep talking about. Jesus Christ was a man, just like us--and in all that he did, he did not sin. And as a perfect man and as perfect God, He died on the cross for our sins--sins of worry and pride and selfishness. And he conquered the cross and death, as he lives in victory and reigns in heaven. We invite you to pray and trust this Savior, as we were made for something more than just worrying and surviving. There will be people up at the end of the service who can guide you, if God so leads you.

For others of you, it’s the reminder of the Gospel--you are this citizen of heaven, and yet it’s so hard since the worries of life choke us out. We need to hear that the Father, who sent the Son, is good and He cares so deeply for you. worrying made you hopeless or discouraged. you question if He can understand you right now. If that’s you, we also invite you to pray, casting your anxieties, for it says He does deeply love you, and will provide for you, even today. It might not be how we expect Him to act, but know that we are under the care of the Father, who is sustaining us daily. So let’s exercise our trust and cry out to Him in confession and thanksgiving.

Application: Practically speaking-- I challenge you...

-Go and write out the things you’re worrying about and pray in surrender and then throw it away, and then on the another sheet of paper write out how you will seek God’s kingdom today.

Following up to my story you’re probably curious how I ended up being here, appearing to be in one piece. Well, I prayed--and yes, I worried a lot, but God did take care of me. He used several people, including one of the youth to give me some transportation and a nice pastor to help me through the evening to give me shelter. Actually, I got some food and drink out of that deal, too. I’m not sure exactly how it happened, but I got a ride back to the gym the next day, as a last resort, to see if anything had happened. I called the police, and they weren’t able to do anything about it, and so all I could do was to go back and hope they had some news.

And by some miracle, by God’s providence, I kid you not-- Strange as it was, as I asked around, the gym manager came out with a black bag--with everything in tact--my wallet, my keys, my phone--everything I lost was given back to me. I lost no money, maybe 2 dollars worth in change and a laundry card. Crazy, right? Did God really take care of me? Was it a sheer coincidence?

What I learned from that lesson, besides bringing a lock to the gym, is that God indeed is worthy of all my trust. He provided for me shelter, food, and drink--I was only out on my feet for less than 24 hours, Then--He changed all my circumstances! He holds it all--And you know, He would still have been a good Father if I never got it back and if He withheld that blessing from me. But the fact that He did, I stand to testify that every time I am tempted to worry, I think about the times like that He has come through in goodness. And I confide in the Words to not worry but seek first His kingdom. Worrying did nothing but make me uneasy. I trust in the Word. I serve a good Father who takes care of all my needs--Even when I don’t deserve it. And as we keep walking, let’s be spending our time wisely--going and seeking His kingdom on this earth. Seeking His kingdom first. As our priority becomes His will first. let’s not forget that we have a Father who deeply cares and loves us, and worries we cast aside.

Pray: