



**THE  
BRIDGE  
CHURCH**

## **The Why Behind the Worry**

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Well, good morning, Bridge family. How are you doing? Well, you all look great. You look like you got some extra sleep this morning. That's why you came to the second service. Hey, seriously, we're glad that you are here. Also, shout out to everybody that's joining us online. We're so glad that you're tuning in.

If I haven't had the opportunity to meet you, my name is Chris, and I'm our Young Adults Director here at the Bridge. And hey, I get the honor and the privilege of getting to jump in on this series we've been doing called, "Did Jesus Really Mean That?" And what we've been doing is every week, we've been really just breaking down the Sermon on the Mount and just going section by section through the Sermon on the Mount.

And today we find ourselves in Matthew 6, and we're going to look at Matthew 6, verse 16 all the way through 34. And today, the specific topics that we're going to unpack are fasting, money and possessions, and anxiety. Yeah, they let the young guy come up here and preach about fasting, money, and anxiety. Oh, man, buckle up. Who knows what's going to happen? But no, it'll be great. It'll be fun. We're going to have a good time.

Can I kind of pray? Is that okay? Let's pray and let's ask God to do what he can only do. God, we thank you so much for another day, for your grace and your mercies that are new every day. God, we're just extremely grateful right now and thankful that we get the opportunity to just gather, whether it's in this room or wherever we're listening online or in our living rooms... It's such a luxury just to be able to gather and worship together and open up the Word together because we know that our brothers and sisters around the world, quite literally at times, have to dig tunnels just to open up your Word. And so, God, we thank you for this moment. God, I pray that you would open up our eyes to see you today, open up our ears to hear you in a new way. We love you and we thank you. And everybody said, "Amen."

I don't know where you're tuning in from, but here in middle Tennessee, man, these little glimpses of summer... Yeah, they're kind of devastating. Like, this is rough. It was nice all week. And then here we are. And it's kind of crazy. But I love when the weather starts to change and it gets nice outside and we start doing maybe some outdoor activities. And for those of you that have outdoor hobbies, you pick those up again and start doing it. Out of curiosity, what I did is... I was curious, like, what are the top hobbies for Americans? What are some of the top hobbies?

And I looked at the list, and number three on that list is working out. Listen, if that's one of your top hobbies, I hope to be like you one day. I really do. That's great. The second top hobby on that list is reading. I was shocked by that—reading. Once again, if that's one of your top hobbies, I hope to be just like you one day. But number one, no surprise here, it's watching TV or movies. That's the number one hobby.

I mean, if you've ever watched a Netflix show, once you find a good one, your weekend's done. It's a wrap, you're all in. But what I find so fascinating about this list is there was something that wasn't on the list that, if I'm being honest, it should be the number one thing on the list. The number one hobby. See, I believe the number one hobby is worry. See, I believe that it is the most practiced hobby in the world.

And it's a hobby that gives you something to do, but it truly never gets you anywhere. It's the number one hobby we all experience and spend so much time with—worry. Whether it's the smallest of worries to the biggest of worries, it's where we spend so much of our time. And what I love about this section of scripture that we're going to unpack here in just a moment, Jesus talks about fasting at first, and fasting is great because fasting can help us combat worry and anxiety.

Then he goes in to talk about money and possessions. And so often, if we're not careful, money and possessions can fuel our worry and anxiety. And then Jesus, he lands on anxiety and really unpacking that. And so I want to start in fasting right now. So go with me to Matthew 6. We're going to look at verses 16, 17, and 18. Let's see what Jesus has to say about fasting.

He says this, "When you fast, do not look somber like the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces." Basically what that means is they would put mud and ash on their face and wear their oldest clothes so they can look really dirty and be seen and noticed by others. "For they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly, I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face"—that was just a normal custom in that time—"so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your father who is unseen. And your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."

See, what I love about Matthew 6 is Jesus deals with three commonly abused religious practices that we're familiar with: giving, prayer, and fasting. And what he does is he shows us that what religious leaders would do is they would take these practices that were good, but they would start to do them with the wrong intentions and the wrong motives.

Like Pastor Ian said last week, when it comes to prayer, we have to be careful that we have the right intention and motives because people in that time, they would stand on the street corner and they would pray out loud just to be seen and noticed. And the same thing can happen when we fast. It's fitting that right after teaching about proper prayer, Jesus focuses on fasting. Why? Because we can pray without fasting, but we cannot fast biblically without prayer. They go together.

Done with the wrong motives, they both can be a form of self worship, like when we're doing it with the wrong intention. I'll give you an example. Like, some of us, we so often do this. Typically when we fast, we love to jump on social media. And it's kind of like, "Hey, what's up, you all? Chris here. Day seven of my fast. God is just really doing some incredible things." What are we doing? Like, "Day two here, staying strong fasting." We do that so often. Or maybe you hear the person that jumps on social media and likes to let people know that they're fasting from social media for a month. Okay, thanks for letting me know. I appreciate that.

If you notice, in verse 16, Jesus did not say, "if you fast." No, he says, "when you fast." He's implying that he expects his followers to fast. So fasting is essentially giving up food or

something else important for a period of time to focus our thoughts and everything on God. And so we know that we should fast as believers. But why fast? Why should we fast?

I want to show you—they're going to put up a list here. And I want to show you some different reasons on why we should fast. The means of seeking to conquer sin and temptation, means of seeking wisdom and revelation, means of seeking God's help in a desperate situation, for mourning over sin, mourning over great pain or loss, or for developing self-control.

Now, I don't know about you all, but I grew up in a Church that served food for everything. Like, for everything. As a matter of fact, in our church lobby growing up, there was a table that had pastries and bread on it every day. So fasting food... yeah, it was difficult growing up. It was difficult at our church. As a matter of fact, Pastor Ian he said he would call them —after events, they would have food, he'd call them "pot blessings." You all heard of that? Like a potluck and a pot blessing? I said, "Hey, I'm from Denver, and a pot blessing where I'm from is something totally different." Just being honest. If you don't get that, you will when you visit Denver.

So the question becomes, can we fast other things beyond food? And yes, because if we consider the essence of a fast, giving up something important to focus more on God, then yes, that's great. That would be more beneficial to us. We must ask ourselves this question: is there anything that is keeping me away from devotion to God or serving others?

Is there anything keeping us away from devotion to God or serving others? Because let's be real, there's a lot of things in our world right now that are vying for our attention and our affection. There's a lot of distractions right now going on, a lot of different things. So it's good to ask God if he's calling us to fast, to better seek Him fasting.

It assures that the main thing stays first, that the best thing stays first when we find ourselves consumed with worry and anxiety. Fasting is great because what it does is it kind of grounds us. It realigns us and gets us back to the most important thing, which is our intimacy with our heavenly Father. Prayer and fasting. They're such important

practices because they can help us combat our fleshly desires that we have, the fleshly desires that we have for maybe money and possessions.

And so I want to look now what Jesus has to say about that, and it's in verse 19. We're going to read all the way through verse 24. It says this: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves cannot break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there, your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If, then, the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness? No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

See? So how many out here, by just a quick show of hands, you would agree? You'd say that money is important, right? Money is important. It's okay. You can raise your hand. We're not going to take up an offering right now. Maybe we should. I'm kidding. We can all agree money is important. It is. There's a reason why Scripture speaks on wealth more than any other topic, because there are dangers that come with desiring and having wealth.

The Bible has countless stories of people who were greatly hurt by having a wrong relationship with wealth. Stories like that of Solomon, who fell away from God in part because of his great wealth. And here in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us how to relate to riches because we know that money in and of itself is not bad. But it's the love of money that is the root of all evil.

And so the temptation to lay up or store up treasures, that's a real temptation. That's a real thing that we deal with and we struggle with, even at a young age, especially with social media. With social media, we're invited into other people's worlds, and we get to see what so-and-so just did, or where they just went, or what they just purchased. And it's like, "Oh, well, I've got to go get that. I've got to get the bigger, better version of it. Now."

I've gotten to travel to quite a few cool places in my life, and every time I go, I find myself thinking, "Man, if I only had enough money to buy a house here... If I can just get a house on this beach or like a Ferrari—oh, I'd love to drive one of those home. What would people think of me then, if I got to drive it?" The temptation is real. And it's not even with big, extravagant things. It can be with things like jewelry, family, power, popularity...

All these things do is... It's a tactic of the enemy to kind of pull you away from having an intimate relationship with our Heavenly Father. Jesus, in verse 19 and 20, what he teaches us here, he teaches us about earthly riches. He teaches us that they're temporary. They're temporary. And he compares earthly riches with heavenly riches. And he describes three of the ancient world's riches. He describes clothes. He describes food and money. He said, hey, as far as clothing... Yeah, moths are going to eat that. It's going to decay at some point. And food, if too much is stored up, rats and insects are going to eat it. And money, back in that time, people would dig holes and put it under their house. They'd hide their money in jewelry. And so thieves would come in and steal it. And so he's saying, "Hey, all that stuff is temporary. It'll decay, or you will leave it at death. So you shouldn't put your hope in it."

You should put your hope in God and God alone. But I know that's easier said than done. To this day, I've yet to see a U-Haul behind the hearse. And I know that everything that we own, it's stuff of future garage sales and junkyards and dumps. Whenever I read this section of scripture, my mind goes to TSA security at the airport. And have you all ever traveled behind that rookie traveler? He's trying to get through the metal detectors with his coin collection in his pocket. It's like, "Bro, what are you doing? You got to take the coins out. You can't get through with that."

I almost feel like something similar is going to happen when we get to heaven. There's going to be TSA at the pearly gates, and we're going to show up and we're here spending all of our time on Earth just accumulating things, and they're going to look at us and say, "Hey, you can't get in with that. I know you spent a good portion of your life running towards that thing or putting a lot of energy or something into that. But hey, you can't get in with that. That's temporary. It stays there."

And I love what Jesus does in verse 21. He goes on to start speaking—really, he speaks into idolatry. Here, Jesus commands us to not accumulate, not because treasures are bad, but because our hearts can be bad. We tend to so often trust our wealth to take care of us when something goes wrong, when a storm or a catastrophe hits, we tend to trust our wealth. We tend to focus on that instead of God. We also tend to believe that our treasure will satisfy our hearts. And the world tries to prove that in every way, like, "Hey, you just need to get this new thing and you'll be good, you'll be happy. Hey, this new phone, that new car, that new job that will satisfy you."

But we know temporary things can never satisfy the eternal longing in our hearts. That's why Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. Whoever believes in me shall never thirst." Scripture says, "For he satisfies the longing soul. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied. Those who seek him shall praise the Lord in his presence. There is fullness of joy." This is great news.

See, unfortunately, I've had the opportunity to be around quite a few people on their deathbed and I've yet to this day I've never heard them talk about the money and possessions that they have or that they have accumulated in their life. The only thing they care about is their relationships—their relationship with God and their relationship with the people around them. A treasure is anything that could become an idol. It is anything we rely on to satisfy us apart from God. It can be a hobby, it can be a career, it can be a person.

So I want to give you two questions. These two questions, they're going to put them up. They are questions that really help us to search our hearts and discern where our treasures are. The first question is this: what occupies our thoughts when we have nothing else to do? Maybe when you first get ready to go to bed and you lay down, where is your mind going? What are those thoughts about? Is it about maybe investments or a position or a job? If so, those are the things that we treasure.

The second question I love: what is it that we know we cannot be happy without that thing? It probably just popped into your mind right now. What's that thing that if it was taken away from you tomorrow, how would you react? What would life be like then? See, Jesus, he goes on in the next two verses to speak about spiritual blindness. He talks about

what is a healthy eye and an unhealthy eye. And so after really digging into this, what it means is a person with a healthy eye is somebody with a generous heart.

Instead of selfishly storing up wealth, they generously share it with others and use it to build God's Kingdom. A person with an unhealthy eye, they can be greedy or maybe stingy. And so Jesus' point here is that people who selfishly focus upon storing up wealth, they develop a severe spiritual blindness. He says that they are in darkness and can't properly evaluate people or life.

Jesus, he ends this section talking about this idea of how we can only have one master. It's God or something else, period. It's one or the other. And money has a tendency to control people and keep them from serving him. See, I don't know where your heart is, or what it is that you're longing for, or what it is that you treasure. Only two people know that: you and God. But what I do know is that what we have here is temporary. But the good news is that there is an inheritance waiting for us when we go to be with the Lord and we must see the grace of the gospel in our daily lives. We must live by that grace through faith for what is to come.

When we focus on how we look, maybe when we pray or when we fast or how we look due to money or possessions, what we do is we continue to create this self-reliance orbit where we start to think this and believe, "Hey, it's all about me. I'm in control here. I'm the one in control." And when we do that, what we do is we open up the door and we welcome in anxiety. And so I want to see what Jesus has to say about anxiety.

So we pick up the text in verse 25. We're going to read all the way through. We'll read through verse 34. It says this: "Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life."

It's like, "Oh, that's it? Okay, easy enough."

"Or what you will eat or drink or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food?" That's tough. I love food. "The body more than mere clothes. 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? Can any one of you by worrying at a

single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers in the field grow? They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all of his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothed the grass in the fields, which is here today and gone tomorrow, is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you? You of little faith. So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after those things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself."

Now, maybe you're sitting there, or you're joining us online, and maybe you had the first thought that came to your mind is what I had as well: "Aren't some forms of worry good?" Right? Like there has to be some good forms of worry! Well, we should be concerned because concern helps us to be diligent and prudent. See 2 Corinthians 11:28, Paul says, "Apart from other things, there's a daily pressure on me of my concern for all the churches."

He had a constant concern over the welfare of the churches. We should be concerned about our spiritual wealth, our health. We should be concerned about that of others as well. But we should not worry because worry negatively affects us, and worry, it can be truly rooted in our lack of trust in God. The difference between worry and concern is the why that is rooted behind it.

In verse 25, Jesus—what he teaches us here, he teaches us to focus on eternal matters instead of temporary ones, because so often we focus on earthly matters like riches and possessions and these different things. And what does that do? That breeds worry and anxiety. He says, no, focus on eternal matters that can help deliver us from those worries, and it can help bring in God's peace. In this next section, Jesus teaches us to focus on our Father's providential care, to focus on his providential care.

I'll explain. Jesus, he talks about how God feeds the birds and clothed the flowers and grass. And we know that this happens by natural processes. But what it does is this reflects the doctrine of God's providence. Let me explain. This means God is not like a

watchmaker who creates a watch with different mechanisms inside and simply allows it to run all on its own, apart from the maker's intervention. No. God is intricately involved in every aspect of his creation. Scripture says that he sustains all things by his Word. Everything is totally dependent upon God.

He gives us life, breath, and everything else. Even our moment by moment breath cannot happen apart from God's grace. God is involved in the intricate processes of flowers blooming and grass gaining its color. Nothing happens apart from God. Everything happens in such a way that one could say, "God did it." God did it. In verse 26, he teaches us that we must recognize our value to God. This is good news.

Again, recognize our value to Him. It must be noticed that Jesus doesn't say, "The bird's Father will provide." No, he says, "The disciples' Father, our heavenly Father, will provide." So aren't you more valuable than they are? Like birds... They are not made in the image of God. We are. We are his prized possession. They are not sons and daughters of God, coheirs with Christ. God made us his chief in creation. So how much more would he not make sure we have all of our needs.

Let me be clear. He doesn't promise us our wants. I know that there's a lot of things that you want, a lot of things that I want—I get it. So often that we're so worried about the things that we want, and it creates anxiety. You're worried about how we lack our wants, and so that's why we worry. But listen, God promises to provide our needs. I'll put it this way: if God gave his best for us in Jesus, how will he not also provide everything else that we need?

Listen, I don't know what your upbringing was like. I don't know what your life has been like, how difficult, how hard it's been. But what I do know is, regardless of what you've been through, God loves and cares for you, and he sees value in you. You are valuable to Him regardless. So much so that he sent his son to die on a cross for you. He values you.

The next thing we learn here is we must recognize how unproductive worrying is. If we're being honest, it's pretty unproductive. Worry does not benefit us physically, mentally or spiritually. It really doesn't. Proverbs says, "Anxiety in the heart of man brings depression."

Typically, when we start to worry about something, it affects our entire mood. It affects everything. It affects us spiritually. It can even affect the people around us.

So let's look at it this way. If the Bible is God's Word for us, as it contains his teachings about how we are valuable to Him and His providence over our lives and his promises to us, and yet we still live in worry, could it be that our worry is a form of atheism? Could it be?

I mean, how can God's Word profit us if we don't believe Him? How can anyone's word profit us if we don't believe what they're saying? Like, if we're talking and there's some suspicion on what you're saying, we'll never make plans. We'll never do anything. In the same way, to worry is to say that God and His Word are untrustworthy and therefore Scripture will not profit us. See, what worry can do is it can deny the wisdom, love and power of God. It says he doesn't know what he's doing, he doesn't care, and he's not able to help me.

I get it. There are moments in our lives where we can see the promises, and it's like, "God, I see Him. I know you're there, but I'm just struggling to believe it." And I know, Jesus, in this section, He really comes on really strong.

But I love the last few verses because He ends with such love and grace. It's so beautiful. I want to read verse 33 to you again. They're not going to put it up on the screen. Verse 33 says this: "But seek first His Kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

See, what Jesus is teaching here is that we must pursue God's promises. We have to pursue His promises. Some have counted over 3,000 promises in all of Scripture. I believe Matthew 6:33 is one of the greatest. He's saying when God's Kingdom and righteousness are our priority, God meets our needs, which can ultimately help deliver us from worry, from fear, from anxiety. I'll put it this way: your worries expose what you seek. Your worries expose what you seek. So what? So seek first His Kingdom.

In the last verse, Jesus goes on to teach us, he says, "We must focus on God's grace for the day." He teaches us to focus on His grace for today. See, it must be noted that Jesus says that we will have trouble. The fact that he calls us not to worry does not mean that as believers, we are exempt from hardship. Wouldn't that be nice? You know how many new believers I talk to and they say, "Hey, Chris, once I became a Christian, my life got really hard." Yeah, it can be like that. We're not exempt from hardship. That's not the promise.

We know that John 16:33 says in this world we will have trouble. We will have suffering. We live in a sin-filled world. We will hurt people. People will hurt us. Bad things will happen. Tragedy will strike. All these different things will take place. However, God promises to give us grace for the day. For today.

I love what it says in Lamentations 3:22-23. It says this: "Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness." As we wake up each day, grace is given. When Israel was in the wilderness and they only received enough bread for the day, God often does the same with us. He often gives us grace for the step that we're on, but not the next one—only grace for the day.

Author George MacDonald said this: "No man ever sunk under the burden of the day. It is when tomorrow's burden is added to the burden of today that the weight is more than man could bear."

It's a way to overcome worry. Live in the day. Take advantage of the grace that God gives you to be faithful today. You've got a trial or something going on in your family, do your best to love them today. You're getting frustrated with your boss and maybe getting annoyed or whatever. Hey, do your best to serve them and honor them, him or her, today.

Don't worry about tomorrow. God's mercies are new. "Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow worry about itself." As I was reading through this passage and forming this sermon, I began to look at my own life and just really think about times in my life where worry and anxiety kind of hit an all-time high.

A few years ago when my wife and I were dating, there was this one day I got a call from her brother and he said, "Hey, I know you're dating my sister, and I just want you to know that the reason you haven't heard from her today is because she has been kidnapped and she's been shot." And he said, "That's all I can really tell you right now." And he hung up the phone.

In a moment like that, what do you do? I didn't know what to do, so I sought Him first. I said, "God, I don't feel like I'm in control," which is a good thing, because if I feel like I'm the one in control, then I don't need to give God or trust God for anything. You can't give God glory for the things that are in your control. And so I said, "What do I do?" And so I begin to pray and worship and seek Him and put my hope and my trust in Him.

I'm so grateful because everything worked out okay. My wife, she's doing great. She's doing fine. And because of God's mercy and grace, she made it out of that situation, and that's great.

But I'll say this: I don't want it to take a desperate situation in my life in order for me to seek Him first. Like, if you do while you're desperate, that's great. That's awesome. You should. Let's go. I want to be able to seek Him first in his righteousness on the mountaintop, in the valley, and everywhere in between, day-in and day-out, seeking Him first. Because whenever I would get worried or anxious, what I do is I just have to look back and see how faithful God has been in my life.

Like God, you have been so good. I'm so thankful. Man, all I have to do, I just have to look back at the cross and it shows me how good he really is. And it shows me how faithful he has really been. When I look at the cross, it reminds me that nobody owes me anything because Jesus gave me everything on that cross. So I'm good. I'm going to be okay.

When we focus on Jesus and his faithfulness, we can surrender our anxiety as we trust in his love, his sovereignty, and his wisdom for our future. We seek first his righteousness. See, what I love about God is the wisdom of God can be found at the cross, where righteousness and love intersect. His righteousness is our righteousness because of the

cross. And today is a special day because we actually get to celebrate that with communion.

See, communion is a great way to focus on what Christ has done for us on the cross. It's a great opportunity to take a moment and just rest and reflect on what he has done. It's the bread and the juice. They are a symbolic remembrance. And so what's going to happen here in just a few moments, I'm going to pray and when I'm done the band is going to come out and at that same moment, you can stay seated, they're going to pass communion trays down your row. And once you get the communion elements, you can hold on to them. Hold on to them. Don't take them because we are going to receive them as a family in the middle of our worship song.

But I want to encourage you, I want to challenge you to take this next song as we receive communion to not just celebrate, but to reflect. Maybe not just to reflect, but to repent. Ask God to search your heart and reveal anything that is maybe dishonoring or not pleasing to him. To those who are not in a relationship with God, let this moment display to you the grace that is available to you through Christ. Let's pray.

God, we are thankful for what you have done on that cross, the blood that was shed. We know that because of that, there's nothing that we have to earn or do or try. But God, your grace has been freely given to us. Your mercies overwhelm us. And God, as we try to practice fasting, God, I pray that we would realign ourselves with our relationship with you, with who you are. God, I pray that you would reveal in our hearts anything that has taken up place and has become our treasure other than you. God, reveals that to us. God, in the moments of worry and anxiety, remind us of how good you are. Remind us of the cross and about the many things that you're already doing in our lives. God, you are so good. We love you so much. It's in your name we pray. Amen.