

## Worry

19 2 17

Almighty God,  
you have created the heavens and the earth  
and made them in your own image:  
teach us to discern your hand in all your works  
and your likeness in all your children.

Our text is part of the opening verse from today's gospel, Matthew 6, verse 25:

‘ . . . do not worry . . . ’

Are you someone who naturally worries about things ? Are you normally anxious, uneasy, uncertain, unsure ? If you are, then today's text, today's teaching from Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount, should be of great comfort. Clearly, we are being told not to worry, or, today's text succinctly puts it:

‘ . . . do not worry . . . ’

I must admit that this passage is a familiar one to me from primary school in East London. Some sixties years ago, I must have first heard it with the beautiful images of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, arrayed in more glory than King Solomon. The one is fed; the other clothed. And the great rhetorical question – are we not of more worth than these so why worry about what we are to eat and what we are to drink or what we are to wear because God loves us and cares us and will not let us go hungry, thirsty or naked. Clearly, we are being told

not to worry because, by worrying, we can't add an hour to our lives as the NRSV translates Matthew's Greek or an inch to our height as the King James Bible suggests.

So essentially, for all this time, I felt I'd understood this wonderful passage was telling me that there is no need to worry – to cross the bridge only when you come to it, for as the King James Bible concludes: 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof' or if you prefer the NRSV version: 'Today's trouble is enough for today.'

But though what the Bible has to say doesn't change, how we might understand it does because, over the years, with time we are changing with experience and in understanding and maturity. Yes, Jesus is teaching us not to worry about food, drink and clothing but in the passage is clearly saying what should concern us and what we should really be striving to achieve: **Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given unto you.**

So what should we be concerned about? Two things. We should be making every effort to ensure the realisation of the coming of the Kingdom of God and that we should try to be righteous folk living righteous lives.

So essentially what are these two central concerns to our lives as Christians? In the Lord's Prayer, which Jesus taught his disciples, we pray: 'Thy Kingdom come' which can mean that not only are we praying for the Second Coming when God's order will be fully realised on earth as it is in heaven but also that in small ways,

we can try to make the values and standards of the Kingdom of God a present reality by the quality of the small things we strive to do in our daily, everyday lives.

Secondly, we should strive to be righteous: tsaddiq – δικαίος (dikaios), the gold standard of ethical purity – being truly, morally kosher. We should strive to be right-minded people, living right lives by right principles, loving God as we love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

So Matthew's gospel today is telling us not only not to worry about what we'll eat drink or wear but we are also being encouraged to be concerned by what we do and with who we truly are.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
Amen.

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*St Bartholomew's, Dinard*

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G: Sermons 35 :Worry

