

[00:00:07.730]

The congregation will please respond with the words and bold letters for the director of music. A Psalm of David praise awaits you are God and Zion. Do you our vows will be fulfilled. You who answer prayer to you. All people will come when we were overwhelmed by sin. You forgave our transgressions. Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts. We are filled with the good things of your house of your Holy temple. The whole Earth is filled with awe at your wonders, where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.

[00:00:55.290]

You care for the land and water it you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain. For so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges. You soften it with showers and bless its crops. You Crown the year with your bounty and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the wilderness, overflow the Hills are closed with gladness. The Meadows are covered with flocks, and the valleys are mantled with grain. They shout for joy and sing glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end.

[00:01:47.550]

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel. A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 6:25 to 33. Therefore, 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 clothes. Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or store away in barns. And yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they can any one of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your life.

[00:02:33.410]

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow? They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon, in all his splendor, was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire. Will he not much more clothes you you of little faith. So did not worry saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear for the pagans run after all these things.

[00:03:05.780]

And your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. But first seek his Kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. The word of the Lord.

[00:03:28.050]

Kids, come on up here. Stand right around here. Yeah, in front of that basket. Now, does anybody know what this is? Looks like a Horn. Yeah. A Horn of plenty. Yeah, that's right. It's also called a cornucopia. Do you know what cornucopia means? Me neither. But what I do know is it's supposed to signify God's abundance. God's plenty. All the gifts that God gives us, and typically cornucopias are filled with food. Everybody grabbed something. He looks like kind of a little kind here's one too. You have to fill that up.

[00:04:32.610]

And as you're filling it, well, reach in there and grab something. Let some other kids that are behind you get in. Okay. If you've already put stuff in, let some kids do have it yet, then we can put some on the table, too. Right here.

[00:04:50.310]

I think there's the water in here.

[00:04:52.220]

Wow. It's overflowing. Let's get all of the vegetables up here. Everything we can. All right. Just a few more to come on up here. Hey, are they full? You know what? God wants to make our lives full. Full of all the good things that he wants. Blessings and teachings and how he helps us and all that. And we're about to have Thanksgiving on Thursday, right?

[00:05:32.800]

Yeah.

[00:05:33.380]

And that's where we what do we do? We give thanks to God for all his good gifts. So this is just a picture of how good God is. Does that sound good to you?

[00:05:46.580]

Yeah.

[00:05:47.130]

All right. I'm going to pray for you. Actually. Do one of you want to pray? Yeah. Come on. Come on. You want to pray, too? Come on up here. All right. Just say a quick prayer for your kids. A lifetime.

[00:06:02.990]

I hope we have a great time. And I hope that.

[00:06:09.150]

Yeah, that's good.

[00:06:13.580]

I hope that everybody has a good time and has lots of fun.

[00:06:17.750]

Yeah.

[00:06:19.710]

I hope everybody has a good time and be healthy and doesn't be sick.

[00:06:29.070]

All right. You guys can go to kids a lifetime now. We pray all those prayers in Jesus name. Yeah. That's what it's all about. Let me pray for you all now, too. Father. We are your children. And we stand in all and amazed at your abundance and your provision. And we know Lord, we don't always see it well, but we believe it. We ask that you would help us to believe it more. And now, through the preaching of your word, let your Grace and your mercy, your love overflow in Jesus name.

[00:07:21.240]

Amen. So I have a box over here. If you can see it, it's labeled today. Can you all see that? It's labeled today. That box is delivered to my house every day. Every morning, I open up the door. And there's that box called today. And inside of it are all kinds of things. Blessings, promises, things I'm looking forward to doing. But typically, inside of it, there's also problems, issues, things that need to be resolved, people that need to be talked to, misunderstandings that need to be corrected.

[00:08:09.650]

Apologies that might need to be made. There are tasks to be done, accomplishments. There's money to be earned. All these things show up in that box label today. And if you're like me, sometimes you wake up around 04:00 in the morning and you're thinking about that box. I wonder what's going to be in it today and you get the box and as you open it and start dealing with the things of today, if you're like me, sometimes you're starting to think about tomorrow's box. Or maybe you're even thinking about the box that's coming on Thursday or the box that's coming next week.

[00:09:00.220]

Or I wonder how many boxes are going to come this month. And are they going to be big and full? And can I deal with them? I know there's that thing I ordered. I think that's coming in about two weeks. If you're like me, that's the way it goes. But Jesus comes among us. And he says, this, do not worry about tomorrow. For tomorrow. We'll worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Do you believe that each day has enough trouble of its own?

[00:09:40.540]

Don't worry about tomorrow. But what do we do? We worry about tomorrow, like in our hearts tend to wonder, is Jesus really being? Is he really being realistic? So when Jesus says, don't worry about tomorrow, we tend to say, yes, Lord. Yes, you're right. But I lost my job. But my paycheck isn't coming or isn't cutting it? Yes, Lord. But my daughter is sick and has health problems and my child is failing in school. Yes, Lord. But my kids are worried if they're going to make the team or not.

[00:10:31.620]

And I'm worried about it too. Or yes, Lord, have you seen the economy? What if that hard office conversation I need to have goes poorly? Lord, I need to worry about that, don't I? And then there's single people who are worrying about what if I never get married? What if I marry the wrong person or getting the wrong job or picked the wrong school or moved to the wrong city? Older couples worry about their grown up kids. Younger couples worry about their teenage kids and worry about their infants.

[00:11:13.070]

There's a lot to worry about, isn't there? Here comes Jesus telling us, don't worry. Is he being realistic? Well, Jesus is being kind. That's what he's being. He knows that worry is a really powerful force. And it's one that preys upon Christians all the time. It's why Jesus said, look, there are some people who are like, they're like seed that falls among the thorns. They grow up. But those thorns grow up and choke out their fruitfulness. That's like people and Christians who are choked out by the cares of this life.

[00:11:59.330]

Do you ever like that? I sure am. There are times when I can't see the fruit and the goodness of God because of the worries. But here's the good news of the gospel. Jesus said, I've come that you might have life and have it to the full. Jesus wants to set us free from our anxieties and free from those things that weigh us down and those things that choke out our ability to see God's goodness in the world. Is he being unrealistic or is he being radical?

[00:12:39.050]

I had an amazing experience of this when I was in College. Some of you have heard me tell this story before, but it's one that I think profoundly shaped who I am as a believer. I was a believer for just a short time. It was my sophomore year at Carnegie Mellon, in the acting Department. And in the acting Department, they accept about 50 people into the program each year. And sophomore year is the crucial year because they cut down that 50 down to a number of about 25, usually.

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And so everybody's sweating it. Some people don't make it through the whole sophomore year. They get caught in the middle of the year when we were getting through towards the end of the year, and I had a final scene I was working on with an acting partner. And my teacher, Angela, said to me, I just don't know if you're going to cut it, sweetheart. She'd seen our rehearsals and it was not going well. I was not able to grasp the essence of the scene, the character I was working on, and I became just despairing because I couldn't see it getting any better.

[00:13:56.210]

And I thought, I'm going to get cut from this program. And so I was walking along and I saw this Christian guy who had just gotten to know and he was like, hey, Patrick, what's up? And he could tell that I was just down as could be. And I told him what was going on. And he said, Why don't you read Matthew chapter six, verses 25 to 34, the very verses we just read this morning. So I went and I started reading them. And I was reading them over and over and over again.

[00:14:33.590]

And as I read them over and over again, that despair started to lift until finally I came to a place of praise to God. And I just said, all right, God, you know what's best for me. I choose to believe that, you know what's best for me. So if I get cut from this program, that's what's best for me only let me do

this, Lord, let me do my absolute best. So I know that if I get cut, it's not because of me. It's because that's what you want.

[00:15:09.410]

And I walked out from that prayer room and I felt such freedom and such peace. And Ironically, it totally freed me up as I was rehearsing to actually get it. And I finally kind of got what the scene was all about and what my character was all about. And when we put on the scene, you would put it on for the whole school, the sophomores and juniors and seniors, and they were all clapping and laughing and loving it. And when it was done, I knew that I had done my best.

[00:15:48.910]

My partner had done her best. And I went into the dressing room and got down on my knees and praised God. And I know some of my acting buddies thought I was nuts, but I was just praising God. And I said, whatever happens. Well, I ended up graduating from Carnegie Mellon, and that's okay. I was glad that that's what it was. But I would have been all right if it wasn't because that's God. Do you not worry? Jesus tells us it's not theoretical. It's real. There is a way to break through in life to a place of less and less anxiety and more and more trust and praise.

[00:16:35.340]

So that's what I want to do is look at that. Are you all hearing that? The music kind of the guitar ringing or something? If you can just turn that down, TJ that'd be great. But it's kind of cool. Every time I say something real out of here, it's ring. Yeah, you thought so. Well, the power of worry can be broken in us. But we got to hear Jesus. We've got to hear Jesus and Jesus in this passage first speaks to our minds. He says, this.

[00:17:14.950]

Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink or about your body. What you will wear. A series of questions now is not life more than food and the body more than clothes. We can all admit that. Yes, it is. It's more than that. Well, look at the birds of the air. Jesus says they do not sow or reap or store away in barns. And yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Jesus isn't telling us we shouldn't sow or reap or store away in barns.

[00:18:06.530]

That's what good farmers do. That's what people are taking care of their families do. But he's saying, once you've done all that you can do once you've done your best, don't worry, right. It is your father's delight to take care of you and to take care of tomorrow and to see that your family is fed and that you are fed. This is a promise even to poor people who don't know where their next meal is coming from. I've heard story after story after story of families raised in poverty, where they would gather together around the table, where there was no food, and they would give thanks for the food that God was going to bring.

[00:18:55.610]

And then Lo and behold, a knock would come on the door. People's experience all over the world has been like that over and over and over again. I'm not saying there's never hunger. I'm not saying there's never starvation. But I'm saying when you look over the scope of things in the world, it's God's habit to provide. So don't worry. Jesus says you are more valuable than birds. Father loves you. Can any one of you by worrying, add a single hour to your life? Not at all.

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We can add hours to our lives, though. Can't we? We certainly have. People are living longer than ever before because of modern medicine. We can pay attention to our fitness. We can eat rights, we can exercise. And by doing so, we actually do add days to our lives. But can you add it by worrying? No. If anything, worrying will detract from your life, worry will shorten your life. Worry won't add one lota of goodness to your life. That's what Jesus wants to get into our hearts.

[00:20:21.930]

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers or the field? They do not labor or spin yet? I

tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. We get to come out here, right? And worship in God's beauty, worship and creation. And we see the beauty of it. And Jesus says, if that is how God closes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you of little faith?

[00:20:55.350]

Will he not take care of you? Right? It's more than clothes that he's talking about. It's every provision. It's the words you're going to say in that hard conversation. It's his presence with you in your marriage or in your relationships. It's all of those things that God so generously provides. It's wisdom when we don't know which way to turn. And God who gives generously to all without finding fault. James says, We'll give it to you if you ask, that's what Jesus is getting out here, not much more clothing.

[00:21:35.980]

I love the story of a little English boy who is riding on a double Decker bus and he's going between the decks, sometimes sitting on the bottom, sometimes sitting at the top. And as he's doing so, the bus is emptying out at each stop. And finally it seems like there's nobody else on the bus except this little boy. And he comes down to the lower level and the bus driver says, Lad, aren't you worried that you're not going to know which stop to get off? Do you know which stop you're getting off?

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And he says, no. Well, aren't you worried about that? He said, no. He said, why not? Because my father is on the upper deck and he knows where the stop is. And I realized I was probably kind of an Irish accent there. But the Father knows he's on the upper deck. We can be as carefree in this life as a child bouncing between the upper and the lower, checking in with the father and coming down and watching the sights and talking to the bus driver and getting back up there.

[00:22:52.130]

The Father knows if that is how God takes care of the grass of the field and the birds of the air, will he not much more feed and clothe you of little faith? And remember, Jesus said, little faith is all we need, right? He got faith as small as a mustard seed. You say to this mountain be thrown into the sea. All you little faith is such a sweet thing that God says to us, like talking to these little children. It's enough. Just put that little faith in your great big father.

[00:23:40.050]

So do not worry, saying, what shall we eat or what shall we wear or what shall we drink for the pagans run after all these things. Now Jesus goes from speaking to the mind, speaking to our lips to what we say. He wants us to understand that what we say shapes and forms us. That what we speak not only comes out of the abundance of our hearts, but it also gets down into our hearts. If we start talking about all the things that we need to worry about, worry grows in our hearts.

[00:24:17.490]

But if we will speak the praises and the wonders and the Thanksgivings of God, that's what starts to bubble up in our hearts. A long time ago, a woman told me that she was giving up worry for Lent. And I said, That's good, that's good. And I asked her how it was going. And she said, It's been amazing. She said so often because I actually stated, I'm going to give up worry for Lent. It made me realize how often I was worrying and how often I was giving words to that worry.

[00:24:55.530]

And I would start to speak that worry out loud. And then I would remember, oh, I'm giving that up. So I would stop saying that. And I would start speaking confidence in God that God's got this God will supply. And she said, It's been amazing. Worry has diminished in my life over this season. See, Jesus speaks to our lips. Do not say, what shall we eat? What shall we drink? How am I going to deal with this problem? What's going on tomorrow? Oh, my gosh. I've got so much to do this week.

[00:25:31.330]

And that was me this week. I had so much to do this week and it was so hard not to give words to that. But then to take those words and just say, God, I've got so much to do this week. Can you help

me lay it all on you and trust you that you are going to come through, and that what is needed will get done. And he always does. He always does for the pagans run after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

[00:26:12.670]

But seek first His Kingdom and his righteousness. Now Jesus starts speaking to our hearts. Seek first His Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So what Jesus is saying is the most important thing. The central thing is the Kingdom of God. What is the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom. It's this reality that is yet to come, right? It's what Jesus is preparing for his people. It's heaven. But he calls for us to pray that His will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

[00:26:55.570]

And every time we do, the Kingdom breaks in. So where is it? The Kingdom breaks in. It breaks in today, like as we gather to worship, as we gather to eat, as we bless the little kids. The Kingdom breaks in in our marriages, in our families. When we honor and respect one another, when we listen to each other, we treat each other well. When we call out the best from one another, the Kingdom breaks in when you go to your job and you just do your job because work is a blessed thing.

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It's an ordained thing that God from the creation of the world, ordained for everybody, not just for pastors, for everybody, people who move trucks or garbage, people who build houses, people who teach lessons, people who, whatever the Kingdom breaks in when you in the power of the Holy Spirit, do those works seek first. The Kingdom. Jesus says in all you do and His righteousness, what is good and what is right and what is Holy, what is just as Paul said, if anything is admirable or lovely or excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.

[00:28:29.270]

Righteous things. Oh, Jesus says, and all these other things that are coming in that box today and that are coming in the boxes tomorrow, all these other things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow. Do you want to say that with me? Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow. For tomorrow, we'll worry about itself. Say that for tomorrow we'll worry about itself. Try doing that the next time you start worrying about tomorrow. Wait a minute. Tomorrow will worry about itself. And Jesus isn't saying we don't sow or reap or store away in barns.

[00:29:15.990]

We do. But don't worry about it once you do it. Don't worry, for each day has enough trouble of its own. So on Thursday we are going to have Thanksgiving, a day of abundance, probably a day of gluttony sometimes and overdoing it. But it's a day of abundance, and it's meant to remind us of just how good God is. That's what Jesus does in this part of the Sermon on the Mount. He's saying, Your God is a provider. So I just want to leave you with one simple, practical thing to do in terms of eliminating or reducing.

[00:30:09.350]

I don't want to say eliminate because I haven't right, but gradually reducing and replacing anxiety in your life with praise and Thanksgiving. That's what does it when you just simply begin to give thanks to God for all that you do have His blessings, you cannot number them. If you will begin to count them, I guarantee you anxiety and worry will reduce in your life and praise and honor and glory. And the Kingdom will increase in your hearts. And that's what God wants for His people. If your worry is of a clinical nature.

[00:31:04.710]

You may need medicine and there is no shame in that. Sometimes you need medicine. Then you need counseling and then you need to practice or practice this while you're doing all that. But for those of you who don't need medicine, just start practicing this. And no, this is God's medicine for you. Amen. Let's pray. Oh, Father, set us free in a world that is caught up in worry. Let your Church be as worry free as possible. Let it be evident in our lives. Let us enjoy it.

[00:31:49.880]

And let that enjoyment turn to praise even more. And let that praise and wonder and glory turn to bold witness of your provision in this life, of your goodness, of your love for everyone that we meet, that the world may know that you are the one who gives life. Lord, you and you alone in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.