

Small groups – Week beginning Monday 13th July 2020

Introduction/icebreaker

- Say you are angry. What's the most likely cause?
- You have 24 hours while the rest of the world is magically paused. What would you do?
- Who is one teacher or mentor who really impacted your life?

Recap from Sunday's teaching [Anxiety – Matthew 6:25-34]

- Emotions are natural, God-given. Problems come when they control us rather than us controlling them.
- Anxiety affects many people. A normal response to uncertainty we face in everyday life. Anxiety = fear of not being in control.
- If you don't control it, anxiety will destroy you. But the Bible says we can take control of our thoughts!
- Jesus said that worry doesn't change anything, but that trust in God can take away fear.
- Matthew 6:25 ***"That is why I tell you*** not to worry..." → Through chapters 5&6 we see promises of God's blessing, reward, omniscience, plan and purpose for our lives, provision and protection. More than enough reason not to worry!
- Choose to focus on the promises, purposes, provision, protection and peace of God rather than on things you can't control or can't be certain of.

Discussion questions

1. Did anything stick out or resonate with you from Sunday's teaching?
2. We touched on Proverbs 12:25 – *"Worry weighs a person down"* → What is your experience of this?
3. Read Matthew 6:25-34 again. Any thoughts/observations?
4. *"Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing?"* (v25) – What does this mean?

Digging deeper

This passage forms part of "The Sermon on the Mount" – (Matthew 5-7, a block of concentrated teaching time that Jesus spent with his disciples). Jesus knew that even his closest followers weren't immune from the pressures and challenges of life. When Jesus told his followers not to worry, it wasn't because their worries were small or unimportant. Life may be more than food, but food and clothing are still important things! Jesus doesn't say that our worries are small, but that no matter how big they are, God is bigger.

Notice that Jesus doesn't just tell his disciples not to worry. He gives them reason, visible proof, and assurance (hence at the end of this block of teaching [Matt 7:28-29] the crowds were amazed at the authority of his teaching):

- *"Look at the birds"* (v26)
- *"Look at the lilies of the field"* (v28)
- *"Your heavenly father already knows all your needs"* (v32)

- *“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else...and He will give you everything you need” (v33)*

When we try to control everything ourselves, anxiety is guaranteed because we can't do it! When we surrender the desire to control to our all-powerful God, He takes care of needs we didn't even know we had. **Discuss...**

5. Assuming we are able to agree that worry is futile, what do you do when facing a difficult or uncertain situation?
6. Can you think of a time that you have trusted in God and He has seen you through a difficult or uncertain time? Share this with the group.

Prayer

Take time to share prayer requests and pray for each other.