

This third message in the series continues the focus on the character and promises of God. Jesus knows us; he knows our essential needs and wants us to trust Him. This week's message comes from the sermon on the mount. In light of our anxious generation, this is a very powerful and needed message. We all need His exhortation, His promises, and grow in faith in His good and faithful love.

THINGS ARE TIGHT

Do you remember times when things were tight in your budget? When? What made it tight?
For Diane and I, we remember when our food budget was \$10 per week.

INTRODUCTION

We are continuing in a series spurred on by an epidemic of fear and anxiety in our culture. These emotions are not new. One of the earlier and most repeated commands from God is to "Fear not." Fear and anxiety are our natural response to difficulties, threats, and bad news. Today's headlines look like yesterday's – 'There's trouble ahead.'

In previous weeks, we looked at the call to pray, to entrust to God our needs and fears. Last week, our focus was on understanding that God is compassionate and forgiving. We need not cower in fear of God when we have messed up and then come to Him. To those who are humble, God welcomes and celebrates us. This week, we will listen to Jesus' words on our common causes of anxiety. Let's dig in by prayerfully reading Matthew 6:19-34 and reflecting on the character and promises of God.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What is Jesus addressing in these verses?

Our essential needs and our propensity to be fearful, anxious, and worry.

What symbolism does Jesus use in vs. 19-24? How are they connected? What do they represent?

Treasure – what we value

Eye – what we are taking into our minds, desires, etc.

Master – what is controlling our direction and results

These are a picture of how wealth, safety, and comfort are connected.

In that audience, what were people anxious about? (vs. 25-31)

Basic needs – food, drink (water was a challenge), and clothing (this was very precious and expensive – most people own one or at most two changes)

What did Jesus say to observe? Why these things? What was Jesus' point?

Birds and flowers.

God alone provides for them. They don't worry.

We are more important to God and will also provide for us as we trust in Him.

Read back through and record the words and references to what we pursue in life. How are these connected with the character of God and Jesus' final application?

Personal application.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What things are we anxious about in our world?

Sharing question

What did Jesus say about what we "treasure?" How is the "eye" involved? What does our "treasure" reveal about our lives? How does our treasure affect our minds?

Sharing question

What does it look like to lay up treasures on earth vs. in heaven? How do we lay up treasures in heaven?

We lay up treasures in heaven by trusting in and serving God in this life. Instead of prioritizing our wealth, security, and comfort in this life, we prioritize serving God and blessing others.

Does it help to say to people, 'Don't worry?' How is it different for Jesus to say it in verses 25 and 31? What did He offer?

Sharing question

What were Jesus' concluding applications on our topic? How would this change our lives?

Sharing question

APPLY IT THIS WEEK (HG leaders: You might want to walk through some of these applications.)

Below are some thoughts and applications from these powerful truths from Jesus. Consider what God may be asking you to understand, believe, and apply.

- God cares for His people by providing all that is needed. How should this change how I see my life and God's provision? How should this affect my feelings?
- Do you sense God's goodness and provision when you see nature? Is this something that God wants us to do?
- What we pursue reveals what we treasure. What we treasure becomes our master to whom we are enslaved. What we treasure occupies our heart, mind, emotions, etc.
 - Key = setting our minds on the things above (Colossians 3:1-2; Psalm 63:3-5)
- Disciples should ask, 'What do I treasure? What has my heart?'
- The pursuit of unhealthy / earthly treasures leads to our destruction
- The root of anxiety is unbelief in the goodness, provision, and care of God
- Guarding your eyes is essential as they are connected with desire. (see 1 John 2:15-16)

Grace to you, my brothers and sisters.

Steve