

JESUS ON ANXIETY (MATTHEW 6:25-34)

Video One

What do you give your attention to?

What content fills your feed? What thoughts crowd your mind?

Jesus knows that this question matters. The things we give our attention to shape us.

And they often shape us negatively. Jesus knows how they can often lead us to worry.

As personal difficulties and uncertainties fill our minds. As unrest and instability fill our feeds. They can leave us worrying about the future.

But Jesus comes with a command for those who live in his kingdom: 'do not worry'.

Is Jesus naïve? Doesn't he know the real and potential threats that circle our lives?

Jesus does know, more than we do. He ends his teaching on worry saying: 'each day has enough trouble of its own'.

But his command is an invitation not necessarily to be care-free, but to have your attention re-directed.

'Look', Jesus says.

'Look at the birds of the air'

'See the flowers of the field'

What does he want us to see as we turn our attention to the birds and the flowers?

Two things.

The first:

Don't live in the future

Worry is a future-oriented thing. It's a way of trying to control all the potential dangers that might arrive on the horizon.

But look at the birds, Jesus says. 'they do not sow or reap or store away in barns'. In other words. They don't live in the future – sowing, and reaping, and storing away their food so they will have enough in the months ahead. Rather, 'your heavenly Father feeds them'. Birds don't live in the future. They receive God's provision today.

'And see how the flowers of the field grow, they do not labour or spin.' They don't work to build up a wardrobe. Rather they enjoy the splendour of the clothes that God gives them that day. Flowers don't live in the future. They receive God's provision today.

Jesus isn't saying – 'don't plan for the future'. But he is warning against a busy mind that is always planning for potential future danger. Without God, that's what people do, he says. They restlessly, tiringly, 'run after all these things.'

But if you live in Jesus' kingdom, 'your heavenly Father knows' everything you need. And he'll give it to you. Don't live in the future, relax into his provision today.

Which brings us onto the second thing to learn from the birds and the flowers:

Realise how precious you are.

If God provides daily for the birds and flowers. 'How much more', Jesus says, will he give you what you need. If you're part of his kingdom, he sees himself as your Father. How much more precious are you?

Now perhaps a question rises in your mind. This is all nice. But – last week I saw a dead bird. And Jesus himself says that flowers die and are thrown into the fire! Did God's provision run out?

It's a thought that should actually lead us into deepest security. If you're part of Jesus' kingdom, the wonder is that *even if you die*. God's provision will be for you there too.

How? Because of Jesus.

You are so precious, that Jesus died for you, so that you could know forgiveness and eternal life with God.

And that means, even when you face death. He will hold onto you. And take you to be with him, in a world made new, forever.