



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.
Matthew 6:25-34

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English Standard Version

“Worry and the Kingdom”

The 18th Sermon in a series on the Gospel of Matthew entitled
“The King and His Kingdom!”

Matthew 6:25-34

*“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? 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? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ 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? ³¹ **Therefore do not be anxious**, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ **“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”***

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus. We ask You this morning to give us the grace to understand Your hard teaching here. It’s hard not simply because Jesus has the ability to say so much in so few words but it’s hard because our wills

aren't easily bent to obedience. We want to listen to our own hearts instead of Yours. We love to worry and we live in our anxieties, and Jesus doesn't want either in our lives. So help us to consider what it means to follow You and not ourselves. So by Your Spirit open this Gospel to us and help us to see Jesus, and, as always, for this we need Your grace. Give us the desire to learn from You this morning, in the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

INTRODUCTION: *Is God Dancing on Your Potato Chips?*¹

There's an old story that I've come across several times and I think I might have used before, but now I'm old so I can't remember. Anyway, I thought it fit the topic for today, so I decided to use it again. It was written by a homemaker, a woman who just "had it." Perhaps some of you can identify with this ...

She writes ... "Not too long ago I had "one of those days." I was feeling pressure from a writing deadline. I had company arriving in a couple days and the toilet was clogged. I went to the bank, and the trainee teller processing my deposit had to start over three times. I swung by the supermarket to pick up a few things and the lines were serpentine. By the time I got home, I was frazzled and sweaty and in a hurry to get something on the table for dinner.

Deciding on Campbell's Cream of Mushroom soup, I grabbed a can opener, cranked open the can, then remembered I had forgotten to buy milk at the store. Nix the soup idea. Setting the can aside, I went to plan B, which was leftover baked beans. I grabbed the Tupperware container from the fridge, popped the seal, took a look and groaned. My husband isn't a picky eater, but even HE won't eat baked beans that look like caterpillars.

Really frustrated now, I decided on a menu that promised to be as foolproof as it is nutrition-free: hot dogs and potato chips. Retrieving a brand new bag of chips from the cupboard, I grabbed the cellophane and gave a hearty pull. The bag didn't open. I tried again. Nothing happened. I took a breath, doubled my muscle, and gave the bag a hearty wrestle. With a loud pop, the cellophane suddenly gave way, ripping wide from top to bottom. Chips flew sky high. I was left holding the bag, and it was empty.

It was the final straw. I let out a blood-curdling scream. "I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!" My husband heard my unorthodox cry for help. Within minutes he was standing at the doorway to the kitchen, where he surveyed the damage: an opened can of soup, melting groceries, moldy baked beans, and one quivering wife standing ankle deep in potato chips.

My husband did the most helpful thing he could think of at the moment. He took a flying leap, landing flat-footed in the pile of chips. And then he began to stomp and dance and twirl, grinding those chips into my linoleum in the process!

I stared. I fumed. Pretty soon I was working to stifle a smile. Eventually I had to laugh. And finally I decided to join him. I, too, took a leap onto the chips. And then I danced. Now I'll be the first to admit that my husband's response wasn't the one I was looking for. But the truth is, it was exactly what I needed. I didn't need a cleanup crew as much as I needed an attitude adjustment, and the laughter from that rather funky moment provided just that.

So now I have a question for you, and it's simply this: Has God ever stomped on your chips? I know that, in my life, there have been plenty of times when I've gotten myself into frustrating situations and I've cried out for help, all the while hoping God would show up with a

¹ The Introduction is taken from an old story that I have found in several books and numerous online sources, all listing different dates and authors. So I'm listing it as "author unknown." Though it reminds me of the book, *Help! I'm Being Intimidated by the Proverbs 31 Woman!* by Nancy Kennedy.

celestial broom and clean up the mess. What often happens instead is that God dances on my chips, answering my prayer in a completely different manner than I had expected, but in the manner that is best for me after all. Sometimes I can see right away that God's response was the best one after all. Sometimes I have to wait weeks or months before I begin to understand how and why God answered a particular prayer the way He did. There are even some situations that, years later, I'm still trying to understand. I figure God will fill me in sooner or later, either this side of Heaven or beyond.

Do I trust Him? Even when He's answering my prayers in a way that is completely different from my expectations? Even when He's dancing and stomping instead of sweeping and mopping? Can I embrace what He's offering? Can I let His joy adjust my attitude? Am I going to stand on the sidelines and sulk, or am I willing to learn the steps of the dance He's dancin' with my needs in mind?

I'll be honest with you: Sometimes I sulk. Sometimes I dance.

I'm working on doing more of the latter than the former. I guess the older I get the more I realize that He really does know what He's doing. He loves me and I can trust Him. Even when the chips are down.”

I love that story! And I especially love it today because we live in a world of **worry** today. Our society, our culture, is constantly **marketing worry!** However, our individual lives are filled with **worry** and **anxiety** as well. Everyone here **worries** about something. Everyone here has to face **anxiety** in one form or another, in one way or another. It's **common** to life.

We're back in Matthew 6 and we're looking at the Sermon on the Mount, and today we come to Jesus' command **NOT** to be anxious. Three times He says, “... **do not be anxious** ...” Quick question? How does anybody have the **audacity** to command us **NOT** to be anxious? Who **wants** to be anxious? Nobody gets up in the morning and says, “I'm going to be really anxious today. I can't wait.”

It's not a very voluntary thing. So why would Jesus command us? If we look carefully, we'll see that He's not commanding us in a military kind of way. Jesus **isn't** coming to us and saying, “Buck up. What are you being anxious for? Cut it out. Stop it. Whistle a happy tune.” He doesn't do anything like that.

I would do that! I'm quick to say, “Suck it up! Be tough! Deal with it! Get over it! Life is tough and then you die!” For years, our family motto was, “Get up, you're fine!” And that's because I'm a jerk ... **but Jesus isn't.**

Instead, if you look carefully, you'll see that Jesus gets underneath and He **explains** to us the why and He **reasons** with us. There's a sense in which He does surgery. He says, “Anxiety is wrong and if you sit still and let me do my surgery in you ... If you listen to my instructions, I can get it out of you. I can remove it.”

So there is an obedience issue here, but at the same time, there's definitely a sense that Jesus says, “I'm going to show you how to get underneath the surface and how you can let me get underneath the surface and deal with anxiety.” Three times Jesus says, “... **do not be anxious.**” But first we have to ask ...

1. *What Is Anxiety?*²

Good question. It's actually easier to describe than to define. TIME magazine not too

2 The Exposition of the text is largely adapted from the Sermon, “Seeking the Kingdom” by Dr. Tim Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, 6/3/90, sermons.redeemer.com; Logos Bible Software 4: *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive*.

long ago said it's the most prevailing quality of our modern culture. They've had a cover story on this issue each of the last three years; and if you go back through the history of *TIME magazine*, they've had over 5,000 articles dealing with worry, anxiety, and stress. I think the reason for that sort of constant focus is that **anxiety** is more than a psychological thing. It has psychological, physical, and a philosophical aspects to it. Psychologically, anxiety, of course, can be focused on a specific danger, but **anxiety** can be a debilitating general condition that's not really focused on any particular cause.

The best way to describe it ... it's like having the constant bass line from *Jaws* running through your life? You're looking around for the fin. You're sure **something's** going wrong. It's called **neurotic**. It's a frightening thing. It really can characterize our whole life psychologically, but more than that, **anxiety** also has a physical aspect. Physically, **anxiety** is called **stress**. We know this.

We know that our bodies have an autonomic nervous system so that when there's a danger, our bodies can suddenly get triggered, that our system gets triggered by the **anxiety**, by the **danger**. We begin to pump adrenaline and begin to pump in all kinds of other things that get us ready for what's called 'fight or flight.' We're ready for dramatic, drastic action. So when danger appears, our body has a way of getting itself ready to do something.

But if you find that you're **constantly** living with stress, that every day, day in and day out you're constantly living with **perceived** dangers, **financial** dangers, **professional** dangers, and **relationship** dangers, you find that your body is always in that condition ... Your body's not supposed to be like that. The system's not supposed to be going off every day. Eventually, you literally burn up. You burn out. Ulcers, hypertension, and high blood pressure are the result.

Anxiety even has a philosophical aspect. The German existential philosophers talked about *angst*, but they also talked about ... *geworfenheit* ... that's a great word ... *geworfenheit* ... roughly, it means "thrown-ness," a feeling of being **thrown** into the world, unprepared, unready, with no rhyme or reason to things. I read an article last December, about a little girl in Southeast DC, sitting at a table on Christmas Eve, and having a stray bullet tearing through the ceiling, up through the floor, tearing right into the room, hitting her in the head and killing her right at the table ... on Christmas Eve.

And when you read stories like that, and when you start looking for them, after all they're in *The Washington Post* nearly every day. You begin to feel that **anxiety** that's more philosophical than psychological, the sense that there is no rhyme or reason to things. It can be so prevailing. Anxiety can and does infect **every part of our lives** — mind, will, and emotion. But what is it?

I think when Jesus says, "... **do not worry about tomorrow** ..." at the very end of the passage, He's summing up everything else He said. Worry is concern about the **potential not the actual**. Worry is concern about that which we **can't control**. The essence of **anxiety** is the desire to **control** that which we **can't control**. That's why we're anxious. We feel the need for control in an area where there's no possibility of control. That causes anxiety. Now that's what it is. Anxiety is **the will to control the uncontrollable**.

But defining it merely leads us to the next question, which is ...

2. If That's What It Is, Where Does It Come From?

The Bible, as usual, gives us far and away the most coherent answer. Jesus Christ, if you look carefully you'll see in a very general way He's saying the source of anxiety ... is the human will **to exercise power**. The fact is ... we want the power that God has and anxiety comes from

that. He says, for example, in verse 27, “*And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?*” But that’s the point. We want to add. We want the power God has.

Jesus is saying, isn’t life more than food and drink? Verse 27 again, “*And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?*” What He’s saying is essentially this, “Listen. Who’s been keeping your life going all these years anyway? What are you worried about it for now?” Put it this way. He says, when the doctor comes in with bad news, when the boss comes in with bad news, suddenly we get anxious because we feel like we’re out of control. But it’s the **threat** that reveals the **illusion** that we’ve been living on all these years. And the **illusion** is that we felt up to now **that we were in control**. We’re getting anxious because we feel like we’re getting **out** of control. That’s not true. The **threat** is revealing your true condition. You’ve **always** been out of control. You’ve **always** been vulnerable. You’ve **never** been keeping your life going.

You see, danger or threat, which triggers anxiety ... The anxiety is essentially showing us **not** a new, precarious condition, but at the deepest level ... it’s showing us what we knew all along: **We’ve never been in charge**. We’re **not** in control. Jesus says that we’re anxious because we **disbelieve** and **dislike** the fact that we’re totally **dependent** on the supporting power of God. We don’t like it and we’re afraid of it, and that’s what anxiety is.

Biblically though, there’s a wonderful truth underneath all this. Pascal, the Christian philosopher, has a very interesting statement. The great thing about Christianity is even when it’s telling you what’s wrong with you; it tells it to you in **such a positive way**, because it shows you where it’s from. Pascal puts it like this. He says, “*The greatness of man is so evident, that it is even proved by his wretchedness. [...] For who is unhappy at not being a king, except a deposed king?*” Do you understand what he’s saying? The Bible says the reason we’re anxious is because we need to be in control. But the reason we want to be in control is because we were made, originally, to be kings and queens on earth.

The Bible tells us that we were built to be stewards. Now a steward was the number one slave in a great mansion. The steward was the slave with authority. A steward was a slave toward the master, but toward everyone else, he was a king. When a steward is a slave toward his master, dependent, loving, obedient, he grows in his authority. That’s the kind of king we were built to be.

The Bible tells us though, in the book of Genesis, that we didn’t like being in charge of everything **except God**. We wanted to be in charge **of everything**. We wanted to be our own masters, and trying to become **more than human**, we became less. Trying to become more than ourselves, we became less than ourselves. Today, how do we respond to this need for control which comes from the fact that **we were built** to be kings, the fact that **we were built** for glory?

We respond now the way we responded then. We’re no different than Adam and Eve. We respond now the way we responded then. We try to get **more power** and **more control**, and the more we try to get power and control and be our own masters, the less powerful we feel.

We’re **insecure** because we want power. The **more** we want power, the **more** we seek to control our lives, the **more** we **resent** the fact that God is actually in control of our lives, and so, the more **insecure** we get. Anxiety comes from that will to exercise power, and that’s why the great reformer Martin Luther looked at his friend Philipp Melancthon one day, who was worried, full of anxiety about how things were going and instead of Luther saying, “Buck up,” he did surgery.

He went underneath and said to Philipp, “Let Philipp cease to rule the world. You know

why you're anxious, Philipp? You want to be in charge. You're trying to be in charge. Let Philipp cease to rule the world."

We feel that we **have** to assert ourselves. Anxiety comes when we try. What's anxiety? **The need for control of the uncontrollable.** Where does it come from? Our basic essential nature as kings and queens, which we are trying to express by being masters of our own lives **When We're Not.**

So, that leads to the third question of the morning, which is ...

3. What Do We Do About It?

You say, "Dave, This is all very interesting. But, in fact, it's making me feel even more anxious, so what do I do?" Again, Jesus would never just say, "Buck up!" He tells you what to do. Essentially in this passage He says if you're full of **anxiety** (psychological, physical, philosophical, whatever), there are **two things** you're doing wrong and therefore, if you want to remove the anxiety from your life, there are **two things** you have to do right.

The two things you're doing wrong are **Wrong Thinking** and **Wrong Priorities.** Here's what we mean. First ... **Wrong Thinking.** Again and again Jesus says, verse 26, "**Look at the birds of the air,**" verse 28, "**Consider the lilies of the field.**" The word that's used there is a word that means **ponder** and **think.**

Jesus says if you're anxious, **you're not thinking.** He says **do not be anxious** but **consider** this, **consider** that. Listen. Before I move on, do you see how critical that is? What do you think faith is? Do you think faith is an **absence** of thinking? Do you think faith is just closing your eyes and jumping off? Do you think faith says, "Well, it doesn't make any sense but it doesn't matter. That's where faith comes in?" **Is that how Jesus talks? No, not at all.**

Jesus says faith **begins** with thinking. He says it's **anxiety** that's the **absence** of thinking; anxiety, fear, and distress. You see, when you're sitting and listening to your heart run off at the mouth, **that's** what makes you scared. When your heart starts to ramble, it just starts to react to situations ... See, it runs at the mouth the way you do and I do if you don't think before you speak. So you're lying in bed and your heart is just saying, "Oh, how bad it's going to be," and "Oh, how awful it's going to be," and "What am I going to do about this?"

You're **listening** to your heart instead of **talking** to your heart. Listening to your heart is what Jesus says brings the anxiety. Instead, you stop and use your mind to talk to your heart and say, "Wait! Look at the facts. Consider this. Consider that." You argue. You talk.

What do you think faith is? Friends, faith is not passing peaceful thoughts through your mind nor is faith turning your mind off. Faith is a position of **confidence** toward the world **based** on what **God has said in His Word.**

If you don't believe God has spoken in His Word, then there's absolutely no way to deal with anxiety, period. I defy anybody to tell me there's another way. But if you understand that He spoke, and then you take it, and use it to argue with yourself, Jesus gives you two arguments. The first argument is (Jesus says), go to the Word and see that God is in charge. The first argument is this, verse 26, "**Look at the birds of the air**" argument. The second argument is, verse 28, the "**Consider the lilies of the field**" argument.

Do you know how to use these two? I don't want anybody to leave here without knowing how. The first argument is a **Providence of God** argument and the second one is a **Love of God** argument. The first argument, Jesus says, is "**Consider the birds. God is in charge of them. God gives them what they need. You don't have the power to add even one minute to your life.**" He's saying, "God has all the power. God's in charge. God's sovereign. God is a God of

providence.” Do you know how to use that on your heart?

To the average American, Providence is the capital of Rhode Island; but the word ***providence***, from which the namers of the capital of Rhode Island got it, comes from ***provide*** ... provide-ence. The doctrine of the **providence of God** is that everything that **happens** to you is part of God’s plan, that everything you **have** is part of God’s provision. **Ephesians 1:11** says *“In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.”* And **Romans 8:28** says, *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”*

Jesus says there is absolutely no way, no way that you could possibly deal with anxiety unless you believe that. Well, somebody says, “That doesn’t make me feel better. I feel then like I’m a puppet. I feel like everything is pre-determined. It doesn’t matter what I do.” If you jump to that conclusion, you have moved away from the biblical doctrine of providence to a pagan notion of fate. They’re not the same thing.

Let me give you two great examples of this in the Bible. First, let’s look at **Acts 2:23**, here Peter is talking to the people of Jerusalem and he says Christ was *“... delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”* Did you hear that? When Jesus Christ died, wasn’t that death foreordained? Wasn’t it planned? It says he was *“... delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God ...”* and yet, even though you were destined to kill Him, even though it was purposed that you kill Him, it was still wicked when you killed Him.

What God is saying here, what Peter is saying, is fairly easy to see, in a sense. He is saying the wickedness of your heart you’re responsible for. Your choices you are responsible for. You see? God doesn’t make you wicked, but on the other hand, God works His perfect plan through those choices.

That’s why Joseph could talk to his brothers who sold him into slavery. He went down into Egypt and he was almost put to death, but then he eventually became a powerful man and later on he was able to save his family from famine. He looks at his brothers and he says, **Genesis 50:20**, *“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”* What does that mean? Joseph said, “God led you to sell me into slavery. It was part of His plan. It looked terrible. It looked awful. But it was part of His plan and He intended it for good.”

Does that mean, “Therefore, brothers you didn’t do anything wrong; you couldn’t help yourself. It was fated.” Of course not. Joseph didn’t mean that and the brothers knew he didn’t mean that. The brothers wept. They repented. Because, you see, they were responsible for their choice and yet, God infallibly worked His counsel out. Jesus says, “Until you understand that, until you believe that, it’s impossible for you to deal with anxiety.” Absolutely.

That’s the reason why there’s a certain sense in which we can say, in **Romans 8:28**, *“... all things work together for good to them that love God ...”* Do you know what that means? Do you see? It actually says there is a certain sense in which, when you finally give yourself over to God and say, “I trust you,” you begin to realize that everything that’s happening, **everything that’s happening**, is happening for your good. Everything is happening for your good.

The minute you finally say, “I am not going to be in the center of the universe anymore. I am not going to demand the explanation for everything anymore. I’m not going to only try and

stay in control of my life. Then, and only then, am I going to be willing to say, “Lord, you know what’s best.”

In Philippians it says, **Philippians 4:6**, “*do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*” That means when you ask God for something, thank Him ahead of time for whatever He sends.

Well how can you do that? It means having the **conviction** that God would not give you anything **that’s wrong or that’s bad** ... even if it seems wrong, or bad, or hard, or difficult. You know, when I was a little kid my parents were always ruining my life. They were always saying, “Stop swallowing those rocks. Don’t stick that fork into that electrical outlet.” You know, these people didn’t know how to live. They were ruining my life. I wasn’t able to understand until I got older and I realized they were **saving** my life every day.

Some people say, “If I really trust God like that or if I give myself to Him, He may start to tell me things that I don’t want to do. He may start to give me things that I don’t want to have. He may start to command me to do things I don’t want to obey.” **Of course** He’ll tell you things you don’t want to do. What’s the use of having a King if you’re wise and smart enough to do it yourself? But you have a King, and a King is there because you’re not wise and smart enough to know how to control your own life. Abraham didn’t want to give up Isaac. Moses didn’t want to go to Pharaoh. Jesus didn’t want to go to the cross, but His will is wise, and right, and good, and the people who submit to it will spend the next billion years thanking Him that He had it, that He gave it to them. In the words of C.S. Lewis, “Of course He’s not safe. Who said anything about him being safe? But he’s good. He’s the king, I tell you.”

The other thing that you have to do is use *the lilies of the field* argument. The *lilies of the field* argument is different. The other argument, *the birds of the air*, the *Providence of God* argument, is to say, “He’s in control. Who else could I trust but Him?” But this argument is the *Love of God* argument. Jesus says, verse 32, “*your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.*” Your Father knows what you need. That’s where you start to argue God’s love into the heart. It goes like this. You say, “Listen, heart. You know that He loves you more than you imagine. You know that He knows all the hairs on your head and how many tears have come down your cheeks. You know that. You know that if He didn’t spare His own Son, how is He going to fail to give us anything else that we need?”

You argue with yourself and you begin to realize **anxiety** is essentially a daily Facebook message to God saying, “I don’t think you have my best interests in mind.” That’s what **anxiety** is. **Anxiety** is essentially saying, “Father, you emptied heaven of your greatest treasure and you sacrificed your Son voluntarily for me **and I’m not sure you know how to arrange my week.**” When you realize what you’re saying, you begin to realize **how much** you’re offending His abounding love and amazing grace.

There’s no way you would possibly put up with somebody ... You wouldn’t put up with a kid, you wouldn’t put up with a friend, who continually trampled on your love the way you trample on God’s love. And so you argue with your heart, “He’s my Father. He loves me. He knows what I need.”

The second thing is **Wrong Priorities**. First thing, **Wrong Thinking**; second thing, **Wrong Priorities**. The wrong priorities are pretty simple, because Jesus gives us the right priorities in verse 33, “*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*”

Do you know what that means? Do you remember Martha and Mary? Jesus came to their house and Martha ran around and literally, it says she was **anxious** doing many, many things. It uses the same word for **anxious** that Jesus uses here in **Matthew 6**. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and Jesus comes to Martha and says, **Luke 10:41-42**, "*Martha, Martha, you are **anxious** and troubled about many things,⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.*" He's saying, "Martha, sit down and focus on Me."

What Jesus is saying is **worry** is a result of having the **wrong** priorities. If Jesus is in the center of your life, there will be no anxiety. If your profession, if your relationship, if your material comfort, if money, if anything else is in the center ... If anything else is more important than Christ, you're going to be torn up with **anxiety**. Your fears are like the breadcrumbs. Follow them and you'll find the house of the witch. Or in this case, the root of your anxiety.

Your anxieties come from that lack of having things in the proper place. Jesus is bluntly asking you to put Him first. "***Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.***" That means your prayer life. It means your fellowship with other Christians. It means your mission and ministry. It means your growth in grace. If that comes first, Jesus says, I can guarantee you your other concerns will go because you'll be able to think more about me and trust me.

Queen Elizabeth (not the second Queen Elizabeth, the first Queen Elizabeth) once told a man that she wanted him to go on a voyage to the New World because she needed his skills on this voyage to make it a success. The man looked at her and said, "Hey, I'm a small businessman and my business has been floundering. If I go on it, I'm sure it's going to sink." She looked at him. She says, "My dear friend, you mind my business and I'll mind your business."

Immediately, all the fear left him because here's Queen Elizabeth, a monarch of absolute power and wealth. "If I mind her business she will mind my business. What a great deal!" "***Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.***" It's the same deal. **Right** thinking, **right** priorities. **Wrong** thinking, **wrong** priorities.

Listen; there are two kinds of people here today. There are some of you who have certainly believed in Jesus Christ, and have received him as Savior. It's one thing to put faith in Him and enter the kingdom. It's another thing to walk by faith.

Tim Keller tells the story of talking to a guy some years ago and he was counseling this man. He said, "Do you trust in Jesus Christ to save you? Do you believe your sins are covered? Do you believe in that?" The man says, "Yes, yes. I certainly believe in that. I certainly trust Him." Then Tim said, "Do you trust Him enough to obey what He says in His Word about not marrying someone who's not a believer? Do you trust Him enough to obey what He says and to wait for a spiritually mature person to marry?" Silence. Because, you see, it's one thing to believe **in** Him; it's another thing to believe Him.

It's one thing to believe **in** God. Lots of you believe **in** God, but do you believe God? Jesus is saying, "Trust Me. Not just believe in Me, trust Me. Listen to what I say. Obey Me." "***Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.***"

There are some of you that possibly are here saying, "You know, I know I've never really put my faith in Christ the way you're saying. I've never received Him as Savior. I've never put Him in the center."

Some of you are saying, "I would like to, but I've never been able to believe. I wish I

could believe but I've never been able to believe." Listen. There are only **two doctrines** on which to base your life. **Only two.** Either **you** are competent to run your own life **or God is.** Your problem when you say, "I can't believe ..." It's not really fair to put it that way. Your real problem is **you refuse to doubt yourself.** You think **you're** competent to run your own life.

You're afraid to give your life to Christ. You think you're competent to run your own life. That is an act of absolute blind faith. There's no evidence for it, and you know it. It's a leap against the evidence. You refuse to doubt yourself. That's why you can't believe. Don't tell me that you can't believe in God. What you mean is, "I refuse to doubt myself, even though I have every bit of evidence." I don't care how successful you are. Even the most successful people are making a total mess of some part of their lives.

Come to Him. Jesus Christ knew what it was to trust God. In the wilderness, the Devil came and said, "*Turn these stones into bread.*" He didn't do it. Why? He continued to depend on God. He wouldn't take matters into His own hands. He wouldn't decide to disobey God and get in control. Because He was faithful, He died as our substitute and He took the punishment that we deserve for our will to exercise power and maintain control.

Believe Him. God is in charge. God is sovereign. God is a God of **providence.** "*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?*" Trust Him. Not just believe in Him, trust Him. Trust Christ. Listen to what He says. Obey Him. God is a God of **love.** "*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.³⁰ 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?*"

That means today you can go to Him and know if you believe not just **in Him but believe Him,** He's your substitute. Your sins are wiped away and you put yourself in the hands of a Father who knows what you need.

Proverbs 18:10 reminds us that "*The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.*"

And those who are safe **are not anxious.**

Think about that ... You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

Our Lord and our God, thank You that You have given us a King. Thank You that this King loves us and cares for us. Open our eyes that we might see our sin and all the ways in which we trust ourselves instead of You. Help us to see how we put ourselves first and how we try to exercise power and keep control. Help us to see how we allow anxiety to push out faith and worry to keep us from trust. We, indeed, are the people of little faith. Grant us greater faith to trust Christ and believe Him from this day forward. And as always, help us to know and believe that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Amen.

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Psalm 28:6-7

*“Blessed be the Lord! For He has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; **in Him my heart trusts, and I am helped**; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to Him.”*