

## A Storytelling Commentary on Matthew 6:24-34

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"No one can serve two masters.  
For a slave will either hate the one and love the other,  
or be devoted to the one and despise the other.  
You cannot serve God and wealth.

"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?

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 can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?

And why do you worry about clothing?  
Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow;  
they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you,  
even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.  
But 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?

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?'  
or 'What will we drink?'  
or 'What will we wear?'  
For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things;  
and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.  
But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness,  
and all these things will be given to you as well.

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

There is one verbal thread that runs through this part of the Sermon on the Mount and that is "don't worry." "Don't worry" is the verbal thread that connects this section of Jesus' sermon.

The structure is also relatively clear. The intro is "you can't serve two masters, God and wealth." So, since that's the case, don't worry about your life related to wealth, about what you'll eat or what you'll drink or about your body, what you'll wear and so on.

The first episode is the introduction of the themes of food and clothing. So, don't worry about what you'll eat and don't worry about what you'll wear; isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing. Then the next episode is about food: "Look at the birds of the air" and so on. The next episode is about clothing, "why do you worry about clothing." The concluding episodes repeat in another variation the same words that introduced this discourse: "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'"

I recommend that you learn the whole Sermon on the Mount because you will learn things about the character of Jesus and a bit of what he was about and what the tone of this sermon might have been. In general, this is a rabbinic discourse. It is not a theological discourse. Jesus does not end the sentences by going down to a deep voice and making pronouncements. This is more playful. I think about Bob Marley's song, "Don't worry, 'bout a thing, everything is gonna be alright." It has more of that light, rabbinic spirit about it.

This story is about engagement. It's partly to get us to laugh at ourselves about how much we worry about all of these things in regard to money. Jesus is saying, "Don't take it so seriously. It will come; it will go. God will provide. Don't worry about it. Focus on the things that matter. Focus on the kingdom of God and his righteousness." In terms of its tone and its dynamic, it is light, it isn't heavy. That's because Jesus is trying to get us to take these perpetual worries more lightly.