

DO NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR LIFE
A Meditation for the Memorial Service of Andrea Loth
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Text: Matthew 6:25-34 (text on reverse)

A progressive or terminal illness, a personal or family difficulty, the death of a sister, wife, mother or dear friend – these are the crises of life that challenge us the most. We mourn Andrea’s death and our loss. Today you may be anxious about yourself or those whom you love. Just two days after Easter, you may have doubts about your faith, and God’s presence in your life. You may be struggling with life’s deeper and ultimate meaning. The death of someone close to us does that. It is inevitable to be troubled and confused by our feelings. Our thoughts become jumbled. And so we ask, “What are we to do now?”

Which makes our text from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount both timely and hard to hear. “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” We need to hear these words today. We may find them hard to hear, hard to believe, certainly hard to act on. Which is why we need to hear them again.

“Do not worry about your life.” These words of advice, this counsel of practical faith, come from the middle section of our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount. In chapter 5, Jesus lays out his program for holy living for his followers. Jesus teaches what life in communion with God and in community with the neighbor is all about. And it is a pretty demanding call. Then in chapter 7, Jesus prepares his followers for the difficulties they will meet when they try to live by his teachings. But here in chapter 6, Jesus offers gentle, encouraging, personal words for daily living. He teaches his followers how to pray. He teaches about the dangers of money. He teaches his followers how to deal with the trials of daily living. How to enjoy life in all of its fullness. And how to face crises like personal challenges, untimely death, and chronic progressive disease.

Do not worry about your life. You are always within God’s care. Consider the birds of the air, Jesus says. They neither sow nor reap, and they are doing fine! Just listen to their spring songs! Take in their colorful beauty. Your heavenly Father feeds the birds, doesn’t he? Are you not of more value than they? “His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me” the old spiritual says. Model your life after the birds of the air, and you will do just fine.

Look at the lilies of the field. They neither toil nor spin, yet the flowers of the field display beautiful apparel Madison Avenue will never touch!

We are anxious and we worry. And what good does that do us? Listen carefully, Jesus is NOT saying, don’t face your troubles, Jesus is NOT saying, life is easy. What Jesus DOES say is this: *what good does worrying do for you?* Then he delivers his punch line: “Strive first for the kingdom of God and God’s goodness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” In other words, place your trust in God, and everything else will fall into line. Yes, your troubles will still be with you. But with your life entrusted to God, all of life’s troubles take on a new and different meaning.

“So,” Jesus concludes, “do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.” Such is the promise of the gospel of God we have through Jesus Christ. “Do not worry about your life!” Entrust yourself to the God who knows you by name before you are even born. “Do not worry about your life!” Walk with the God who walks with you even through the valley of the shadow of death. “Do not worry about your life!” Open yourself to the goodness of God’s creation that surrounds you, and live within the beauty of the good earth God has given us. “Do not worry about your life!” For in life and in death, we belong to God. *Thanks be to God!* AMEN.

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look 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? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

³⁴“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.