

Matthew 19-08-25a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It's a pleasure to have everyone joining us this morning near and afar. This is the 25th of August 2019, which astonishes me.

I can't believe the date, but then I'm easily astonished, I'm easily surprised and impressed. But it is, we're in the last week of August 2019, we're continuing our study of the sixth chapter of Matthew, something we will complete this morning. The section we are studying today is going to pick up in verse 25.

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life. Well, easier said than done. I can say, don't worry, be happy, but it's a far different thing to actually not worry and be happy.

So it will be interesting to see if this section of the Lord Jesus' teaching remains platitudinous or aphoristic and something that lays on the surface of our mind, but doesn't penetrate and create any real difference in our thinking. And He is speaking to the disciples. We're reminded that the audience is the faithful, and yet He's going to call them those of little faith before we get done and not for the last time.

So this is what we'll be picking up. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and we'll get started. Father, we thank you for the fellowship we enjoy with you through the Lord Jesus Christ, energized and enabled by your Holy Spirit.

It is a privilege that we could not possibly properly evaluate to be connected to you and to be called your children. Looking at the distance between us and yourself is beyond human comprehension, but we're grateful. We thank you that we have the privilege of coming before you and addressing you ourselves with the only intermediary being our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you for your many blessings and provisions. We thank you that we are under your care. We are held in your hands.

We are lifted up by your grace. Your mercies are renewed to us every morning, and your faithfulness to us is unimaginably great. We thank you for the opportunity to spend this time together looking for spiritual sustenance and encouragement and strength, which we can't generate in and of ourselves, but which comes to us through that which you have provided, the presence and power of your Spirit and the truth of your Word.

We pray that as we look at this portion together, that the Holy Spirit will find us ready pupils and apt students, and that the truth will sink deep into our souls and germinate and bear fruit that reflects your glory and enables us to live the life that is pleasing in

your sight, and that glorifies the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his name. Amen.

Let's read this section together. We just saw the lamp of the body being the eye, and then in verse 24, this very succinct parable, as it were, no man, no one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. And we often think that, well, as Jesus says in another place, easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom, and that riches are just pretty much anathema to a healthy spiritual life. This is not what Jesus is saying in either place.

The key here is the word serve, love, and be loyal. Serve, love, and be loyal. You can only serve, love, and be loyal to one master.

If riches become your master, you're in trouble. So the key, if you have material wealth, is that it never gained the mastery, that it never becomes the boss and becomes the driving factor. You have it, you must keep it, or you must increase it, or you must focus on it on a daily basis in a way that we ought to be focusing on spiritual priorities and on living our lives heartily as under the Lord.

So it is not that riches in and of themselves are evil. There are a lot of wealthy and very philanthropic and benefactor type believers who support ministries, who help churches, who help those who are in great need. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with riches.

People love to misquote the Bible and say that money is the root of all evil. But if you remember, it is the love of money. And you have the same thing here.

No one can serve, love, and be loyal to two masters. You can only serve, love, and be loyal to one. So whatever material, and of course the idea of riches, sorry, had a momentary bubble in my brain there.

The idea that, does that ever happen to you? You're in the middle of a sentence and suddenly it's like standing on the edge of a cliff and there's just no road across. You've started and you think, where, how did I get here? But riches, we think, well riches, this is, I won Publishers Clearinghouse, I've got a lot of money. I've got, you know, six figures, seven figures, or such.

But who is Jesus talking to here? Nicodemus is not sitting in this crowd. This is not the Pharisees and the Joseph of Arimathea's sitting there around him. Who's sitting there? These are the peasant folk, the fishermen, the villagers who have come out to the hillside and have climbed up to listen to Jesus teach.

So why would he be talking to them? And you think, well, he is talking in the third person. He says, no one, no third party, those guys cannot serve two masters. He will

love the one and hate the other, or else he'll be loyal to the one and despise the other.

But look at how he concludes. You, second person, cannot serve God and Mamona, M-A-M-O-N-A, and it is transliterated for a reason, because it doesn't really have a good translation. It's almost as though what Jesus is saying is giving well-offedness a name.

They always talk about the rich man and Lazarus, and he's accumulated a name, Dives, just like the three wise men. They've been given names, you know, traditionally down through history. Well, Jesus actually gives a name to this because he's saying the two masters, one is God and the other is Mamona.

Well, who is Mamona? What is Mamona? And it's a good transliteration. It's amazing that it's actually survived all the way down through the English. But the idea is you have idolized, you have made an idol of something.

And you don't have to be rich to make an idol of something. It can be anything that you hold exceedingly dear to the point that it becomes the definer of your day, the center of your thoughts. So, and that's why he, why didn't he just say riches? You can't serve God and riches.

Would have been very simple and straightforward. Why does he say Mamona? And no man can serve two masters because you can make a master out of a lot of things. Here's an easy one.

Think about people that fall into addiction. Could be painkillers, could be recreational drugs, could be hard drugs, could be alcohol, could be any one of a number of things. But if that thing becomes the master, if you start organizing your day around it, if you start sort of planning, and that's kind of the gem in the setting for the day as well.

You know, when Downton Abbey comes on, my whole day is planned around being sure I can catch the next episode and they're going to have a special tonight. There's an hour beforehand where they're going to tour the mansion and talk to the expert who knows all of that. I saw and I made myself watch it.

I just, it's like G. Gordon Liddy, the match under your hand. You know, how long can you hold it there? I watched this thing at, well, I confess, I only got through about 20 minutes of it and I just had to leave. But there's a guy that was the consultant for the Downton Abbey series who is an expert on the manners of a hundred years ago and how do people behave.

And, you know, they sit up straight and this is where the spoons go and they would say this, they would never say that. They, down to just nitpicky little details that were in the show to try to recreate a late 19th century, early 20th century culture of the rich. And he just watches everything like a hawk and he makes people not laugh that way or not slouch that way or not talk in this part of the room.

They would always be over here and on and on and on. And well, you can so prioritize a thing that it dominates. It dominates thoughts.

It dominates time. It dominates the use of resources. It's just sort of the major item in the day.

That's Mamona. It doesn't have to be wealth. And that's why Jesus never uses the word riches here.

No man can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and Mamona, whatever the idol is you set up in your life. And what are the keys? Serve, love, be loyal to.

Serve is in there twice. It's the bracket. Serve at the beginning, serve at the end.

And there's love and loyalty. You can't give that to two. There can only be one.

First commandment, no other God before me. This is the lead in now. So he has talked about idolatry in general.

And our notion is, well, he's talking about riches, idolizing wealth. But look at how it continues now in our passage this morning, verse 25. Therefore I say to you, do not worry 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. Then he's going to give an example from the birds. Verse 27, he's going to give an example of adding height to your stature.

Then in verse 28, he's going to talk about the flowers of the field. Continue that into 29 and 30. And then in verse 31, therefore do not worry saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear.

For after all these things, the Gentiles seek, verse 32, for your heavenly father knows that you need all these things, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Well, we started out in verse 19 through 21, talking about laying up your treasure. Where is your heart? Is your heart in the earth or is your heart in heaven? Where your treasure is, that's where your heart is. What kind of perception do you have? What is your eye like? Are you looking at light? Are you characterized by light or is your standard, is your illumination actually darkness? And what you think is light is dark.

How great would that darkness be? So these seem to be little aphoristic sections that connect like train cars, but there's one theme that runs through them all. And if we were going to give it a single name in English, it would be priorities. What are your priorities?

Are you earth focused or are you heaven focused? Are you looking at things from God's perspective or man's perspective? God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

We are sitting in darkness. Remember when the prophecy for the coming of the Lord Jesus, those who were sitting in darkness have seen a great light, sitting in darkness. Who were waiting in expectation? It's the people of God, but they were sitting in darkness waiting for a great light.

The light comes from heaven. The light is God's glory and God's point of view. You can't be double-minded.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. So you've either got to be God focused, heaven focused, light focused, or your priorities are wrong. You cannot serve two masters.

Therefore, verse 25, I say to you, do not worry about your life. The word life here is *soukē*. And we often translate this *soul*.

But in this, this is where once again, you look at context to help determine the meaning of a word. Wouldn't make much sense. Do not worry about your *soukē*, what you will eat or what you will drink.

It does not really follow. But *soukē* means the immaterial being that is sustained by your physical body. We are both immaterial and material.

I've been reading a book on materialistic philosophy and how it has deceived so many people. And it reminds me of Lamartine's history of the Girondists in that it is incredibly complex. It needs to be abridged.

I'm thinking about abridging it myself and just boiling it down. But of course, I got to get the, I got to get the beam out of my own eye. I've got to abridge myself and then I can go abridge somebody else.

But one of the things that is notable in there is if you think the material is all there is, you run into inescapable difficulties. And this, this is scientific. This is logic.

This is standard foundational philosophy going all the way back to Plato and Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and Augustine, that it is beyond silly. It's downright ignorant to try to make the universe work on a purely materialistic plane. Imagine for me just for one moment, a green balloon hanging right here in the air in front of me.

Just imagine a green balloon. Now your mental image of a green balloon, is that material? Can you track that down anywhere and find it? You can't, but it is a real thing. It is, it is real that you can have an idea.

You can have a thought, you can have a mental picture, you can have a sequence of

ideas. And these are all in the immaterial realm. Materialism can never explain those things and never will.

So when Jesus says, I say to you, do not worry about your immaterial life. Your life is an abstraction. Anytime you want to talk about the life of an animal, the life of a chicken, the life of a toad, the life of human beings, that's an idea.

You're born, you live, you mature, you thrive in your prime, you begin to decline and disintegrate and fall apart and go to the dogs and sink and the sun sets and the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is gone and all the rest of it. But that idea, that's an idea. At any given moment, you can't look at a material case for that.

That's psuche. It's your life. Do not worry about your life.

And this doesn't mean I'm about to die or my heart may quit beating. This is the course of life. This is the immaterial picture of how things are going.

And he says, don't worry about that path, that sequence of events. And what follows now, these illustrations, what threads them together like beads on a string is that they all talk about process. They talk about progress.

They talk about journey and destination. So do not worry about your life beginning with what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Now we've gone from where is your treasure and how do you evaluate the world around you with your eye and light and what you make an idol of and what is your goal.

Now we're talking, Jesus looks at these disciples and they're not necessarily worried about treasure. They're more worried about day to day. It put me in mind of Job's three friends and we looked at their different approaches to life.

One was a pragmatist and one was superstitious and one was was trying to be a spiritual guy but was mechanical in the application of what he knew and different approaches to life. And when he says, do not worry about your life, now we're getting down to basic provisions because this is not a goal in terms of, I hope to be here in five years. That's the interview question.

Where do you see yourself in five years? If you've ever been interviewed or had to interview potential employees, you're supposed to be looking at the person's vision and their motivation and their goal orientation. And so you ask them, okay, I'm interviewing you to be a IT guy here in our company. Where do you see yourself in five years? And of course my favorite answer is, I want to have your job.

I want to be sitting where you are interviewing other people. But do you have aspirations? Are you working toward a goal? This is not goal. This is just survival.

And Jesus says, don't worry about your life in the sense of basic provision, what you will eat, what you will drink. And these are immediate. In the ancient Near East and even in the Middle East today, that's a pretty hot climate most of the time.

And you can't go very long without eating something and drinking something. Your life can come to an abrupt termination in a matter of hours or a few days at most without sustenance. So if your life is on the line, why wouldn't you have a healthy concern about, have I got a bottle of water? Have I got some provisions here to stay alive? And in Jesus' day, even more so.

But he says, he's not talking about attack. He's not talking about danger from wild animals or bandits or the Romans or thieves. He says, just where is the drink? Where is the food? And then clothing, this of course, lasts longer.

You can stretch clothing. I've got jeans that are older than some of the people listening to me, probably. Clothing lasts longer, but you can still worry about it.

So there are near-term immediate needs. And then there are longer term, this will last me sometime, but I won't have it forever. It's going to get soiled.

It's going to get torn. So clothing. And he says, do not worry this with a strong negative.

And this is in the present. So he says, stop. When you have a present imperative with a negative, if it's a present imperative positive, it means continue to, continue to seek, continue to march, continue to walk.

Here with the negative, it means stop doing something that is going on. And so he didn't personalize the mammon area. He didn't personalize the lamp of the body and the eye with a command the way he does here.

This is a present imperative. Stop worrying about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink and about your body, what you will put on is not life more than food and the body more than clothing. And this is Jesus answer to the materialist, to the secular humanist.

There is more to life than the material, than keeping fuel in the tank, then keeping paint on the outside or clothing on the body is not life more than that. And the answer to the question, the expected answer is yes. This is if, and it's true.

This is an expects an affirmative answer. Yes. That life is more than food and the body is more than clothing.

So now he's going to give some examples and this is going to, to be strike striking closer to home for the disciples because they're in the out of doors and these are outdoor natural examples. Look at the birds of the air for they neither sow nor reap nor gather

into barns yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And it's been put this way.

Birds are God's creatures. You are God's children. Which do you think he's going to care for more? If this is how well he cares for his creatures, how well is he going to care for you, his children? And that's why he uses the heavenly father reference to God.

Are you not of more value than they? And of course, once again, this expects a positive answer. Now we come to the, probably the most mysterious verse in this chapter, verse 27, which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? Let's think about this. How big is a cubit? It's from the elbow to the tip of the fingers.

Let's call it 18 inches. Which of you by worrying would want to add 18 inches to your stature? Does this make any sense on the surface? Oh, I just wish instead of six feet, I was seven and a half feet tall. Unless you were an extremely short, maybe Zacchaeus might want to be tall.

Maybe somebody who has some sort of stunted growth thing. Why would he, all of the words are solid. There is no textual problem here whatsoever.

And it's been a puzzle and there's been a lot of head scratching trying to figure out what did Jesus mean by this? Because on the surface of it, nobody wants to be that tall. You look at the extremely tall people trying to fit through doorways and sit on public transportation and it's a nightmare. Nobody wants to be.

In these days, if the average was five feet and they were suddenly six and a half feet tall, Saul was head and shoulders above the rest in Israel, it can be a real problem. You got to be one of the five giants that had the bed that was so long. My dad had to make special beds for my two brothers because they were just half a foot taller than everybody else.

He had to put an attachment on and extend the footboard so those guys didn't have to sleep diagonally with their feet and heads hanging off. So why would you want to? What is Jesus talking about here? Who of you by worrying wants to be a foot and a half taller? It just doesn't compute. So what they've said is this word, adding a cubit to his stature, the word stature here is *helikia*, H-E-L-I-K-I-A.

And it's used a few other places in the New Testament in helpful ways. If you keep your finger here and flip over to Luke chapter 19, it is used in the sense of stature. Luke 19 verse 3, and this is your Zacchaeus reference.

Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was but could not because of the crowd for he was of short stature, short *helikia*.

So we're still stuck with stature and a foot and a half. But turn over to John chapter 9 and

verse 21. We'll just solve this puzzle together if we can.

John chapter 9 verse 21. Start at verse 18. Of course, John 9, this is one of those chapters you should know.

John 9 is the blind man, healing the blind man and the dialogue that he has with the authorities. And he just really makes mincemeat out of him, this blind guy. He sees a lot better than they do.

But anyway, the Jews did not believe concerning him that he'd been blind and received his sight, verse 18, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. So in John 9, 19, they asked the parents saying, is this your son who you say was born blind? How then does he now see? His parents answered them and said, we know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but by what means he now sees, we do not know, or who opened his eyes, we do not know. He is of age, ask him.

He is of helikia. This is speaking of maturity. He is old enough that you can ask him.

Apparently he was kind of a young guy, but they said he's an adult. He's 21, ask him. So here helikia doesn't refer to how tall he is, but how old he is.

And one more reference real quickly, flip over to Hebrews chapter 11. This is another one we recognize by number. What is Hebrews 11? That's the faith chapter.

And Hebrews 11, 11, by faith, Sarah also received strength to conceive seed. And she bore a child when she was past the age, past the helikia, because she judged him faithful who had promised. So helikia can be used of, of how long have you been alive? So you can, you can go over to Psalm 39, five, where it talks about, you know, man's lifespan is but a hand breadth.

And so length has been applied, you know, measures of length have been applied to lifespan. So Jesus could be saying, and this is the most common understanding. Jesus could be saying, well, which of you can add a foot and a half to the length of your life, but it's still kind of odd.

Why wouldn't he say an hour or a hand breadth or something, you know, a foot and a half just seems an odd thing to want to add to your life. And it seems to be mixing things because helikia being used for stature, and then you use a measure of length, you really are kind of back in Zacchaeus territory. So it seems unsatisfactory to me to just say, which of you can add a foot and a half to the length of your life? Could be, and it's commonly understood that way.

However, here's what I think. Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly father feeds them.

This is what happens in nature. Man doesn't intervene. These are not domesticated animals.

These are wild birds. And in God's natural economy, these birds naturally find their food. There are seeds.

There is nectar and flowers for hummingbirds. There's bugs. There are insects and things.

And it is part of the natural process that these birds in their niche naturally get fed. It's a part of nature. Then he goes to, which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his helikia? Well, let me ask you this.

Is there a case where you have had a foot and a half added to your stature? All of us have had a foot and a half added to our stature, because we all started out as babies and small children and have grown. And if you look at a child that's four feet tall, and then you look at an adult that's five and a half feet tall, how did that happen? Did the parents need to worry in order to get their children to grow? Did you have to worry? It's built into God's natural care for our bodies that we grow. God cares about your food and your drink and your clothing, and it's provided.

And as a result of that, you naturally grow. So he could almost have said here, which of you by worrying caused yourself to grow from a child to an adult? And there might have even been some young people in the crowd that came up to listen to Jesus teach on the hill. And he is sensitive to the presence of children, as we know from other passages.

But which of you by worrying can add a cubit to his stature? Worrying didn't grow you from a child to an adult. That was natural, just like the birds eating, or the flowers looking beautiful is natural. So I think he's talking about the foot and a half, and that's a nice one cubit.

If he said two cubits, there might be people that stayed fairly short like Zacchaeus, but everybody grows at least a foot and a half. That's common to man. And none of that is accomplished by worrying.

It happens naturally. So then verse 28, so why do you worry about clothing? And he's coming back out. He said food and drink and clothing.

Now he's going to talk about clothing, and then he'll talk about food and drink. Why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field. This word, they don't really know what flower he was talking about.

These are basically flowers of the field. This is not a technical word for lily, but it works. There's no real need to change it.

Consider the flowers of the field, how they grow. Now there's a lot of things you can consider about flowers, where they are, how big they are, what color they are, what type they are. Are they food for animals? Are they a source of nourishment for insects and birds? There's a lot, but he says the specific thing to consider about these flowers is how they grow.

What was he just talking about in the preceding verse? How you grow, I think, how you grow in stature. And so this is the context that I think informs the preceding statement. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They neither toil nor spin. And yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. And if you know about flowers, or you're married to somebody that knows about flowers, and you watch them, or your mom has done flowers, you know that they don't flower as soon as they pop out of the ground.

They grow, then they flower. And so the flower is the culmination of the growth process. Consider the flowers of the field, how they grow.

They don't toil, and they don't spin, but at a certain point in time, the beauty appears. And of course the grass withers and the flower fades, but that's not his point here. His point is they grow to the point of beauty, and there is the beauty is the culmination of a growth process, right? So, and when he says consider, this means pay attention to and learn from.

This is a really intensive word for get an education looking at. Educate yourself by thinking about. Learn from.

Learn from the flowers of the field and how they grow. They don't do any work. God has built into their existence growth and beauty.

Solomon in all his glory was not some, to try to get at the literal meaning of this, arrayed. It means to be enrobed. It's from peribolo.

It means to throw around. Solomon in all his glory didn't throw around anything that looks as nice as these flowers. It's, have you ever done that? Somebody comes to the door and you're not dressed, so you just grab something and throw it around you so that you can answer.

That's kind of what this means. He was not encircled with something he put on, like one of these. Now, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, fuel was so scarce, you know, they didn't necessarily hack down cedars of Lebanon or something for firewood and so on.

And in a lot of these open areas in Judea and in the environs of Jerusalem, a lot of this was open fields and it wasn't easy to find firewood. So many times they would gather

bundles of straw and burn that in their ovens for cooking, to stay warm, to fire pottery. There was a lot of burning of grass and that's why he says that the grass is thrown into the oven.

It's gathered and thrown into the oven. So at one point it looks great and the next point it's fuel and is consumed and gone and turns into black dusty ashes. Will God not much more clothe you, O oligopistoi, oligopistoi.

God clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven. This is a twofold observation by the Lord Jesus. On the one hand, God has taken care with his creation and with his creatures to build into their very existence, their sustenance and their appearance.

Will he not much more take care of you? And you notice cloth is in italics there. Will he not have much more concern for you? Who are his children? And then he says, O ye of little faith. And every time we come to this word, I remind you that oligos has come over in English, in political vocabulary, talking about an oligarchy ruled by the few.

There are people, there's just not very many of them in an oligarchy. So oligopistoi, pistos is faith, trust. So they have some trust.

It's just very little. They're not faithless. They're not apistoi, they're oligopistoi.

They've got some faith. They have faith enough to come and sit at the feet of Jesus and listen. They believe and they have the opportunity to grow.

He's been talking about growth, right? Consider the lilies, how they grow. Consider your stature, how you grow. You have little faith and you need to grow.

You have little faith. If you're worrying about these things, you need to grow. The solution is growth.

It's easy to say, oh, take no thought for what you will eat or what you will wear. Your father knows you have need of them. Oh, okay.

Have you ever tried to not worry about a thing? Got a big test coming up, got a big assignment or requirement at work, got an issue that's on the verge of filling the landscape. And well, I've done all I can do. You can't just tell yourself to not worry with much success.

Somebody else can't tell you, don't worry. This is the thing I hate in movies. Somebody's concerned.

Somebody's gone. Are they okay? Where's my child? Oh, it's all going to be fine. They have no basis for saying it's going to be fine.

It's a platitude with no substance, no truth, no knowledge. The person could already be dead for all they know. Oh, they're fine.

Don't worry. They're fine. It has no power.

It's just useless. It's water off a duck. Well, telling somebody don't worry, be happy, you know, the little song the guy did with all of his own voice, it doesn't work.

So here's my question. If Jesus says, don't worry, take no thought, how do you do that? The answer is right here. Oh, ye of oligopistoy, you need to be megapistoy.

You need to be more faithful. The solution is faith. It is one thing to identify something you shouldn't be doing and say, I'm going to refrain from doing that.

But in many cases, the key is to find something else to do instead. Instead of this, I'm going to turn away from dead works, and I'm going to turn toward faith in God. Change of mind away from dead works, Hebrews chapter six, right? Not laying again the foundation of change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God.

Well, this is change of mind away from undue worry. Now, you notice what he does not say here. He doesn't say don't work.

He doesn't say don't work for what you will eat and what you will drink and what you will put on. Most of the time we need to work for those things. He doesn't say stop working and wait for it to drop on parachutes from the celestial realms.

He doesn't say don't work. He says what? Don't worry. How do the birds eat? Do they sit in their nests on their backs with their wings spread and their mouths, their little beaks open? Maybe when they're babies, but very soon, what do the birds have to do in order to be fed? They go get their food.

They fly, they flit, they flee, they move, they go out and get it. We've talked about this in Psalm 119. This is the model in Israel for charity is leave resources for people to go and get and manipulate and grind and bake and create for themselves sustenance.

It doesn't say do no work for what you will eat or what you will drink or what you will wear. It says do not worry, and this is stop worrying. It's another present imperative.

Stop worrying about these things. Your father knows you have need of them, and he's going to make provision, and the provision usually involves us getting busy. Get busy.

Why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies. If God closed the grass of the field, verse 30, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more you, O oligopistoi? How do you accept that and turn it into power in your soul? Faith. And you look at the promises, you look at the principles, you look at the doctrines, you look at the narratives, you look at the content of scripture.

If you want to stop worrying, you can't just sit there backing away from the worry table saying, well, I know I've got that problem, I know I've got that issue, I know I've got that challenge, I know I've got this requirement, and just keep trying to back away from it, but you're staring at it the whole time. Take your attention off of that in the same way that if you're going to serve God, you can't be serving Mamona, you can't be loving, you can't be loyal, and you can't be serving. Well, you can't be loving, loyal, and serving worry either.

And it has to be replaced with loving, being loyal to, and serving the word of God. And that's what our Thursday night study has been all about, is the beauty and the substance and the power of God's word, and how it distinguishes us and separates us from others. And that's where Jesus is going here in verse 32, after all these things the Gentiles seek, the nations seek.

Now, he brought up the Gentiles once before, earlier in the chapter, you remember that? When you pray, you know, vain repetitions in verse 7, as the heathen do, that was the ethnica, and here you have the ethnoi, the individual Gentiles, or the nations, either one. You ought to be different. You ought to be marked out by something you have that others don't.

You have a heavenly father. You are his children. He has built into your life as his child the same kinds of provisions and protections and beauties that he has built into his creation and into his creatures.

It is as natural for you to be fed and clothed and sheltered as it is the rest of God's creation, and more so, because you're not just creatures, you're children. Take it to the bank. Make that the object of faith.

I am a child of God. Got self-worth issues, inferiority complex? Look at the purchase price with which you were bought. Look at the lengths God has gone to to make you his child.

You belong to him. You're a child of the king. You're a member of the royal family of God.

You are a priest after the order of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. You have got value and function and position. It's what they call positional truth in seminary.

That's how you increase your faith. That's what you point your faith at and get rid of the oligo and become pistoid, become faithful, not little faithful. It's funny to me that somebody will have the same name as someone else in a family, and so there's Tim, and then there's little Tim, or there's, you know, Tammy and little Tammy.

And then those people grow up and become large, and so here's this huge person. You're still calling them little Tim or little Tammy. We don't want to be little faith.

You might start out with a little faith, but you don't want to spend your whole life being

little faith. You want to be characterized by something else. So the answer to worry in a nutshell is faith.

Don't try to stop worrying. Concentrate on being more faithful. Concentrate on the faith.

The worry will disappear. Provision, protection, and grace are a natural part of the life of God's child. You are God's child.

They belong to you. They're going to come as naturally as flowers grow and birds sing. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll pick up here with the Gentiles in verse 32.