# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“What Do We Seek?”**

**Matthew 6:31-34**

 **November 1, 2020**

This morning we return to the 6th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, where Jesus is encouraging his followers not to worry. We began two weeks ago with verses 19-24 where Jesus contrasted two kinds of treasure, two kinds of vision, and two kinds of master. Worry, Jesus teaches, comes from storing up the wrong kind of treasure, that is, earthly treasure, because earthly treasure has a way of disintegrating and eventually disappearing. Earthly treasure is what I consider valuable for myself, to accomplish my desires and satisfy my wants. The more I try to accumulate such treasure for myself, the more I will worry about losing it, because I only have myself to rely upon to be able to hold on to it. Similarly, with the wrong kind of vision, I look around at the things of this world and see them only for what they can do for me. My soul becomes dark with worry that I might not be able to secure them for myself. Finally, with the wrong kind of master, I make these things I am accumulating or would like to accumulate a priority in my life, a master, if you will, a false god that I believe will satisfy me and make me happy if only I devote myself to it. Worry comes from wrong treasure, wrong vision, and a wrong master.

Last Sunday we moved on verses 25-20. Having shown us where worry originates, Jesus goes on to tell us not to worry, because we have a heavenly Father who knows what we need and he will provide. Jesus encourages us to consider the birds of the air and the lilies of the field and how well God provides for them. Are we not, as Pastor McLane emphasized, greater than lilies?

Now we come to the third part of Jesus’ three-part teaching on worry. Having explained why we worry and then told us not to worry, he will now tell us what we can do to avoid worry altogether. I invite you to turn with me to Matthew 6:31-34

“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”

Don’t treasure, have a vision for, or allow to be your master anything other than the Kingdom of God, for when you do it will bring you worry. Heavenly treasure, a heavenly vision, and a heavenly Master, all which are aspects of the Kingdom of God, will allow your thoughts to be dominated by a God who richly provides everything you need.

Jesus isn’t discounting the importance of the things of this world. Money, food, clothing, and having a roof over our head are all things that matter. What Jesus is warning us against is taking these things that matter and turning them into things that become more important to us than God. How do we know we have begun to do just that? We know because we are worrying about them rather than trusting God for them.

Probably the best known passage of the Old Testament is the 23rd Psalm. “The Lord is my Shepherd; I have all that I need” including green meadows in which to rest, peaceful streams from which to drink, renewal of strength when I am weak and clear guidance for when I am lost. Even in the darkest times of life he is close beside me, protecting and comforting me. “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.” When the Lord is our Shepherd, when our thoughts are on him, when our eyes look to him, when he is the master of our life, then we will have all that we need.

To seek the Kingdom of God is to make the things of God our primary concern, and we know that the primary concern of God is love for God and love for neighbor. We love God by placing our trust in him, affirming that he is all that we need. And we love our neighbor by caring for them in their time of need.

Later in this Gospel of Matthew, Jesus will speak of people who are hungry and thirsty and naked and sick and in prison. He will point out that those who care for these people in their time of need are people who are living for God and have made the Kingdom of God their primary concern. When you and I take our eyes off ourselves and worry less about what we have, we will be better able to see what others need and be better motivated to provide for them. By doing so, we are seeking the Kingdom of God.

God has placed in our hands the resources that we need to live our lives in this world. We may not have as much as we want, but we have enough. How will we hold it? Will we hold it in an open hand, available for God to take it from our hand and put in into the hand of another who needs it more than we do? Or, will we hold it in a closed hand, refusing to share God’s blessings with others because we are worried about having enough for ourselves? While a closed hand may seem to keep what we have safer, it is a hand that God can’t bless. Only an open hand, ready to share, is a hand that God can continue to fill. “Give and it will be given to you. Pressed down, overflowing, it will spill into your lap.” Seek the Kingdom of God by making it your primary concern, and you can be confident that God will meet all your other concerns.