

# Matthew 6 • The Sermon on the Mount (Part 2)

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And we're smack dab in the middle of The Sermon on the Mount which takes up 3 chapters in the Book of Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Here we are in chapter 7. This is really a series of little mini messages that are given to us and all packed together here on The Sermon on the Mount.

And as we did with chapter 5, we're going to give you a roadmap on the screen of what we're going to be looking at here today.

## Matthew Chapter Six Roadmap

- Right and wrong way to give
- Right and wrong way to pray
- Right and wrong way to fast
- Treasures on earth/heaven
- Don't worry, be happy

The Right and wrong way to give. The Right and wrong way to pray. The Right and wrong way to fast. Treasures on earth/heaven, and Don't worry, be happy. These sound like categories on Jeopardy. I'll take Don't worry, be happy for 200, Alex.

The first is a word about doing good deeds. Look at what the Lord says, verse 1. *"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."* (ESV)

Jesus starts off saying, when you do something, don't do it in front of other people. Right? Not really. I mean, yes, He's saying that, but if you take from this verse that you should never do your good deeds in front of other people, then you're going to be wrong. Because if you remember in the last chapter, chapter 5, Jesus said something about doing things in front of people. Up on the screen, here's what He said. From chapter 5, verse 16, He said,

### **Matthew 5:16 (ESV)**

*...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

*...let your light shine before others, (let it shine before others) so that they may see your good works and (ultimately) give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

You see, that's the interesting dynamic that's going on here. It's not about the issue of doing your deeds in front of others, it's why you do your deeds in front of others. That's what He's talking about.

And so what He's doing, of course, is He's revealing the all important element of motive, which is what we forget. We forget. God never forgets because He sees the heart.

You and I look at somebody going out, handing out thousand dollar bills on the street or something like that. We go, wow, how cool is that? But all we see is the outside. All we see is somebody getting money. And we think, well, he's blessing people, that's really cool. You don't know the motive, you have no idea.

God speaks to the motive, and the wrong motive is spoken there in verse 1, and it's by the phrase, *"in order to be seen by them."* That's the motive. All right. In other words, the goal is to draw attention to me. I'm giving hundred dollar bills because I want people to like me. I want people to notice me, and I want people to admire me, and so forth.

And Jesus said in that case, there's no reward for that person in heaven because they sought their reward here on earth. There you go.

He elaborates further in verse 2 and following saying, *"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. (and there's the motive, that they may be praised by others) Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward."* In other words, that's all they're going to get, whatever they got from people.

He says, *"<sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, (and that's an idiom that Jesus explains in verse 4, when He says) so that your giving may be in secret."* And that's the meaning of that idiom.

Don't let your right hand know. No. It's don't let your left hand know what your... They assume you're right handed, so don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. He's basically just dealing with the issue of hypocritical giving, doing it for the wrong reasons.

And so He goes on now to address hypocrisy when you're praying. He says, <sup>5</sup> *“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, (obviously again, so everybody can hear them. Here it is again) that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”*

And there you go. So what does Jesus say? Now, if you're going to take this a little too literally, you might say, well, I don't think there should ever be such a thing as public prayer because Jesus says right here, when you pray, go into your room alone, close the door. Don't let anybody hear you. Well, that's obviously not what He's saying. We have examples of public prayer in the Bible. Go to the Book of Acts and you see people praying in public.

The issue here, again, is fighting that, that gravitational pull that we have as human beings to want to be noticed by other people, to want to be admired by other people. And He's basically saying, if that is going on in your life, if you sense that's even a possibility, then do your praying in private. Just do it by yourself. Don't pray that anybody can hear or something like that. Just pray by yourself and He says, your Father in heaven will reward you.

Verse 7. *“And when you pray, (He also says) do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do,...”*

And the reason He uses the word, Gentile there is that it was used back in that day to mean, the ungodly. I mean, most of us in this room are Gentiles. We hope we're not ungodly people, but you understand what it is. It's, don't heap up empty phrases like the pagans do. And that's really what it came down to.

He went on to say, *“...for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them,...”* And that phrase right there is a key to the Sermon on the Mount by the way.

You want to know what the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount is or if you want to condense it down to a single phrase, there it is. *“Do not be like*

*them.*” There it is. He says, “...*for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*”

He’s talking now about it. When we do pray, how do you pray? And He begins to tell us not to use, and here are the key phrases, empty words or, excuse me, it's empty phrases, is actually what He says here. And many words. Stay away from empty phrases and many words.

The New American Standard Bible (NASB) uses the phrase, “*thoughtless repetitions.*” I like that's good. I mean, that's helpful. The NIV elaborates saying, “*do not keep babbling like pagans.*”

And even though that's a, it's more of a thought for thought interpretation rather than a word for word interpretation. It's actually pretty good because what Jesus had in mind was the way the pagans prayed. Because the pagans believed that if they repeated things over, and over again, and particularly the names of their gods plural, that they would, get their attention.

You can actually see that in various passages in the Bible where you read about, like when Elijah was fighting the prophets of Baal, they were saying the name of the... Oh, and remember when Paul was in Ephesus and they were repeating, great is Diana of the Ephesians for like two hours? Over and over and over and over again. And that was a pagan thing.

And so Jesus is talking about how we pray. He's not necessarily forbidding repetition of any kind. That's not the point because you might remember, when He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus used repetition. You remember reading that? Let me show you this on the screen. From Mark chapter 14, it goes like this.

**Mark 14:37-39 (ESV)**

*And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.*

*And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (look at this) And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.*

You see, this is not an absolute prohibition of ever repeating a word in your prayer or even a phrase. The issue is useless, empty repetition that is going on because you think somehow that repetition is going to make a difference. That's what He's talking about. Don't be thoughtless about how you pray. I guess that's a better, maybe that's the best way to say it. Don't be thoughtless.

In verses 9 through 13, He's going to go on now here and talk to them about how they should pray. This, of course, is known as the Lord's Prayer, although it was given to the disciples. And this, I believe, is a model for their own times of prayer.

I had someone go through one of my other studies online and write to me, because I was talking about the Lord's Prayer and how it is a model. And this person wrote me and said, well, but do you think there's anything wrong with just reciting it as is and not necessarily using the different elements of the Lord's prayer as a springboard? Which is what I was saying. I was saying that the Lord's prayer gives us ideas.

In other words, *"Our Father (who art) in heaven, hallowed be your name"* is obviously praise, and worship, and adoration, and so forth. And when I've talked about the Lord's Prayer in the past, I've said, take that element of praise, and worship, and stuff, and use that as you open up your prayer. And this person said, well, do you think there's anything wrong with just reciting it? No, I don't. I don't think there's anything wrong with just recite.

Here's the deal though. There's a danger when we recite things. It doesn't have to be dangerous, but there is an inherent danger when we recite prayers that they will become thoughtless expressions that we just do from memory because we think that somehow this is the magic prayer or something like that.

In fact, some people call this the, Our Father, and has the Lord's prayer been used as a thoughtless expression? Yes. Yes, it has. And have you ever been in a church where they did it like every week? And you knew that it was coming up because it was in the bulletin. And it was here and it was there every week. It was the same spot in the church service.

And usually the minister would start off by saying, as the Lord taught us to pray, Our Father. And then as soon as he says, Our Father, all the other voices drone in. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. And then we go through that, and there's just this low drone. And you know people are thinking about the football game. You know it. It's like, oh, did I turn off the oven? Who

art in heaven? Yeah, the house is really dirty. Hallowed be thy name. You know what I mean?

Listen, it's one of the most beautiful prayers in the Bible, but we can make it a thoughtless repetition. And that's exactly what Jesus told us not to do in the previous verses. So let's look at this. Yeah, okay, you want to recite the Lord's Prayer? Knock yourself out, but make sure you mean it. Make sure you're not just thoughtlessly repeating words. Right?

He says, Pray then like this. Verse 9,

*“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,  
<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.”*

What a tragedy if you recite that prayer and don't think about what it means. What a tragedy. So beautiful.

Here's the interesting thing. When Jesus said to the disciples, you guys should pray this way. This was a revolutionary sort of an idea, because first of all, Jews didn't regularly call God their father. They thought it was presumptuous to do and frankly, too intimate to, to even use a term like... Or maybe a better word is, too informal, a little too informal. We're talking about God here, right? And so they would have struggled with something like that.

But the guidelines that this model prayer gives us to it, it deals with all of the basics and it's so good. And it's particularly good for those who struggle in their prayer times knowing what to say.

I've had people say that a lot to me in the past. I struggled with prayer, pastor Paul, and you know what, I've struggled with consistent prayer in my life. I'll just tell you that. I've never really struggled knowing what to say because I guess I was born with a lot of words, but I have struggled to be consistent.

But for those who do struggle in just the area of, what do I say? Or I've had people say to me a lot, when I pray, my mind wanders a lot. So having a guideline like this can really be helpful. And I would encourage you, for those of you who fit into that area to do that, because here's what it covers.

*"Our Father in heaven."* Again, we've already talked about this, but He starts with, *"Our Father in Heaven"* which is a proper recognition of your relationship with God.

One of the things I hate is when people are so formal with God that it's like, oh, I'm even struggling to find the right words and that guy in the front row is gone, he usually helps me. But it just seems so distant. It seems so, just, do I even know you?

But He says, start off by saying *"...Father."* *"...Father."* I like that. It brings it to that personal level. And notice it's not my Father, it's *"Our Father."* Did you catch that? Which also reinforces the fact that I've been born into a community of people. I'm in a family and God is *"Our Father"* right? *"Our Father."* I like that too. I like being reminded that I am part of a community of believers.

He says, *"hallowed be... (your) name."* Hallowed, of course, just means holy. It's just, you're saying, God, you're holy. That's all you're really saying there. Lord, you're holy. We begin by ascribing that praise and honor to the One who is worthy.

And then we say, something related to *"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."* And Jesus is going to actually have more to say about that in later on in this chapter. But here He incorporates this as really the very first petition. Did you notice that?

All we've done is praise up to this point and recognize God for who He is relationally to us. But now as we begin the petition, it begins not with me, not even with you. Not about us at all. It's about Him and His kingdom.

And we are to begin before any personal requests come out of our mouth, our first concern is to be Godward, He says. Put your priorities and your focus where it needs to be.

And I believe that God wants you and me to be passionate about God's kingdom and about God's rule, which we struggle sometimes to see in this world and in this life. We know that He is sovereign. It's a wonderful word, sovereign. It

means that God is above all and there's no power or authority that supersedes His own. That's what sovereignty means.

We know that because the Bible says that God's sovereign. Do we always see His sovereignty operating in the world around us? No, we don't see it all the time.

And one of the reasons for that is that God allows much of what goes on in the world to go on, even though it's bad, because it got started by sin. It was man's choosing to start the ball rolling in that direction. And so in many respects, God lets that ball roll.

And so we, as the body of Christ, are to pray, Lord, first of all, let Your kingdom just saturate this world in which I live, and let Your will, Your ultimate will, be done here on this earth, as I know that it is done in heaven. Because I know that You're sovereign, and I know that You're above all. And so we're praying here for God's rule right in everything.

And next we then come to our needs and it's a very simple thing. *"Give us this day our daily bread,"* and this is not talking about specifically just a loaf of bread. The term bread or meat, even in the King James Bible, it is just a reference to food.

And this is really just us saying Lord, I lay my needs at Your feet, whatever they may be. And I want to trust You to meet my needs. And that's the simple aspect of that prayer. Lord, you know what I need and I lay those things at your feet.

And then we are to pray, *"and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."* And I think that, and I'm preaching to myself here too, daily forgiveness is important, asking for forgiveness. But people, we don't ask for forgiveness for the purpose of keeping ourselves saved. Right?

The purpose is to make sin, or make sure rather, that our sins don't become a blockade or a barrier to our relationship with other people and our relationship, frankly, with God. Because unconfessed sin can do that. We all know that. And so we're to say, forgive us our debts. Lord, you forgive us as we also have forgiven those who are in debt to us for some reason.

And next we say in verse 13, *"...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."* Some translations say, *"deliver us from the evil one."* And the final part of this model prayer is geared toward recognizing the things that can so easily

steer us off course, the temptations, and the works of the enemy, that can easily throw us away. And so we are to actively be praying against those things. And that's what this is all about.

And we're basically praying that the Lord would increase our discernment in the area of temptations that we are most likely to fall to, or that are most likely to lure us away from the Lord. And we're saying, Lord, lead us away from that sort of stuff.

And then He also, *"but deliver us also from... evil."* And so we're to actively be praying that the, that God would foil the plans of the enemy in our lives. That's spiritual warfare. Actively praying, Lord, first of all, lead me away from the things that could easily lure me away from You. And then I pray that you would deliver me at all times from the work of the of the evil one.

And then Jesus makes this additional statement almost as a footnote to what He had said earlier about forgiveness. And He said, *"For if you,"* verse 14. *"...if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,"* <sup>15</sup> *but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

And this can be a troubling statement for some, but the point of the statement is to simply make clear that when we come to God for forgiveness, and He's assuming that we're going to follow this prayer, and we're going to say something related to, forgive us our debts and forgive me for the things that I'm indebted to You about.

So He says, when you do come and when you ask for forgiveness related to the things that you have done, please understand that if you are at the same time, willingly choosing to withhold forgiveness from others, that's a problem. And if you're choosing instead to hold on to bitterness, you've created a problem for yourself related to this whole concept of forgiveness. Because you see, the bottom line is that as Christians, we just simply don't have the luxury to not forgive others.

Yeah, but pastor Paul, you don't know what somebody did to me. You're right, I don't. But that's not the point. It's not... The point is what Jesus did for you and what you did against Him and He still forgave you. And you know what, you did against Him was worse than what that person did against you.

I don't have to know what that person did against you. What you did against God is worse. You know why? What that person did against you was one sinner

violating another sinner. What you did against God was a sinner violating a holy God. Puts it in a different universe, different orbit. Different matter altogether.

You see, we don't have an option of being unforgiving, and here's why. When you forgive, when you... Let me say this, when you refuse to forgive someone for something that they've done to hurt you, you are exposing the fact that you have no real understanding of what Jesus did for you on the cross. That's the bottom line. That's what you're doing by withholding forgiveness. You are declaring openly that you have lost sight of what Jesus did for you when He suffered.

And you know what? It's like taking His suffering and throwing it back in His face. Just saying, and that's not something any of us want to do ever.

If you're struggling to forgive someone who has hurt you, my advice is that you go to the Lord and tell Him, because first of all, He already knows, okay. You're not going to surprise Him.

But secondly, you need to come to Him and confess your inability to forgive because He knows that too. And He's not going to stop loving you because you admitted that you were having a hard time forgiving.

In fact, I believe that's the first step to really walking in forgiveness, is recognizing that I lack the ability at times to do that. And coming before the Lord with a willing heart.

I believe God is more concerned with your willingness to forgive than your ability to forgive. Can I say that again? I believe He cares more about your willingness to forgive than your ability to forgive.

He wants you to be willing. And if you're willing, He'll give you the ability because there's nothing God can't do. All things are possible with Him. Will you just be willing? Lord, I'm willing to forgive this person, but I can't do it by myself. That's what we ought to be saying. And I think that honors the Lord. I really do.

One more warning about hypocrisy. Verse 16. Look with me in your Bible. He says, *"And when you fast, do not look (like a) gloomy (Gus, I just threw that in there) like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,"* And that's what people did back then in everyday kind of life.

But He says, *“<sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”*

As you know, fasting is abstaining from food for a period of time so as to focus one's heart in the area of prayer. And when you go without food, it can be troublesome when your stomach's growling and you want to eat. But for whatever reason, some people used that idea that I'm suffering as a badge of spirituality that they wanted everybody to see. Did you notice by the way that I'm spiritual? Did you catch on? I'm a really, really spiritual person because I'm fasting right now and this is hard. This is hard stuff.

Well, Jesus says that's all the attention they're going to get. They ruined their ability to fast, and pray, and really draw close to the heart of God because what they were doing was seeking to impress other people.

Jesus says, when you fast, keep it to yourself. Don't let anybody know you're fasting. And then He gives the promise: *“...your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”* All right.

Let's read verses 19 through 24. *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where (neither moth, that's a, put moth and rust together, it comes to most. Anyway) moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

*<sup>22</sup> “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, <sup>23</sup> but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*

*<sup>24</sup> “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.”*

All right, this is a great section of Scripture, but Jesus is talking to us and exhorting us about where we are making our investments in life. And I'm not just talking about financial investments.

Jesus clearly tells us that if the focal point of our lives is to invest only in the things of this world that are liable to loss, then there's a good chance you're going to lose everything. And then what are you going to have to show for yourself? And anybody who's ever made investments in this world knows how

liable they are to loss. I mean, in a single day, you can look at your investments and go, oh, mercy. They're all gone. And that can happen.

So what Jesus is telling you and me to do is to “*lay up treasures*” or in other words, make investments. Another way of putting it, “*in heaven.*” And the reason that heaven is a good place to do that is because it is not liable to loss. He says nothing there is going to affect your investments. Right? The FDIC has got nothing on heaven. Heaven is the most secure place to invest.

But I think in this whole section of where he's talking about these things, there are two very convicting statements in this passage. Let me put them up on the screen just to highlight them. First of all, the first convicting statement is,

**Two Statements:**

*“... where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

*“No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and money.”*

*“... where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* Wow. And then the second one is, *“No one can serve two masters...”*

And that means you can't serve God and money. And the reason that first statement is convicting is because it exposes our duplicity. Because we call Jesus our treasure, but then we spend an inordinate amount of time investing in things other than Him, right?

And He says, you want to know where your heart's at? Just look where your treasure's at. Just check your treasure. There's your heart and vice versa. Either way, you can see where your treasure is. You can see where your heart is by looking at the other one.

And the second statement that He makes is convicting because it exposes the real idea behind having our treasures in the things of this world. It's nothing less than the worship of another god. When we put our treasure in something of this world, when we treasure it, then it really becomes the thing that we lean upon. The thing that we seek after, the thing that we're living for.

And Jesus said, you know, don't you? You can't serve two masters. Can't have Me and worldly investments. It's not possible. And I'm not saying you can't have worldly investments. I'm not saying that. Just make sure they're not your treasure.

So many times it's so easy for us just to take a position related to some of these things of extremism and say, well, Jesus is condemning all worldly, so if you have any worldly investments in the stock market or something like that, oh man, you know, your salvation may be in jeopardy. It's not what He's saying.

Again, the Sermon on the Mount is all about the heart. God sees all. The heart. Okay. And He wants you to be constantly asking yourself the question. Is this where my heart is? Is this where my treasure is? Because you know what? God doesn't have any problem with people being wealthy necessarily, as long as it doesn't cause a problem. As long as your heart's not in it.

As long as you're, you have the attitude like, hey, easy come, easy go. The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. If He's given me this wealth, great, wonderful. But you know what? I'm not going to worship it. I'm not going to focus on it and I'm not going to live for it.

I'm going to worship Him. I'm going to focus on Him and I'm going to live for Him. And if He takes it away. I'll still, I'll survive. In fact, I did fine before that money was there. He took just perfect care of me before I had what I have now. And if it goes away, He'll continue to take care of me. See, that's the proper focus. So He says, be careful.

Now there's a couple of statements Jesus made in verses 22 and 23 that I want to highlight here where He said *"The eye is the lamp of the body"* because that can be a little confusing and we wonder now what in the world does that mean?

You got to understand that in the Old Testament the eye, a person's eye, was not just something they saw physically what was in front of them. It spoke of really the direction of a person's life and what they were taking in. And so Jesus is saying to be very careful. He's warning us about the things that we fix our eyes on. Right?

We talked about this back when Jesus was being tempted by the devil. We talked about the fact that one of the sins that Satan tempted Him with was the lust of the eyes. And that's something, because we all have a sinful nature. We all have that propensity to look at something and want it.

The Bible calls it, covetousness. To covet something. I see it, I want it. And it could be anything from my neighbor's wife, to his car, to his home. Anything, could be anything.

Jesus is warning us here about coveting what we see. And what we see in the world, you see, is based in a world of darkness. You got to understand that this whole statement, where Jesus says, the eye is the lamp of the body, and the warning that goes with it, it's based in the fact that you know and understand already going into it, that everything in the world is in darkness.

The things of the world, the things the world runs after, because the world is shrouded in darkness, the things that you run after in the world are going to make you dark if you fix your eyes on them. Does that make sense? And that's really what Jesus is saying.

And that's why He says, "*if your eye is bad,*" and then what that means is if your eye is fixated on dark things in a dark world. If that's all you're looking at, if that's all you're fixated on, then your whole body is going to be full of darkness. Cause that's all you're looking at, right?

What He wants for you and me is eyes that are looking at to Him, simple as that. Because He is the light. He is the light of the world. And so when we're focused on Him, that's how we let the light of His presence into our soul. And that does a whole different work of preparing us to properly love and serve God. And walk in joy and peace and all the other things, right?

Now this last section of Matthew chapter 6 is all about worrying, which is... I thought, man, I was tempted just to skip it because I know you guys never struggle with worry. Anyway, so He says here... I was obviously being facetious. We all worry, every single one of us.

<sup>25</sup> "*Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life,* (and that's the broad statement. Now He gets into specifics, like) *what... (you're going to) eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than (those things) food, and the body more than clothing?*" And even though that's rhetorical, those are good questions. Isn't life more than that?

He goes on and says, verse 26, "*Look at the birds of the air:* (when's the last time you saw a bird that was worried about what it was going to eat? He says) *they neither sow* (that means they don't plant) *nor reap* (they don't go out and harvest) *nor* (they don't) *gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*" Can I just stop you for a moment there?

This is a good, it's another rhetorical question, but it's a really, really good one. Are you not more valuable than they?

Now you see, the reason this is a good question, particularly today, is because we live in the world of the naturalist. And the naturalist says, you have no more right to be here than your dog. Or a tree or a flower. That we're all part of the same ecosystem, and we're all just animals, and plants, and birds, and fish. And you have no more right, and you're no more special than the tree you planted in front of your house. Hey, that's a message the naturalist has been preaching for quite a while now. And there's even some Christians that I think are leaning that direction.

You know what the Son of God says? Are you not more valuable than they? And even though it's a rhetorical question, it demands a yes answer. Yes, you are. You know why? Because you were created in God's image. Your dog wasn't. I know you think highly of your dog, and I'm sorry about that. But that's just the way it is.

Here's another great question. Verse 27. *"And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"* No, you won't be able. You might be able to take a few away by worrying.

*"<sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (in other words, they don't go out and work and earn a wage and then make their clothing) <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory (and he was the richest man who ever lived on the face of the earth. He says) 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, (I love this statement) 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 (and again, that's a reference to ungodly people) seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all."*

There's another good statement, by the way, to underline, highlight in your Bible, because the Son of God, who ought to know things like this, and yes, He does, is giving you a very special insight into life.

You know what that insight is? Your Heavenly Father knows. He knows. He knows everything you need. Every, all of it. Not just some of it, all of it. He knows. He knows. God knows. Right.

And by the way when Jesus calls us, oh, you of little faith, He's referring to those of us who have forgotten that God knows. You see He says, your Father knows but some of you forget that and so instead of knowing, you're of little

faith at that point because you see worry is the opposite of faith. Okay. And worry, you ready guys, is a sin. Oh, of course it is.

You know what sin means? It means it's missing the mark. Do you think worrying isn't missing the mark? You think worrying is what God wants you to do? No, it's missing the mark. If you worry, you've missed the mark. The mark is trusting God with all of your heart, leaning not on your own understanding. That's the mark.

And it might be a difficult mark sometimes. But it's the mark nonetheless, that's the target. That's, in fact, that's the little red dot in the middle of the target, right? So He reminds us, God knows, God cares, the question is, are you going to trust Him. That's it's what it comes down to in all of our lives, doesn't it?

We know from the Bible that God knows all of our needs. He cares about our needs and yet we worry anyway.

Then Jesus says, verse 33, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* And He's talking to us about our priorities.

Remember He told us in the Lord's Prayer, as we begin our prayer, after we've praised the Lord, which is proper, we begin by saying, *“Your kingdom come, your will be done.”* You know what that is? That's seeking first the kingdom of God, seeking first God's kingdom.

And you see, the reason that we become so upset and easily worried about everything that's going on in our lives is because we have so little faith. And we've stopped focus. Let me put it this way. Because we're focusing so much on my needs, I begin to worry. That's one of the things that fosters worry. It's a fixation on my needs.

And so He tells us, seek first the kingdom of God. Don't fixate on your needs. Start by fixating on the kingdom of God. No, that's not going to cause you trouble and just be praying, Lord, let *“your will be done, here on earth as it is in heaven.”* Make that your top priority. Seek first the kingdom of God and what's His promise? All these other things that you would otherwise spend all your time worrying about and getting an ulcer over, they'll follow, they'll follow. They'll all be done in time.

Here's the conclusion. Verse 34. *“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.”* In other words, tomorrow's going to

have plenty of things to deal with. So don't borrow tomorrow's trouble. You've heard people say that. Don't borrow trouble. And that's what they're really saying. The same thing Jesus is saying here.

He says, “*Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*” In other words, what you've got right now, that's enough. You know, what you're dealing with today, that's enough. Just deal with that. Don't deal with tomorrow because then you're piling tomorrow onto today and it's just going to be worse.

He's telling you and me that we have a responsibility to live for the Lord today. Not for tomorrow, but to live for the Lord today, and let God take care of tomorrow. And I think that's a really good thing that we should probably incorporate into our prayers. Lord, I just, help me just to deal with what's going on today, and to trust You. And help me to not worry about tomorrow, but to just let You take care of that because worrying about tomorrow is really dumb. And I don't want to be dumb. I want to be smart and I want to trust the Lord with all of my heart.

Remember, that's the goal, that's the target. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. Oh, that's so hard. But in all your ways, acknowledge Him. The problem is in all our ways we acknowledge only us, our self. We acknowledge self. And that's not what we're told to do. And by the way, that's, you know, that's in Proverbs. (Proverbs 3:6) So acknowledge the Lord in all of your ways, and then He will direct your paths, amen.

Let's stand together. We'll close in prayer. If you need prayer, come on up here after the service is over. We'll have some folks up here to pray with you.

Father, we've looked at a lot of things this morning in Your Word. And a lot of things that we're convicted by, You spoken Lord to the heart of the matter in so many ways in these verses. And we pray, Lord, in the name of Jesus, that we would take these things truly to heart and put them into practice in our lives.

Help us, Lord God, to be sincere and always to remember that You look at the heart and You care about the heart and the motive behind the actions. And help us Lord to understand that and to continually bring our heart before You that we might know and understand and walk in discernment related to what's really behind what we see with our eyes.

We thank You Father. We praise You for your goodness. And we ask You to guide us and direct us through this day And we ask it in the name of Jesus and all God's people said together, amen. Have a good rest of your day