

Session 1

September 1, 2019

A CENTERED LIFE

Matthew 6:25-34

“Busy.”

That single word seems to sum up just about everybody’s life. The demands of work, home, school, family, church, and a multitude of other obligations pull us in a dozen directions, often at the same time. The result is tired bodies, cluttered minds, frazzled emotions, strained relationships, and plenty of worry. The “centered life” is a consistent life, centered on Christ and His provision. It is the antidote to the harried, anxious lifestyle so many of us attempt to live. It begins by reflecting on what really matters.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5, 6, 7), Jesus called His disciples to Him, seated Himself before them, and taught them. The multitudes (consisting of the common folks of the day), drew in close and quiet to hear what the Master had to say to His disciples. This was for their benefit as well. Here, midway through the discourse, Jesus confronts the sin of worry. He gives them three key thoughts to consider.

Think of your priorities (v. 25). Verse 25 refers back to the topic of money introduced in verse 19 and concluding with the declaration, “you can’t serve both God and money” (or “riches”). God’s word has much to say about the discipline of work. Proverbs 14:23 says, “Work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty.” Paul said in 1 Timothy 5:8, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Even more bluntly, he told the church at Thessalonica, “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.” (2 Thess. 3:10). The problem isn’t with working, but rather supporting a lifestyle that requires working all the time! Those who worry only about work are missing out on the abundant life that Christ promised (John 10:10).

Trust in God’s provision (vv. 26-32). While seated on the hillside, it was quite easy for the Lord to point overhead at the birds flying by, and down in the valley where the wildflowers bloomed. His audience of common working folks would have appreciated the simple examples of God’s provision. If God took care of His creation, would He not take care of them? Were they not more valuable than birds and flowers? Three pointed applications are made by the Lord. First, worrying about it doesn’t help (v. 27). Second, worrying about the simple necessities of life demonstrates how little faith we have in our Creator (v. 30). Trust Him...He knows exactly what we need (v. 32). Third, the pursuit of materialism is something lost people are known for and should not characterize God’s children (v. 32).

Take a Kingdom perspective (vv. 33-34). The context of verse 33 makes it refer specifically to getting one’s heart right regarding the priority of heavenly treasures over material things. But like the Golden Rule that Jesus gives later in this same discourse (7:12), the application sweeps much further than that hillside in Galilee. I take both terms to their fullest extent: *the kingdom of God* is all that pertains to the honor and glory of God. It’s everything that He represents and everything that He desires for His children. *His righteousness* is His character. Just as heavenly treasures outweigh earthly ones, so God’s righteousness outweighs man’s. Jesus already

mentioned this (see 5:20, for example), but the remainder of Christ's ministry will highlight and reinforce both the coming of God's kingdom as well as the requirements for participating in it. In verse 34, Jesus returns to the simple topic of the needless worry. Every tomorrow brings with it its own challenges. So relax...trust your heavenly Father...and focus on living for Him today.