

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity
13 September 2026
Matthew 6:24-34

Worry-Free Life

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—Amen

The text for this morning's sermon is the Gospel lesson appointed for today from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

In the Name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit—Amen

Don't worry. Don't be anxious. You've got nothing to worry about.

Don't worry about money. Jesus says, "No one can serve two masters, for 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."

Don't worry about money. It's okay to have it, even lots of it; just don't worry about it. The big danger with money, of course, is to make it into a false god, so that you love it more than God, trust it more than God, and fear losing it more than losing God. No one can serve two masters—it's either God or it's money. If God is your Master, then you'll understand that money is a gift from Him. It's a gift to be used in your various callings and in service to others, not to be hoarded for yourself. If God is your Master, then you'll use the money which He provides you to care for those in your household, to help your neighbor who is in need, to budget a noticeable portion as a church offering back to God for the further proclamation of the Gospel. Where you do make use of that money for things you want to have, you understand that those things are gifts from God, too. And if those things should happen to be lost or damaged, you know that is not proof that the Lord is out to get you—they were really only the Lord's things entrusted to your care for a while anyway.

On the other hand, if money is your master, you're going to be afraid to let it go. Slaves don't give away their masters, after all. You'll be willing to sacrifice things like family, good citizenship, and worship in order to acquire more money. You're willing to spend some—or a lot of it—on yourself, either because you keep it around in the form of something else of value, or because by spending it on yourself you're spending it on your other favorite god—you. But if expenses pile up and the savings account starts to erode, you're going to worry. You're going to worry because you think that it's the money taking care of you—that if it's lost, you're lost too.

Even if you're not particularly greedy or a money-worshiper, you're still going to worry when the medical expenses pop up or the job gets lost. But Jesus says, "Don't worry." In fact, He commands it. If you truly trust in God above all things, about what can you possibly have to worry?

Money buys things like clothes and food, so Jesus turns to those next: "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? 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?"

Don't be anxious about food and clothes, says Jesus. Don't worry. You have no reason to worry, because your heavenly Father will provide you with what you need. Jesus' examples should make us laugh at ourselves. Look at the birds of the air: when was the last time you saw them sowing, reaping, running a tractor, harvesting, or doing maintenance on a combine? Yet they don't starve. God feeds them, and not one of them falls to the ground without Him knowing. And here's the comfort: "Are you not of more value than they?" Of course you are! The God who takes care of the birds is your heavenly Father! He didn't send His Son to die for the birds of the air, but to die for you. If your heavenly Father has already paid such a price to make you His beloved

child, do you think He's going to start scrimping on the little things like daily bread, like clothes and food? Of course not. Don't worry.

"Likewise, consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." When was the last time you saw a lily working to earn its keep, bent over a loom or a spinning wheel? Never, of course. Lilies of the field just stand in the field for all of their beautiful, short life. And they have that beauty, and they have that life, because God makes it so, before they wither and die and are thrown into the fire at their end. Again, that same God is your heavenly Father, and He didn't send His Son to become a lily, to die for lilies and the grass of the field. He sent His son to become man, to be your Savior. Aren't you of much more value than they? If God takes care of lilies and the grass of the field, do you think He's going to stop taking care of you? Of course not. Don't worry.

Don't worry about life, either—like what's going to happen tomorrow, or next year, or when the kids are gone or when you're retired. Worrying, says Jesus, is pointless: "Which of you," He asks, "by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" Worrying does not help you add a single hour to your lifespan. If anything, it hurts your longevity, and fear can eat you up from the inside out. You're in the Lord's hands. You know that you're not going to live forever in this world—nor do you want to, because Christ has died to deliver you to a better world, to eternal life. It's fine—and wise—to plan for the future, of course, as long as you humbly subordinate your plan to whatever the Lord plans for you in His good and gracious will for you. No matter what happens—whether your plans for you play out, exceed your wildest dreams, or end miserably—you're in the Lord's hands. He's working all things for your good. You've got nothing to worry about.

"Therefore," says Jesus, "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 Gentiles—the unbelievers, the non-people of God—worry about these things, because they don’t believe they have a loving Father in heaven. Why act like them? You know better. You have a heavenly Father who knows that you need them all.

Don’t worry.

Don’t worry. God will provide you everything that you need for this body and life. You have no reason to worry. If you’re worried, it means that you doubt. You doubt God’s promises to provide. It means that there are idols which you’re trying to serve instead, or at the same time. Instead of saying, “Thy will be done,” worry says you’re praying, “Thy will be done, as long as...” Fill in the blank: “as long as I have a certain level of income.” “As long as we both live into our eighties.” “As long as my kids get through college.” “As long as I never suffer a long-term illness.” Worry means, at the very least, you’re praying “Thy will be done, as long as it agrees with my will.” Do you know what that means? It means that the threatening false god is you: you want God to bow to your will, not the other way around.

Worry accomplishes nothing and only feeds false gods. So stop worrying. That’s a command. Jesus tells you so. You’re supposed to obey God’s commands, so stop worrying. Now. Don’t worry anymore. Does that help? I’m guessing not. I can tell you all day not to worry, but it’s not going to stop you from worrying. You can tell yourself all day that you shouldn’t worry, but you’re going to worry anyway. That’s how the law works: it tells you what you should do, but it doesn’t give you any power to do it. In fact, now you’re going to worry about how you can’t stop worrying, so you’re only condemning yourself more.

To all of this, Jesus concludes by saying, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.” A lot of people will hear that as another command. They will tell you that you’ll stop worrying if only you work harder at following Jesus. If only you devote yourself, with all your heart, to pursuing His ways, then your worries will go

away. So don't worry: seek the kingdom of God first with all your heart. And if you can't do that...well then, you'd better be worried.

Ah, but such people miss the joy. "Seek first the kingdom" is not one more thing to add to your list of worries. Here is where you come upon the Gospel.

"Seek first the Kingdom of God." The kingdom of God has popped up in Matthew before. When John the Baptist preached in the wilderness, he proclaimed, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Why did he preach this—why was the kingdom of heaven at hand? Because the King was at hand: Jesus was present as the Savior. When Jesus began preaching, He declared, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It certainly was! The King Himself was there, preaching and performing miracles to show His power over disease and death and sin.

When Jesus says in our text, "Seek first the kingdom of God," He's reminding His disciples to remain with the King. This isn't a command to non-Christians, to unbelievers. They can't seek out the King because they're dead in their sins, but the King is seeking them out! No, here, Jesus is speaking to His disciples, His people. He's speaking to you. He's saying, "You're still in My kingdom. I still work all things for your good. I will never leave you nor forsake you. The devil will try to get you to look only at your worries and forget about Me; but by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep seeking Me."

The devil uses worry to divert your attention from Christ and to make you doubt His promises to you. And when you take it upon yourself to make yourself stop worrying, the devil cackles with glee because you're trying to save yourself from the sin. So when you worry, what do you do? You remember that worry is a sin—and you remember that Christ has died for every last one of your sins. So rather than say, "I'm going to stop worrying on my own," you do what you do with all of your sins: you confess it. You seek out the King, knowing His Word: "I said, 'I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." You confess

your worries, and you rejoice in His Word of forgiveness. Because whatever worries you have in this life, one thing you need never worry about is whether or not you are forgiven. You are. The King says so.

You seek the King. You listen when He speaks in His Word. You go to His Supper. You receive His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, including the forgiveness of worry. And where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you from all your sins.

Therefore, do not be anxious, saying “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” The answer is “Eat and drink the body and blood of your Lord, Jesus Christ; for that is where the Kingdom of God is found for you.” Do not be anxious, saying, “What shall we wear?” for Christ clothed you with Himself at your Baptism. You already wear His righteousness.

So, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will added to you. Your Father in heaven knows what you need, and He will provide. It doesn’t mean that you’ll get what you want, but what He wants for you. And that, dear friends, is a far, far better thing.

So don’t worry. Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. There will be trouble then, just like this day is sufficient for its own trouble. But Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ reigns over all things. He will provide you with all the daily bread you need. He has redeemed you by His blood. He knows you by name. He has clothed you in His own righteousness.

There is no need for worry; but when you do, seek the King and confess the sin. For the King declares that you are forgiven for all of your sins.

In the Name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit—Amen

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus—Amen