

THE WORD FOR TODAY

MATTHEW 6, 25-34—“I tell you, do not worry”

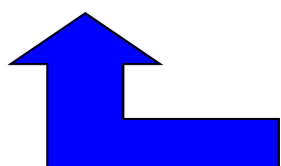
Worry is everywhere at the moment. People are worrying about the state of the world, and about where politics is going in this country. Health is always a concern, and so is money. For some, “Do not worry” is easier said than done.

Jesus may have been speaking two thousand years ago, but he wasn’t speaking to people living in comfort—he was speaking to people with plenty to worry about. They were people living under Roman occupation. Many earned a precarious living from the land or sea. For most of them, life was hard and life expectancy short.

Jesus spent a lot of time in the open air—it was where he did much of his teaching. He often talked about things people could see in front of them, and opened their eyes to what these natural things could teach them about how to live their lives. The Bible passage we look at here is just a small part of “The Sermon on the Mount”. Jesus was being followed by large crowds, hungry to hear what he had to say, and he went up a mountainside, sat down, and taught them. Imagine you are there!



Follow the words of Matthew Chapter 6, from verse 25 to verse 34, on seven panels around the church. The first is just round the corner on the north wall of this little building and the others are on benches round the sides and back of the church building. You will be directed to them. The translation of the Bible used is the New International Version, and you can look it up on the internet under Bible Gateway.

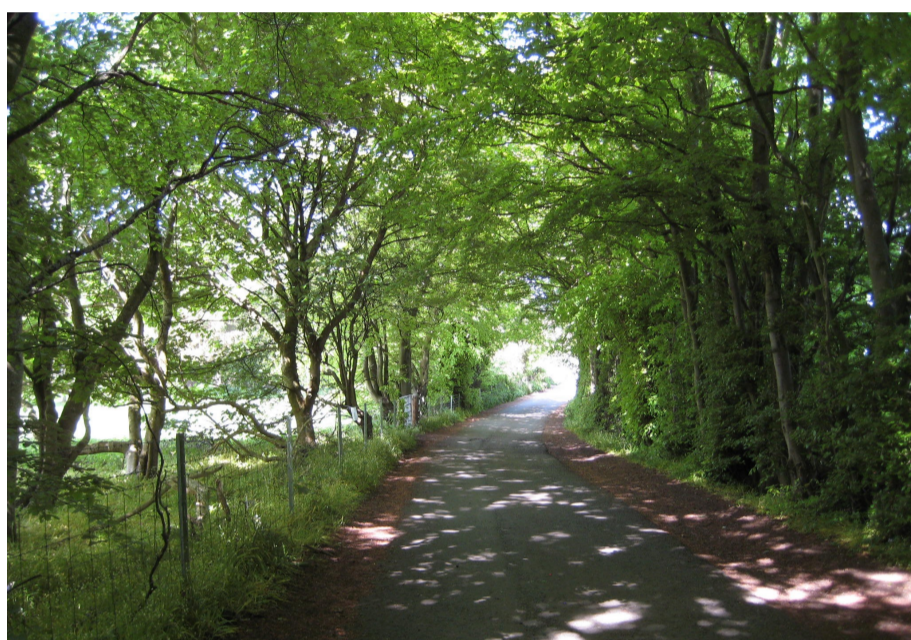


Turn immediately left to find the first Bible extract on the bench

“...I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.

Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”

1



At the height of the Covid pandemic I met a man at the viewpoint on Braid Hills Golf Course admiring the 360° views over the city, the Pentlands etc. “Why have I never come up here before?” he asked. Why indeed!

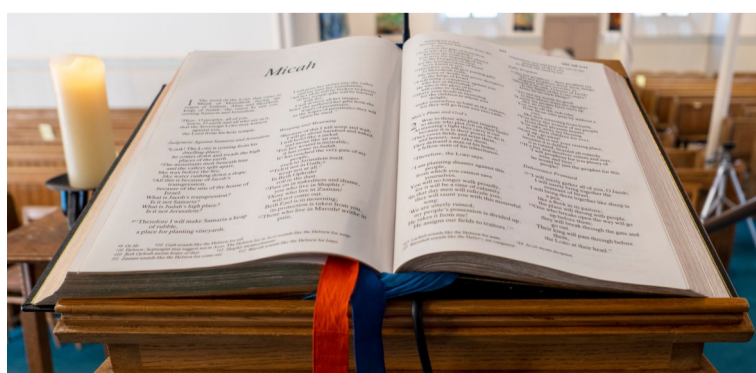
In that strange time, many found footpaths within easy reach they didn't know existed, and views which took their breath away.

Jesus is telling us to celebrate the life we have and enjoy the world we live in. On another occasion he said “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Sit here and feel your pulse—life is coursing through you. Life is a wonderful thing and our bodies quite amazing creations. Open your eyes and ears to the world all around you, and live!

*Lord, thank you for the precious gift of life.
Thank you for the wonderful world around me.
Teach me to treasure my life
and to take time to live it to the full.*

(No. 2 is on the bench just round the corner of the church building you are looking at. This might mean having to walk on the grass if scaffolding is in the way. If so, and if you want to avoid this, take the left-hand path and walk round the church clockwise until you find No. 2)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“Look at the birds of the air;
they do not sow or reap
or store away in barns,
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
Are you not much more valuable than they?”**

2



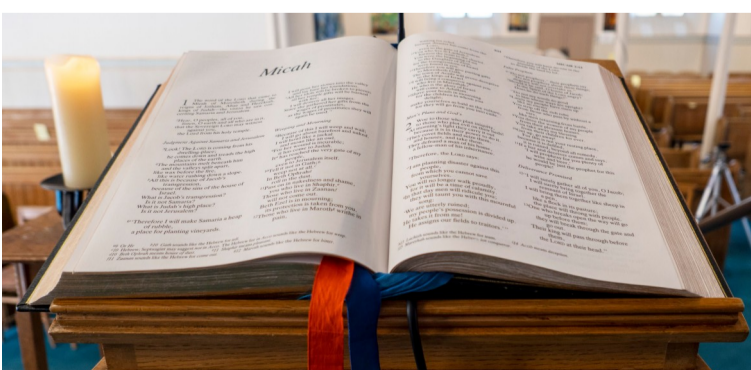
On another occasion Jesus said that God knew every time a sparrow fell to the ground—that’s some thought, isn’t it? If you have ever questioned in your mind whether God really cares about you, then read Jesus’ words again. God cares about everything he has created, and human beings have a very special place in his heart. God cares. God provides.

But worry is hard to suppress if the scan results are taking a long time to come through, or if the kitchen cupboards are running low. The questions re-surface. How could God possibly know what a mess I am in? Why should he care? How can he help?

It’s a big step to take—to believe and to trust—but God can give you hope.

*Lord, help me to believe that you are there,
that you know me, and that you care about me.
Give me the trust that I need to confide in you.*

(No. 3 is further along this side of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”

3



The point Jesus was making was that worry in itself is unproductive. He might have added that it doesn't do your health and well-being any good either. At worst it can make you ill—wrecking your sleep, your digestion, your temper, and your mental health.

There is an alternative. Take your problems to the God who gave you life and knows you and loves you. Lay your worries down at his feet. Ask him to take them away from you.

Then ask him to help you move forward, to show you the way.

*Lord, I am weighed down with worries.
Please take this burden from me.
Please help me to look at the source of my worries
and find a way forward.*

(Walk along the back of the church to find No. 4 on the bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“And why do you worry about clothes?
See how the lilies of the field grow.
They do not labour or spin.
Yet I tell you that not even Solomon
in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.”
If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here
today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much
more clothe you, O you of little faith?”**

4

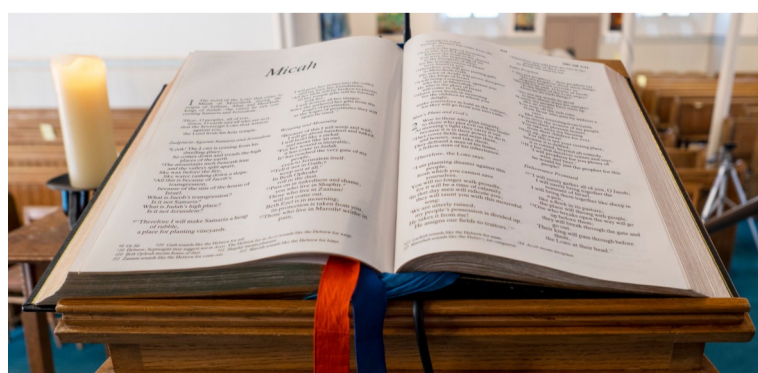


A walk along Stanedykehead usually lifts the spirits, especially if there are poppies in the field. Flanders fields, dug into trenches for World War I, became poppy fields afterwards. The Standykehead field was dug up for a new water pipeline from Glencorse before Liberton Grange was built, and produced the same effect. God can provide such transformational change. Jesus reminds us here that God bothers to make such flowers things of beauty even though they will not last long.

Jesus reminds us too that God cares for us, his human creation, so much more. He wants us to be things of beauty, lifting people's spirits by who we are and how we live our lives, and he's the one with the power to transform.

*Lord, transform my faith so that it can be a strong firm rock for my life.
Lord, transform my life,
so that I am a thing of beauty in your eyes,
and a blessing to others..*

(Walk along the back of the church and turn right to find panel 5 on the prayer bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“So do not worry, saying
‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we
drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’
For the pagans run after all these things,
and your heavenly Father knows
that you need them.”**

5



I must admit I very rarely go into the centre of Edinburgh unless I need to buy or see something specific, but I know many people who just like “to shop”. Jesus is not telling us not to shop, but he doesn’t want us to focus our hearts and minds on it. Human beings can so easily make their own gods—they are seduced by possessions, by spending.

There is only one God really worth pursuing with all our hearts and minds! The God who made us, the God who loves us as his children, the God who knows what we need. He will guide us as to how we live our lives, focussing on what matters and finding the peace he can give us.

***Lord, be at the centre of my life.
Keep me focussed on you,
so that your presence guides my days.***

(You will be able to see No. 6 on the first bench before the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

6

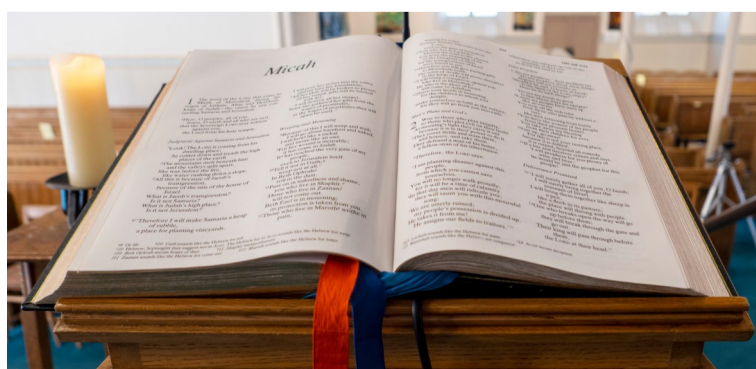
We believe that one day God’s kingdom of love, peace and justice, will come to reign, but in the meantime there are things we can do to bring it a little closer. We can simply be kind. Making an extra portion of a meal for somebody who struggles to cook, contributing to food banks, delivering food parcels, supporting charities helping others at home and far afield, taking time to have a cup of tea with someone who is lonely; being kind makes a difference, not only to the people who are helped, but to the people helping.

Jesus assures us all that if we forget our self-centredness and open our hearts to the needs of others, our own needs will be provided for. We might just find that we feel better about ourselves too!



***Lord, help me not to be selfish, but to be sensitive to others’ needs.
Show me ways I can be of help to those struggling today
with loneliness or poverty or grief.***

(You will find No. 7 beside the Covid Memorial and the Cairn, just past the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“Therefore do not worry
about tomorrow,
- for tomorrow will worry about itself.
Each day has enough trouble of its own.”**



As soon as Christmas is over the hot cross buns and cream eggs start to appear! It's three months before Good Friday and Easter—90 precious days of our lives to live, each with demands of their own. Let's take one day at a time. When he taught us what we now call the Lord's Prayer, Jesus included the words "Give us THIS DAY our DAILY bread". One day at a time.

The golfer Ben Hogan's philosophy for living was: "As you walk down the fairway of life you must smell the roses, for you only get to play one round." Today will not come again—it is a unique gift from God. Don't waste it!



*Lord, thank you for the precious gift which each new day is.
Still my soul to focus on today and on the world around me.
Help me to live today to the full, secure in your love and care.*

*Liberton Kirk has no minister at the moment, but you can contact us at
minister@libertonkirk.net and your request will be dealt with by the appropriate person.*



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PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

Picture of Bible on all pages by Gary Ross

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