

## Matthew 6:24-34

Trinity 15, September 8, 2024  
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***"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. <sup>25</sup> "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? <sup>26</sup> 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? <sup>27</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> 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? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. <sup>34</sup> "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.***

"No worries!" That's a phrase I seem to hear pretty often these days. "No worries!" If I let someone know that plans have changed, and I can't make it, they might reply, "No worries!" Or maybe someone holds the door open for me, and I say, "Thank you," and they say, "No worries!" It's sort of a flexible phrase, and it's used in so many situations that we're *constantly* being told not to worry.

But for a phrase that you hear so often, it's advice that we rarely actually listen to. Wouldn't it be great if we could actually *not* worry? If we never had to worry about making ends meet, or if we never had to worry and knew things would work out for the best, or if we never had to worry about our mistakes—that they could easily be erased. In our text for today, Jesus says that, depending on where you put your trust—that's exactly the kind of confidence you can have! The Lord's encouragement for you today, and our theme this morning is:

### **"No Worries!"**

- I. Trust in material things, and you've got a lot to worry about
- II. Trust in the Lord, and your worries are over!

I think just about everyone knows that worrying about things is a waste of time. If you're always fretting over every little problem, the stress will finally take its toll on you. And so, people are always reassuring you, "Don't worry about that, it will all work itself out." But that might not actually be true! If your trust is founded in the wrong place, you may indeed have good reason to worry!

In our text today, Jesus says, ***"No one can serve two masters . . . you cannot serve God and money."*** The word Jesus actually uses there is "mammon," and money isn't a *bad* translation of that word. But in truth, mammon includes a bit more than just money. It comes from an old Aramaic word that means "wealth" or "profit." Strictly speaking, your mammon is whatever you've got that's above and beyond the bare necessities of life. It could be a healthy savings account, real estate, a nice car, fancy clothes, a life insurance policy—all sorts of things. Consider everything that you have and just subtract every item that's essential to staying alive—whatever you have left is your mammon.

Now, there's nothing wrong with this sort of wealth in and of itself. If God has blessed you with more than you need, that's a reason to give thanks. But you have to be careful that you don't put your *trust* in that mammon. And that's what Jesus is speaking about when He says, ***“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”*** It's really very simple: your trust is going to go somewhere, and that will either be in God *or* in the things you possess. Your concerns about tomorrow will lead you to placing your trust in something: either in that nest egg that you've been saving up or in the promises of God. And ***if you trust in material things, then you've got a lot to worry about!***

For one thing, you never quite know how much mammon you'll need, do you? There's all sorts of IRA calculators online where you punch in your starting amount, your monthly contributions, your expected rate of return, and the number of years until you retire, and these calculators will tell you how much money you should have when you retire. And sure, it can look really reassuring. Let's say you punch in all the numbers and the calculator says that by the time you're 65 you'll have a million dollars saved up. Well, that might look pretty good today, but who can say what \$1,000,000 will be able to buy you in 30 years? It might not look like much at all by then. So how much mammon do you really need? Who can say for certain?

Besides that, Jesus says, ***“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”*** You might remember the Parable of the Rich Fool. Jesus told that story to show that material wealth is not the key to a happy future. That parable told about a successful farmer who built big barns to accommodate a bumper crop. And he saw all that mammon piled up and said to himself, ***“Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”*** With all his wealth, what could he possibly have to worry about? So, he was a guy who set his heart on that wealth, put all his trust in it. But then, when he least expected it, the Word of God destroyed his delusion: ***“Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?”*** (Luke 12:19-20)

You cannot serve God and mammon. ***If you trust in your material things, then you've got a lot to worry about.*** And ultimately, trusting in anything above God is just another form of idolatry. So, putting your confidence in mammon will bring you nothing but trouble in *this* life, and that's already bad enough. But such a misplaced trust will mean downright disaster on Judgment Day. On that Day, you and your material goods are going to part company forever, and then ***“whose will they be?”***

So, ***“No worries,”*** they say. And that's impossible, really—impossible *if* you put your trust in material things. But there *is* a sure-fire way to stop worrying. In our text, Jesus tells us, ***“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*** In other words, ***Trust in the Lord, and your worries are over!***

A few years ago, when we were shopping for an armchair, I remember seeing a lot of pieces of furniture that were advertised as “stain resistant.” We didn't go that route, although perhaps we should have. If it's stain resistant, it just means the upholstery has been treated with a special chemical so that liquids remain pooled up on the surface, easy to be wiped away. Without that special

chemical protecting the upholstery, any liquids would immediately get absorbed into the furniture and cause a permanent stain. Well, there's really only one difference between the anxious and stress-filled lives of the unbelievers who live around you and the worry-free life that God wants you to live. What's the difference? It's the protection that comes from trusting in God.

When Jesus tells you to ***“seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,”*** you know what He means. That righteousness is the protection that Jesus earned for us through His death on the cross. And you can think of it this way: none of your sins can produce a lasting stain, because Jesus has paid the price for them. One day, God will call you home—and hey, maybe even ***“this night your soul [will be] required of you”***—but you have absolutely nothing to worry about. Because of Jesus' atoning work as your substitute, your record is spotless. With His blood as your protection, no sin can stain you in God's eyes.

The Apostle John writes, ***“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*** (1 John 1:7) Please note that it says, ***“from ALL sin.”*** So many of us carry around the guilty memory of a particular sin that we've committed, and every time you're reminded of it, that guilt comes rushing back to trouble you once more. But Christ cleanses us from ALL sin! There is no sin that you've committed that God has not already covered with the precious blood of His Son Jesus.

In His love, God makes this promise to you in His Word, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*** (Romans 8:1) That's a promise from God. Nothing can change it, and God *never* goes back on His Word. The renowned Lutheran pastor C.F.W. Walther once said, “I can confidently meet God on the Last Day; and if He were preparing to condemn me, I could say to Him: ‘You cannot condemn me without making Yourself a liar. You have invited me to place my entire confidence in Your promise. I have done that, and therefore, I cannot be condemned!’” Now *that's* Christian confidence! And that's what it means to not worry!

But maybe you see a problem here. The problem *seems* to be that of course we've got nothing to worry about on Judgment Day because of Jesus, but we still have all sorts of worries in *this* life! “Am I going to stay healthy?” “Will I have enough money to pay the bills?” “Are we going to be able to get through this rough patch in our marriage?” “Am I raising my children correctly?” There's so many questions, so many things to worry about in the here and now. But Jesus says, ***“No Worries!” “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*** For the exact same reason we trust God for our forgiveness every day, we can also rely on Him to provide all the other things we need in life.

The Lord has a special interest, not just in Christians in general, but in each one of you in particular. Think for a moment—He allowed His only Son to bleed and die for you so you could have eternal salvation—don't you think you can trust Him to take care of the *other* needs of your life? And so, Jesus tells you to take a look around. Look at the wildflowers that pop up in the grass. Or take a look at our garden after church at all the zinnias that we didn't actually plant, yet sprung up voluntarily. They don't need to work. They don't receive paychecks. Yet, God clothes them with much more beauty than any of us can boast of.

Or, Jesus says, think about the birds of the air. They don't ever worry about planting or harvesting or whether their barns are big enough. They don't have emergency savings accounts or IRA's. And yet God *never fails* to feed them! And considering them, Jesus asks you, ***“Are you not of more value than they?”*** Or, in the words of the Apostle Paul, ***“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”*** (Romans 8:32) It's a question that really doesn't need an answer. For Jesus' sake, God will give you everything you need. It's simply a fact.

So, you don't have to worry about tomorrow. You don't have to worry about money, you don't have to worry about health, you don't have to worry about who the next pastor will be! These are things that you need, and for that reason they're the things you don't have to worry about. You're a Christian. And to be a Christian means ***“No Worries!”***, because our ***“Heavenly Father knows [all] that you need.”***

May God grant us such trusting confidence in Jesus' saving name. Amen.

***“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*** (Philippians 4:7) Amen.