

# DO NOT BE ANXIOUS

## *A Meditation on Matthew 6:25-33*

“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about so many things.” I wonder how many of us are like Martha? The truth is there is a little Martha in all of us. Most of us don’t think this is a big deal. Worrying or being anxious is just a part of life, right? After all, how can you not worry when terrorists are running free? How can you not worry when you owe more than you earn? How can you not worry when your health is deteriorating? How can you not worry, when it seems like there is always something to worry about?

Before we talk about how to overcome anxiety, let us realize that it does need to be overcome. *Anxiety is a sin*. Three times in Matthew 6:25-33 Jesus commands His people, “Do not be anxious.” And in verse 30 he relates anxiety to those “of little faith.” One writer said, “Worry is the sin of distrusting the promises and providence of God, and yet it is a sin that Christians commit perhaps more frequently than any other.” How can we stop being “worry warts”?

First, consider the birds. “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?” (vs. 26). Theologian John Stott said, “Some may know that I happen myself to have been since boyhood an enthusiastic bird-watcher. I know, of course, that bird-watching is regarded by some as a rather eccentric pastime, but I claim biblical warrant for this activity. “Consider the fowls of the air,” said Jesus according to the AV, and this in basic English could be translated “watch birds!” Indeed I am quite serious, for the Greek verb in his command means “fix your eyes on, so as to take a good look at.”

I can’t read birds like I can read people, but they don’t seem to be terribly stressed out or anxious creatures. I don’t believe they get ulcers or have to worry about heart attacks. In fact, they seem to be relatively happy and content. Why is this? Because *your* heavenly Father takes care of them. So let’s consider the birds, for they illustrate how God provides for His creation.

*Said the robin to the sparrow:*

*“I should really like to know*

*Why these anxious human beings*

*Rush about and worry so.”*

*Said the sparrow to the robin:*

*“Friend, I think that it must be*

*That they have no heavenly Father,*

*Such as cares for you and me.”*

Jesus asks, “Are you not of *more* value than they?” They’re not created in God’s image. Christ didn’t die for their redemption. Promises in the Bible, like Phil. 4:19 (And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus) are not for the birds.

Second, grow in faith. In the middle of this passage dealing with anxiety Jesus says, “O you of little faith.” At the heart of worry is an anemic faith. Your struggle with anxiety is actually a struggle with faith. Worry is essentially the fear of the unknown future. Will I still have a job tomorrow? Will there be more terrorist attacks? Will the economy survive? A Christian may ask these questions, just as non-Christians do, but he can be confident because he is looking to God and not to his employer or the government or the stock market or anywhere else for his security. As the saying goes: We may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. And He has promised to provide for His people.

Third, seek the kingdom. There are really two complementary commands in this passage: Do not be anxious! But seek first the kingdom of God. Since we are naturally going to channel our energies in some direction, God tells us precisely where to channel them. “Seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (vs. 33). In a sense, Jesus is saying, “Do you want to worry? Then worry like a Christian. Worry about advancing my kingdom and living a righteous life. And as you worry

about that, I'dl worry about meeting your needs.ö Sometimes we need to fight fire with fireí or in this case worry with worry. Imagine staying up late at night because you're worried. You're worried about how to reach your neighbors for Christ, and how you can be more holy. This is godly worry that can help conquer ungodly worry.

*By Wayne Christensen/Fox Lake Community Church/ See "Permissions" for reproduction authorization.*

**Permissions:** You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do not alter the wording in any way, you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and you do not make more than 1,000 physical copies. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be explicitly approved by Fox Lake Community Church.

**Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:**

By Wayne Christensen/Fox Lake Community Church.

Website: [www.foxlakechurch.org](http://www.foxlakechurch.org) Email: [wchristensen@foxlakechurch.org](mailto:wchristensen@foxlakechurch.org) 847-587-1331