

# FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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**SERMON:** *Worry*  
**SERIES:** *Whoever Hears These Words*  
**SCRIPTURES:** *Matthew 6:25-34*  
**SPEAKER:** *Shaun Kipe*  
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*\*Credit to Scott McKnight, John Ortberg for valuable insights regarding this message!*

Well good morning, it is so great to worship with you.

Good to have a holiday weekend. I suspect it's been a busy couple of weeks for many families. Summer vacations are coming to an end and school has started. This means, early mornings, homework, extra-curricular activities. And it brings us to an appropriate message for this time in our lives. Jesus says...

**<sup>25</sup> “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? <sup>26</sup> 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? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life<sup>lel</sup>?”**

**<sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> 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 clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you**

**need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

This morning we are beginning the final section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (**SERIES TITLE SLIDE**). By now some of you may be thinking, "wow Jesus preached for a really long time. We've been looking at his sermon for a long time!"

But actually if you sit down and read the sermon it's only 3 chapters long. Matthew 5-7. You could read the whole thing in less than 30 mins.

It's just that Jesus is able to say in 30 mins what it takes you and me a life-time to learn and live out. Jesus is the Master teacher. So real quick review to catch us all up to speed here.

Remember Jesus sermon is about "learning to live the 'kingdom of heaven life in our world'. When you choose to follow Jesus, when you give your life to him. It's not just about getting into heaven some day, but it's about getting heaven into you, each and every day. You join his kingdom and live that kingdom life in our world. And so in Jesus' sermon that's what he's been talking about, what does it look like for us to live in his Kingdom.

**Matthew 5** back in February, was setting the stage. Jesus said things like...

**"You have heard that it was said...but I say to you."**

Kingdom of heaven living looks different than the kingdom of the world living. That was Matthew 5.

**Matthew 6**, that was June & July, Jesus moves onto this concept, that in His kingdom it's not about following a bunch of rules to the letter of the law, rather its about heart issues and your motivations/intentions. He is concerned about the

person you are becoming. Jesus says, “Give...but not be noticed by others, but because generosity is a kingdom of heaven character trait.”

Jesus says, “Pray...not to be seen and noticed as spiritual, but because in tune with God, is a kingdom of heaven trait.”

Jesus says, “Fast...not to be noticed, but because in this world people end up ruled by their appetites instead of God. We start to store up treasure on earth...we give ourselves over to things like food, and pleasure, possessions. But Kingdom people are ruled by God, not their appetites.”

It’s all about “learning to live the ‘kingdom of heaven lifestyle in our world’. Let’s dig into our passage for this morning...when we get caught up ruled by the Kingdom of this world (food, possessions, desires) do you know where those things lead...a life filled with worry.

**Therefore, do not worry...**

**Any worriers in the room this morning?**

Sometimes, people get the mistaken idea that being a Christian means, life just kind goes the way you want it to...God will keep bad things from happening to you.

I think it’s helpful to acknowledge that...

**A. Worry is a real thing.**

Jesus says, **“Do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”** Jesus says, worry is real. Life involves trouble. If you’re living, you’ll experience trouble. Trouble today, trouble tomorrow.

At another time Jesus... **“In this world, you will have trouble...”** (John 16:33)

The word Jesus uses here is merimnaw and it literally means, “to be anxious in your soul.” It’s a little bit like eating corn on the cobb. You know how you always get a piece stuck in your teeth. And you just can’t get it out. It can very quickly start to consume you and take over your life, your thoughts. It can keep you up at night.

I said this was an appropriate message for this time of year. I remember being younger and not really liking the beginning of the school year. New teachers, new classroom, new classmates, new schedule. A time of worry. Worried about finding all of my classrooms ok, not being late, not walking into the wrong room. I worried about getting good grades.

I remember as a kid, being worried about fitting in. Finding a group of people at lunch time, to sit and eat lunch with, so that you’re not alone. Worried about my appearance. Right clothes, right hair style.

I always kind of imagined, that worry was a kid thing. And that some day when I was older, when I grew up, a little more independent then I wouldn’t worry anymore.

Went off to college. Worried about my career choice. What to study. What are you giving the rest of your life too, now is the time to make that choice?

And I’ve discovered that growing up, even graduating from college doesn’t eliminate worry from your life. It just changes the things you worry about.

Now I worry about my occupation. Am I doing a good enough job? Meeting the standards and expectations. No joke, every time I sit down to write a sermon, there is always this twinge of worry...what if I don’t have anything to say this time? Worse yet, what if the things I’m saying, explaining, describing are wrong. What if it has eternal consequences?!

The other day, I'm sitting in the living room deep in thought, working on this sermon. Jenny says, "What are you working on, you seem a bit worried?" I said, "I am worried, I'm working on my next sermon." She says, "Oh what's it about?" "It's about how Jesus tells us, not to be worried."

Worry about being a good parent. Do you ever worry about that? I used to think, how hard could it be? And I'm gonna have the best-behaved, most well-rounded kids in the world. By the time they can walk, they'll be doing chores and putting themselves to bed. And what I've discovered is that the only people who think that way, are people who don't have kids. I mean there is just no magic formula for parenting. What kind of habits and values are you creating for your family? How strict should you be with bed-time? How much screen time is appropriate? How many extra-curricular activities should you involve your kids in? How did it feel the first time you let your son or daughter, grab the car keys and head out the door?

And most of those things are just personal worries. Then you begin to think about worry on a grand scale. Worry about the condition of the world we live in. Sex-trafficking, drug epidemic, shootings, refugees and natural disasters, climate control.

Any worriers in the room this morning? Some of you are thinking I wasn't really worried until I walked in here and sat down and listened to the first few minutes of your sermon. Now I'm getting a little worried.

Truth is life can be full of worry. Each day had enough trouble of it's own. The same was true 2000 years ago in and around Jerusalem. Lot of people worried. Worried about life, kids, parents, work, paying the bills. Worried about health and the world.

So, if you've ever worried before. You're in good company. Good company in this room and good company in the scope of human history. Jesus talks about worry, because it's a real human experience.

What does the Master Teacher have to say to you and me about this very real aspect of our human-ness.

## **B. How do we deal with worry?**

First, and this is really important to understand regarding the entire conversation that follows. Worry and I'm going to throw other words in here closely related that we use...anxiety or stress...these are often affected by many factors and there are differing levels or scales regarding our experience.

### **1. Worry may require professional help.**

There are certain situations or levels of worry and anxiety that may require professional help. There is such a things as clinical depression or diagnosed levels of anxiety. And it can be related to life circumstances, it can be related to genetics or other physical factors taking place inside a person.

There is a part of this discussion that may involve help from a professional. A doctor, a therapist, a counselor.

Sometimes in churches we give the impression that if you are struggling with anxiety...it must mean you obviously don't trust God or you're not spiritual enough. And then we make people feel guilty on top of the anxiety they are already experiencing.

And while worry can be related in some ways to trust in God, that's way too simplistic of a way to think about it and boil it down to just that.

In some cases its folks can't just choose to not worry. This is why worry is not a sin. It's not good for you. It's draining. God doesn't want you to experience it, but it's not a sin.

And so when it comes to dealing with worry, depression, anxiety...some of the process of healing may include, going to see a professional.

Second, notice Jesus discussion about worry comes right after his discussion about storing up treasures on earth.

Our tendency is to store up stuff or to place our sense of trust and security in food, pleasure, possessions, especially money!

Easy to begin thinking, "If I just had more money, a better job, a different hair style, new phone, new security system...I wouldn't worry anymore"?

Some of you are familiar with this gentleman (**PIC OF HOWARD HUGHES**). Do you recognize him? Howard Hughes. Fascinating life story. A billionaire, made his money in oil industry and even entertainment. But spent the last 25 years of his life in the prison of worry. Worried that people were always out to get him or his money. He spent the last decades of his life actually living in hotels, where he would rent out the entire floor. So no one else would be near him.

He was paranoid about germs. And so if you want to visit him, he has this process in place. You had to take tissues with you and wipe off door handles.

When he traveled anywhere he had specific instructions for his driver. Couldn't drive over 35 miles an hour. Think about that for minute. Some of you never drive under 35 miles an hour. Could only drive on smooth roads and when coming to like railroad crossings had to slow down to 2mph. Overwhelmed, controlled, imprisoned by worry. And I know his situation is pretty extreme. But the point is this...

## **2. Stuff will not eliminate worry** from your life.

The truth is possessions, wealth, technology do not decrease our level of anxiety. People are healthier, wealthier, smarter, than at any time in history and yet, levels of worry, anxiety, and stress...are increasing not decreasing. Do you know why?

Because stuff often has the opposite effect. In other words, possessions often make us worry more, NOT less.

A few years ago, I bought the car I now drive. It's a 2007 Toyota Yaris. It wasn't brand new, but it was new to me and it was the first car, I ever bought, all the cars I had before that, were had-me-downs from relatives. Nicest car ever owned. Strange thing happened when I got that car, I started to worry more than ever before with that new car.

With my old cars, I didn't mind if they were out in the weather all winter long. They were already rusting at places anyway. I didn't mind if I someone bumped into, scratched it, ate food in it, spilled food...whatever in those old cars. But the moment I had this new car I started to worry about it. No joke. About 5 months after I bought this car, I backed into my dad's truck (**PIC OF BUMPER**) and now I have a big hole in the rear bumper. It was kind of like this symbol, God's way of saying, Shaun possessions will not eliminate worry from your life.

I thought you know that's probably true of so many of our possessions. The more I have, the nicer it is, the more I worry about it.

So first thing you need to know. If you've been thinking a little more money or a nicer home or new car or whatever...will eliminate worry from your life, I'm here to tell you, it will only become one more thing to worry about.

### **3. Two principles that come directly out of the passage.**

Jesus says, first thing you need to remember, each moment of each day

#### **a. You are in God's hands.**

Here and now...you have entered the Kingdom of Heaven. And I know that almost sounds so simple, that it's hardly worth saying and yet the truth is we just forget that truth so quickly.

Jesus gives these two simple examples to help remind us that even now, in this world, we are under his care and attention.

He says, look at the birds, they are all around you, every day...and they are my reminder to you...they don't sow or reap or store away and yet God's feed them. God's watching over, providing, caring for those birds. You are worth so much more than the birds.

Way back when I was in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Jenny and I started "going out." That's what we called it back then. I don't know what they call it today. We called it going out, even though we never actually went anywhere. But we were going out and we never wanted to be apart. We just liked being with each other. But mostly what I knew is that Jenny was choosing to give me her focused attention, priority above everybody else. That's why we like that romantic kind of love we begin to experience at that age. There's something comforting about that.

Sometime during that year, Jenny's family went away on vacation to Florida. And it was torture just being apart. Kind of wondered if while she was away she was still thinking about and remembering me. Then I got this post-card in the mail. It was from Jenny. I still have it.

Said, **“I’ve got my eye on you.” (PIC OF JENNY’S post card)** Kind of like this little reminder “Yep I’m still thinking about you. I know I’m away, you can’t see me. You might forget. You might begin to wonder. But I’m still thinking about you.”

What Jesus is saying is, I know, you can’t see me. You might forget. You might begin to wonder. But I’m still thinking about you. I’ve got my eye on you.” Every bird is a little reminder, He’s still watching.

Jesus says, notice the flowers...they don’t labor or spin, but God clothes them with beauty. God’s got his eye on them. You are so much more valuable than they are.

My good friend Bobby Crowe, we’re in a prayer group together and he will tell you, every spring, end of May to go for a ride up through the mountains. There are these bushes (**PIC OF MOUNTAIN LAUREL**) all over the mountain plastered with gorgeous white flowers...called mountain laurel. When Bobby prays, sometimes he says, “Thank you God for showing me your flowers.” Those flowers are kind of like God’s reminder...I’m watching out for things. Those are my flowers.

Paul says it this way in a letter he wrote to the church in Rome, **“God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature are clearly understood from what has been made.”**

Psalmist says, **“The heaven’s declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of his hands...”**

**“The earth is the Lords and everything in it.”**

“If God cares for the birds and flowers...you can be sure he’s watching out for you. You are not in the hands of the kingdom of this world. You are not in the hands of fate. You are not in the hands of nature. You are secure in the hands of the Creator.

*“You don’t need to worry because we live in a God-made, God-breathed, God-soaked, God-watched, God-loved world.”* (Ortberg) And to every person in this room God says, “I’ve got my eye on you.”

It doesn’t mean nothing bad will ever happen to you. It’s just that you know in walking through the worries of this world, he’s walking with you here and now. He’s got his eye on you and that’s a comforting fact.

And it leads to another aspect of our faith, related to the topic of worry and that is...ultimately,

**b. Our future is secure.**

**“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart I have overcome the world.”**

**Let not your heart be troubled, trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms...and I’m going to prepare a place for you...I will take you to be with me.**

One day, ultimately all will be set right. Pain, suffering, injustice and even death itself will be redeemed! And this future hope, gives us a sense of security, a sense a hope, a sense of peace about the worries we face today.

We are part of a different Kingdom, kingdom of heaven. Our Kingdom is being watched over by the Creator and he has secured our eternal future.

One final thought regarding dealing with worry.

**c. Seek first his kingdom and righteousness**

Notice Jesus doesn't just say, "Don't worry..." **You cannot choose to not worry, by trying really hard to not worry.**

One of our Sunday school teachers in youth group, used to use this analogy for things like this. He would say, if I tell you not to think about purple elephants (**PIC OF PURPLE ELEPHANTS**). Try really hard to not think about purple elephants, what do you think you're going to think about? Purple elephants. Instead, you think about something else. If I don't want you to think about purple elephants, I might tell you to think about blue cars (**PIC OF BLUE CAR**). Ever seen a blue car? See how that happens.

And so Jesus doesn't just say "don't worry", he doesn't just tell you what not to do, he actually points you in another direction. Instead of worrying he says, <sup>33</sup> **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

"In other words, if you want to live a worry-free life, then pursue, chase after God and his righteousness. You need to get in on what God is doing in this world."

In other words... "*Study God. Love God. Follow God. Serve God. Think about God.*" (Ortberg) Build your entire life around "knowing, loving, and following Jesus."

Do you get what Jesus is saying? Because this is important., in fact if you learn nothing else from our messages on the Sermon on the Mount then remember this...you can have the whole kingdom of this world, but if you miss Jesus, if you miss the Master....you'll just be worrying about the whole kingdom of this world.

You see ultimately the solution you are after in this life is not a different or a better life, it's not more money or better job, bigger house...it's the Kingdom of heaven life. That's what you were created for. It's the life that Jesus teaches in his Sermon on the Mount.

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all of these other things will be added unto you.

It doesn't mean you'll get all of these other things. It means, you will understand the place of all of these other things your life. Your desires, intentions, your motivations, your character, what makes happy, content...what fills you up, all of these things begin to change.

We worry when we lose focus of the most important thing...Jesus. It's what you were created for. You will only eliminate worry to the degree that you make Jesus the focus of your life.

I used to tell our teens all the time, if athletics becomes the focus of your life it will always cause you to worry. Because there will always be someone better than you, there will always be injuries, there will always be a time when you leave your sports behind. Like it or not even if you play professionally sports will end.

If money becomes your primary focus you'll always worry that you never have enough and even when you start accumulate it, you'll worry about how to keep it.

Occupations, sports, hobbies, life is only good when Jesus is the center.

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. Do not store up treasure on earth, but store up treasure in heaven.

The secret to the worry-free life starts by daily remembering God is watching you, here and now, your future is secure in his hands...and each day seek first his kingdom and his righteousness with every decision, every thought, every action, every word that you speak.