



## **A Bible Study Based on Matthew 6:26, 32b, 33**

*Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ... and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matthew 6:26, 32b, 33).*

### **Goal**

Through a study of Matthew 6, participants will seek God's salvation first and then entrust their daily life to His loving care.

### **Participants will seek answers to these questions:**

- *Therefore do not be anxious* (Matthew 6:31)
  - Do I worry? Should I worry? Is God convicting me of worry?
- *Seek first the kingdom of God* (Matthew 6:33)
  - What is His kingdom? What does it mean to seek first?
- *And His righteousness* (Matthew 6:33)
  - What is His righteousness? How do I attain it?
- *And all these things will be added to you* (Matthew 6:33)
  - What is included in all things? How does this apply to LWML?

## Study and Discuss

### Read Matthew 6:25-34.

Do you worry? About what do you worry? The text looks at food, drink and clothing. You probably don't worry about those things. You may worry about what to wear or what to eat, but is that really what Jesus means? Discuss some typical worries of today. Have participants make a list. Consider breaking into small groups of two – three.

What is worry, really? Isn't it turning our focus from what God can and is doing, to what we can do? Luther says, "Whether we want it so or do not want it so, all our care falls back upon God alone, and we are very rarely left to take care of ourselves. And even when the Lord at times lets us shift for ourselves, He does so in order to move us to acknowledge His goodness and finally to see the great difference between His care and ours" (taken from *What Luther Says*).

What does the text say about worrying in verse 27? *And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?* In one of his last letters to his wife Katherine, Luther wrote, "You want to assume the cares of your God, just as if He were not almighty."

Don't worry – it sounds like Law, doesn't it? Can we keep the Law perfectly? Consider verse 32. *For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.* The unbeliever has reason to worry and seek his needs, but we know that our Father knows our needs. Is the Sermon on the Mount Law or Gospel? Consider Jesus' audience in Matthew 5:1-2. In this context, He is describing the way people who have received the Gospel now live. Let's explore some more.

### ***But seek first the kingdom of God (v. 33).***

What is the kingdom of God? *The Lutheran Study Bible* note for that verse says, "Desire above all to live under the rule of one true God." See Matthew 3:2 and Matthew 4:17. John the Baptist speaks of the kingdom of heaven being at hand. Jesus preached the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Let's go to the catechism for an explanation of the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer:

*What is the kingdom of God?*

*The kingdom of God is His ruling as king over the whole universe (kingdom of power), the church on earth (kingdom of grace), and the church and angels in heaven (kingdom of glory).*

*The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all (Psalm 103:19). (Kingdom of power)*

*Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God' (John 3:5). (Kingdom of grace)*

*The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen (2 Timothy 4:18). (Kingdom of glory)*

When Matthew 6 says *seek first the kingdom of God*, to which kingdom is it referring?

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).*

*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13-14).*

The Catechism states, *We do not pray that God's kingdom of power would come, because that is already present everywhere, but we ask God to give us his Holy Spirit so that we believe his Word and lead godly lives as members of his kingdom of grace.* (Question 213, Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, 1986)

How are we to seek His Kingdom of grace first? Praise God, it's a gift received through His Holy Spirit. I'm living in that kingdom daily. It's not about me, but about God's gracious work in me.

### ***...and his righteousness (v. 33).***

What is His righteousness? Paul wrote extensively on righteousness in Romans. We could study this topic all day long. But let's look at just a few verses, remembering that in Greek the word Paul uses is translated as "right" or "just."

*But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it – the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:21-24).*

*Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:18-21).*

We could read all of Romans 8. It reminds us that we no longer walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit who dwells in us. *But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness (Romans 8:10).*

How do we attain righteousness? Praise God, it's not through anything I do, but what Christ has done for me.

So, Matthew 6:33, is it Law or Gospel?

If it is Law, could we obey it perfectly? No! But thanks be to God that it is understood as Gospel. That is, Christ has won our righteousness for us and provided entrance for us into His kingdoms of grace and mercy. It's not our own merit, but His. We seek first His kingdom daily as we live under His grace through Baptism, hearing the Word and receiving His very body and blood.

***And all these things will be added to you (v. 33).***

What is included in all things? Let's return to your list of worries. What is God promising about all of these things in Matthew 6:33? Can you think of Bible verses to address each? Return to groups and then share with large group.

Some examples that may come up (or the leader can mention if they do not):

Physical needs (money, poverty, employment, shelter, etc.) Matthew 6:26, 28, and 30

Health issues (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

Relationships, tough times (Philippians 4:13)

Our own weaknesses (Romans 8:26)

Government (Romans 13:1, 6-7)

Evil of this world and the devil (Romans 8:37-39)

Sharing the Gospel (Luke 12:11-12)

Finally, do you worry about the future of LWML? Are you anxious about the state of our church body and the work of LWML?

How does Matthew 6:33 also apply to the LWML? Remember our LWML pledge (recite together):

In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and His blood-bought gift of redemption we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have; and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Amen. (LWML League Pledge, © 1955 authored by Rev. Harry Fricke)

As LWML we seek first His kingdom, and have nothing to worry about!

Close with prayer.



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