

引言 INTRODUCTION

To worry is part of human nature. Conventional wisdom teaches us to hope for the best but plan for the worst. But will you still worry after making all the preparations? Let me begin by telling you some good news: most of the things you worry about will never happen. The sky is not falling yet! In one study, some researchers told participants to write down the things they are anxious about. After a period of time, they were asked to check their list. On the average, only 15% of the matters they worried actually occurred. Also, eight out of ten people said that they handled those 15% issues better than they had expected. Even so, some people may still worry about those 15% problems! You do not need to be a doctor to know that worries are not good to your health. To begin with, worries produce extra stress hormone. This chemical can lead to insomnia, lower your IQ and cause emotional problems. In the long-run, worries may also raise the chance of heart problems, premature aging and even Alzheimer's disease. Jesus knows the damaging effects of worries. He tells us the best antidote is to put our trust in the Heavenly Father. It is that simple! Important truths do not have to be complicated. Blessed are those who obey God. To have faith in God is to look forward to His plans in His timing.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 神的觀點 God's Perspective

First of all, we do not need to worry if we see things from God's perspective. Jesus tells us in verse 25: **“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”** By beginning with “therefore,” Jesus draws a conclusion from what He teaches us so far. In particular, He says in the immediate context that we cannot serve God and money at the same time. We will devote our time, effort and attention to whichever master we serve. Here, Jesus uses food and clothes as examples. Food gives us energy and nutrients for daily activities and clothes cover our body. We see things from a wrong perspective if we worry about those temporary things. God gives us life so that we can enjoy food. He creates our body for us to put clothes on. It only takes a minor sickness for us to realize those truths. Suppose you have a severe cold. You cannot do anything but rest at home. No delicacy will entice you since you lose your appetite. You prefer noodle, congee or soup instead. Also, you will wear pajama all day. You may not care about missing a clearance sale. Nothing matters when you do not have a good health. Even if you have a five-bedroom house, all you need is a comfortable bed. You may have a shiny new car but you do not have the strength to drive it out of the garage. To put it bluntly: you cannot enjoy life if you do not have a life! Jesus tells us the truth in verse 27: **“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”** The phrase “a single hour to his span of life” can also be translated as “another eighteen inches to his height.” Worry will not make us live longer nor

grow taller. Rather, too much worry will trigger fear. We will be indecisive when we are burdened by fear. We will naturally think of the worst scenario. Our world was completely shut down during the pandemic. Let us look at it as a public health crisis. We took necessary precautions, especially when we knew very little about the disease at the early stage. Thanks to the diligent efforts of many scientists, they found ways to control the infection and minimize the effects of the symptoms. Even with those safeguards in place, many people were still plagued by all the what-ifs. Fear can make us paranoid. I know a sister who puts grocery in a designated area. Those items will sit there for a week before she takes them out of the shopping bags. She will wipe everything down with disinfectant before putting them in the pantry. She is consumed by fear. During the pandemic, every church struggled with the decision of when to reopen. Our church leaders carefully evaluated members' concerns. We followed experts' advice. We balanced people's safety versus the desire to get back to normal. When we finally resumed in-person meetings, we respected members' choice if they preferred to stay home. Like many churches, we Zoomed our meetings for people at home. We do all we can to protect everyone. But ultimately, we must put our faith in God to overcome our fear. In reality, everything we do comes with a calculated risk. You cannot predict what may happen when you drive or when you fly. There may be unexpected accidents even when you are at home. All those unknowns will drive us crazy. What can we do? We must see things from God's perspective. He has full control over our world and our lives. Nothing can happen to us without His permission. God has a perfect will even when we face troubles. We are protected in His hands.

2. 神的供應 God's Provision

Besides seeing things from God's perspective, we also need to consider all we have as God's provision. Jesus conducted this teaching on a hillside. Therefore, He uses the objects around as teaching materials. He says in verse 26: **“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?”** Birds never work like farmers do. Yet they survive because our Heavenly Father provides for their food. Except for chickens, ducks and turkeys, most birds do not have much economic values. We see the geese by our pond a nuisance when they block traffic and dump residues all over the parking lot. If God even provides for those birds, how much more will He care about us? Martin Luther said it wisely: “God provides food for the birds, but He does not drop it into their beaks.” Birds have to look for their food. The same is true for us. Faith in God should not make us lazy. Proverbs 10:4-5 teaches us: **4 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. 5 He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.** God provides for our needs through our hands. We can make money because God gives us wisdom, capabilities and opportunities. The world conveys an unbiblical idea about work. Some people see labor as a torture. Work was actually a blessing before Adam and Eve rebelled against God. They were entrusted the responsibility to manage God's creation. We need to keep God's original idea in mind in order to find joy in our jobs. God allows us to use the gifts, talents and potentials He gives us to make a living. Besides looking at the birds, Jesus also advises us to study the plants. He says in verse 28-30: **28 “... Consider the lilies of the field, how they**

grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" Birds can fly around to look for food. But wildflowers and grass are stuck in the ground. They must rely on God completely for air, rain, sunlight and nutrients. Grass was used as a fuel in those days. God provides for those natural vegetation even when they do not last long. He dresses wildflowers with beautiful colors. They are more good-looking than king Solomon's royal garments in God's eyes. How much more will God care about us? Why do we crave after man-made fashion? Jesus points out the core issue in verse 30. We worry not because we do not have enough stuff. We worry because we do not have enough faith. We tend to pile things up when we have little faith. My wife tells me recently that people in some Asian countries stock up salt because Japan released some radioactive waste water from power plants into the ocean. Salt may be a more popular gift than clothing when you visit relatives overseas! But the more we store things up, the tighter we will hold onto those items. We will forget that everything is God's provision. Two questions can help us examine our hearts. First, do you gladly share what you have with others? God is our Master. We are just a manager of what He assigns us to oversee in this life. Second, does your happiness vary with the amount of goods you store up? God wants to use us as a channel instead of a bucket of His blessings. We should not worry that we will not have enough. When you walk out from this building, take a look at the birds and behold the flowers. Do not do it while driving! God provides for them. He will do the same for you.

3. 神的次序 God's Priority

Jesus says we will not worry if we see things from God's perspective. Also, we will not worry when we consider all we have as God's provision. Thirdly, we will not worry if we do things according to God's priority. Jesus contrasts the world's priority with God's priority in versus 32-33: 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Gentiles refer to people who do not know God. They seek after things of this life like food, drink and clothes. Let us be clear, Jesus is not against eating healthy food or dressing nicely. He cautions us not to seek after those things just for ourselves. The world's priority is grounded on a me-centered culture. It encourages us to buy the things we do not need, with the money we do not have and to impress the people we do not know. The worst thing is, those people do not care. God's people should not fall into that trap! Once I saw some ladies posting photos on the social media with one thing in common: they put name-brand handbags in front of them. Are those advertisements? Of course not. They want to tell people that they can afford those Italian goods. There is nothing wrong about buying pricey items. But it is a pride if the sole intent is to show off. Rather than adopting the world's priority, Jesus asks us to embrace God's priority. He tells us to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." That echoes with what Jesus teaches us in the Lord's prayer when He says: "Your kingdom come, Your will be done." Jesus says if we seek God's priority first, then our Father will provide for what we need. You and your non-believing classmates and colleagues may be doing the same tasks. But your emphases should

be to bless people and serve God. Once a young man interviewed for a job. The hiring-manager liked the applicant's resume and personality. He took the fellow out for lunch after the interview. They casually chatted about their families, hobbies and sports. All of a sudden, the manager asked him: "Johnny, what are your life goals?" He wanted to catch the man off-guard. Without missing a beat, he answered: "My goals are to know God and help others get to know Him." That young man seeks after God's priority. Your campus or office is a mission field God sends you into. Other believers may never meet the people you see every day. It is easier for you to begin a conversation because you have some common ground with them. Ask God to give you courage and opportunity to tell them what you believe. Embrace God's priority by putting Him first in your decision-making. Jesus ends with some final remarks in verse 34: **"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."** We can easily get nervous when we think of the uncertainties. We can plan for the future without worrying about tomorrow if we include God in our plans. He has the power and resources to help us if we seek Him. A little boy was frustrated because he could not haul a heavy log. He mustered up all his strength, but that piece of wood did not move. Seeing that the boy was upset, his father came over to offer help. "How about we carry it together?" He suggested. "You hold onto that end, and I'll grab this side." The child happily completed the task. He almost forgot that daddy did all the heavy-lifting. Do not give yourself full credit when you can accomplish something. God achieves that through you. He knows how much we can bear. He will give us sufficient grace if we ask Him. He causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him. We can sleep peacefully every night if we hold onto those and many other promises in the Bible. The next day we open our eyes with thankfulness because God gives us breath of life. His grace is new every morning. The Lord walks with us wherever we go. Is there any more reason for us to worry?

結論 CONCLUSION

Our God is much bigger than we can imagine. His love is richer than we can comprehend. To have faith in God is to look forward to His plans in His timing. He knows our needs more than we do. He is gracious to give us His best. A beautiful song titled "Flowers of the Field" illustrates those truths. The lyrics are based on the passage we study today. It is a Chinese song, but I found the English lyrics on YouTube. "Flowers of the field put on beautiful clothes. Birds of the air never worry about their lives. The loving Father watches over all. He loves men so much that He prepares them eternal life. All of our needs our Heavenly Father already knew. Sadness of the heart, let Him take away for you. The loving Father watches over all. He is the Almighty God. Blessed are those who believe in Him." Our Heavenly Father takes care of all of our needs. He gives us eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ. He has also prepared a heavenly home for His children. When you have this sure hope in your heart, then you have joy every day with a firm assurance, knowing that the Heavenly Father will watch over you in every step.

引言 INTRODUCTION

憂慮是人性的一部分。傳統智慧告訴我們要抱最好的希望，但要做最壞的打算。但做好一切準備之後你還會擔心嗎？讓我要告訴你一個好消息：你擔心的大部分事情都不會發生。不用緊張，天還沒有塌下來！在一項研究中，一些參與者寫下他們所擔心的事情。一段時間後，他們檢查他們的清單。平均來說，他們擔心的事情只有百份之十五真的發生了。而且，有八成的人表示，他們處理這百份之十五問題的情況比他們預期的要好。即便如此，有些人可能還是擔心那 15%的問題！你不需要是醫生也知道憂慮對身體不好。首先，憂慮會產生額外的壓力荷爾蒙。這種化學物會導致失眠、降低智商並導致情緒問題。從長遠來看，憂慮也可能增加心臟病、提早衰老甚至老人痴呆症的機會。耶穌知道憂慮會產生的問題。祂告訴我們憂慮最好的解藥就是信靠天父。就是這麼簡單！重要的真理不需要太複雜。順服神的人是有福的。對神有信心就是在祂的時間裡期待祂的計劃。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 神的觀點 God's Perspective

首先，如果我們從神的觀點看事情，就不需要憂慮。耶穌在第 25 節告訴我們：「所以我告訴你們，不要為生命憂慮吃什麼，喝什麼；為身體憂慮穿什麼。生命不勝於飲食嗎？身體不勝於衣裳嗎？」耶穌用「所以」來開始，總結祂到目前為止教導我們的功課。特別是，祂在上文中說，我們不能同時事奉神和金錢。無論我們事奉哪一個主人，我們都會投入時間、精神和注意力。在這裡，耶穌用食物和衣服作為例子。食物為我們提供日常活動的能量和營養，衣服遮蓋我們的身體。如果我們為那些短暫的東西憂慮，我們就會從錯誤的觀點看事情。神賜給我們生命，讓我們能夠享受食物。祂創造了我們的身體，使我們需要穿衣服。只需要生一點小病，我們就能明白這些真理。假設你患了重感冒。除了在家休息，你什麼都做不了。因為你失去了胃口，任何美味佳餚都不會吸引你。你只想吃麵條、粥或湯。此外，你整天都穿著睡衣。你可能不在乎錯過大減價。當你生病時，任何事情都不重要。就算你的家有五個房間，你所需要的只是一張舒適的床。你可能擁有一輛新車，但你也沒有力氣開出車庫。說白一點：沒有生命就無法享受生命！耶穌在第 27 節告訴我們一個真理：「你們那一個能用思慮使壽數多加一刻呢？」「壽數多加一刻」也可以翻譯為「身高增加

十八吋」。憂慮不會使我們活得更久，也不會讓我們長高。相反，過多的憂慮會產生恐懼。當我們被恐懼勝過時，我們就會猶豫不決。我們自然會想到最壞的情況。在疫情期間，整個世界都停頓了。讓我們把這次事件看為一場公共衛生的危機。我們採取了必要的預防措施，尤其是剛開始時我們對這個疾病一無所知。感激許多科學家的努力，他們找到了控制感染並降低症狀的方法。縱然有了這些措施，許多人仍然很擔心。恐懼甚至會使我們失去理智。我認識一位姐妹，她買完菜之後把東西放在指定的地方。一週之後她才會把食物從購物袋拿出來，用清潔劑消毒，然後放到櫃子。她屈服於恐懼之下。疫情期間，每個教會都在掙扎何時才重新開放。我們教會的領袖小心評估會友的憂慮。我們聽從專家的意見。我們平衡了大家的安全與回復正常的願望。當我們恢復實體聚會時，我們尊重會友的選擇，無論是回來聚會或是留在家裡。像許多教會一樣，我們安排直播，使在家裡的人也能同步聚會。我們盡力保護每個人。但最終，我們必須信靠神來克服恐懼。事實上，我們任何決定都會帶有計算的風險。例如：你無法預計開車或坐飛機時會碰到什麼狀況。就算你在家，也可能會發生小意外。你想太多便可能會瘋掉。怎麼辦？我們必須從神的觀點看事情。祂完全掌管我們的世界和我們的生命。沒有神的允許，任何事情都不會發生在我們身上。縱使我們面對困難，神也有祂完美的旨意在其中。我們在祂手中受到保護。

2. 神的供應 God's Provision

除了從神的觀點來看事情之外，我們也必須看我們所擁有的一切為神的供應。記得當時耶穌是在山坡上作教導。因此，祂用周圍的事物作教材。祂在第 26 節說：「你們看那天上的飛鳥，也不種，也不收，也不積蓄在倉裡，你們的天父尚且養活他。你們不比飛鳥貴重得多嗎？」鳥從來不像農夫那樣種田。然而，牠們之所以能生存，是因為天父供應食物給牠們。除雞、鴨、火雞外，大多數鳥類都沒有什麼經濟價值。我們看到池塘邊的鵝會覺得厭煩，因為牠們堵塞交通，並且在停車場到處方便。如果神連這些小鳥都照顧，祂豈不是會更關心我們嗎？馬丁路德說過一句有智慧的話：「神供應食物給小鳥，但祂不會把食物放到牠們的嘴裡。」小鳥必須尋找食物。我們也是如此。對神有信心不應該使我們變得懶惰。箴言 10:4-5 教導我們：**4 手懶的，要受貧窮；手勤的，卻要富足。5 夏天聚斂的，是智慧之子；收割時沉睡的，是貽羞之子。**神透過我們的雙手供應我們的需要。我們能賺錢是因為神賜給我們智慧、能力和機會。世界對工作有一種不符合聖經的觀念。有些人把勞動視為一種折磨。在亞當和夏娃背叛神之前，工作其實是一種祝福。他們被賦予管理神創造的責任。我們需要牢記神原來的心意，才能在工作中找到喜樂。我們善用神賜給我們的天賦、才幹和潛能來謀生。除了觀察小鳥之外，耶穌也建議我們看看植物。祂在 28-30

節說：28 「...你想野地裡的百合花怎麼長起來；他也不勞苦，也不紡線。29 然而我告訴你們，就是所羅門極榮華的時候，他所穿戴的，還不如這花一朵呢！30 你們這小信的人哪！野地裡的草今天還在，明天就丟在爐裡，神還給他這樣的妝飾，何況你們呢！」小鳥可以飛來飛去找食物，但野花和草卻無法走動。它們必須完全依靠神來獲得空氣、雨水、陽光和養分。那時，草被用作燃料。神供應這些植物，縱然它們的壽命很短。神給野花穿上美麗的色彩。在神眼中，它們比所羅門的皇袍還要好看。神豈不是更關心我們嗎？為什麼我們會為衣服擔心呢？耶穌在第 30 節中指出了問題的核心。我們憂慮不是因為我們沒有足夠的東西，而是因為我們沒有足夠的信心。當我們缺乏信心時，我們往往會把東西儲存起來。我太太最近告訴我，一些亞洲國家的人囤積鹽，因為日本將一些發電廠的放射性廢水排入海洋。當你回國探親時，鹽可能是比衣服更受歡迎的禮物！但我們儲存的東西越多，就會抓得越緊。我們便忘記一切都是神的供應。有兩個問題可以幫助我們省察自己的心。首先，你願意與別人分享你所擁有的東西嗎？神是我們的主人。我們只是祂委派我們暫時管理事情的管家。其次，你的快樂會隨著你儲存的物品數量而改變嗎？神希望使用我們成為祂祝福的管子，而不是祂祝福的罐子。我們不應該擔心會缺乏。當你走出這棟大樓時，看看鳥，看看花。當然不要一邊開車一邊看！神供應鳥和花。祂也一定會供應你。

3. 神的次序 God's Priority

耶穌說，如果我們從神的觀點看事情，我們就不必憂慮。而且，當我們認定我們所擁有的一切都是神的供應時，我們也不會憂慮。第三，如果我們按照神的優先次序做事，我們就不用憂慮。耶穌在第 32 至 33 節中把世界的優先次序與神的優先次序作對比：32 這都是外邦人所求的，你們需用的這一切東西，你們的天父是知道的。33 你們要先求他的國和他的義，這些東西都要加給你們了。外邦人是指不認識神的人。他們追求今生的事物，比如吃吃喝喝和衣服。讓我們搞清楚一點，耶穌並不是反對吃得健康或穿得漂亮。祂提醒我們不要追求那些事。世界的優先次序是以我為中心的。它鼓勵我們花我們沒有的錢去買我們不需要的東西，並向我們不認識的人炫耀。最糟糕的是，那些人根本不在乎。神的子民不應該落入這個陷阱！有一次我看到一些女士在社交媒體上登了一些照片，它們有一個共同點：她們把名牌手袋放在自己前面。她們在賣廣告嗎？當然不是。她們是在告訴別人她們買得起那些義大利貨。購買昂貴的物品本身並沒有什麼錯。但如果唯一的目的是吹牛，那就是驕傲。耶穌要我們認同神的優先次序，而不是接受世界的優先次序。祂告訴我們要「先求神的國和神的義」。這就和耶穌在主禱文中教導我們的話一致：「願祢的國降臨，願祢的旨意成就。」耶穌說，如果我們先尋求神的優先次序，那麼祂就會供應我們的需

要。和你仍未信主的同事可能在做同樣的事情。但你的重點應該是放在祝福別人和事奉神。有一次，一個年輕人去工作面試。經理喜歡這個申請人的履歷和個性。面談結束後，他帶那個小伙子去吃午餐。他們隨意地聊自己的家庭、嗜好和球賽。忽然，經理問他：「小強，你的人生目標是什麼？」他想要打這個男孩一個措手不及。他卻不用思考便回答：「我的目標是認識神並幫助別人認識祂。」那個年輕人追求神的優先次序。你的辦公室是神派你進入的宣教場所。其他信徒可能永遠不會遇見你每天看到的同事。你很容易與他們交談，因為你和他們有一些共同話題。祈求神給你勇氣和機會與他們分享你的信仰。我們要認同神的優先次序，在一切決定中將祂放在首位。耶穌在第 34 節最後說：「所以，不要為明天憂慮，因為明天自有明天的憂慮；一天的難處一天當就夠了。」當我們想到未知的因素時，我們很容易感到壓力。如果我們將神放在我們的計劃之中，我們便不用為明天憂慮。如果我們尋求神，祂就供應能力和資源來幫助我們。一個小男孩因為拉不動一根沉重的木頭而感到沮喪。他用盡全力，但是仍然拉不動那塊木頭。看到孩子的困難，父親便過去幫忙。他建議：「我們一起來搬吧。你抓住這一頭，我抓住那邊。」於是任務完成，孩子也很高興。他幾乎忘記其實都是爸爸在出力。當你能夠完成某些事情時，不要把全部功勞歸給自己。是神透過你達成目標。祂知道我們能承受多少。如果我們向神祈求，祂就會給我們足夠的恩典。神使萬事互相效力，叫愛祂的人得益處。如果我們記住聖經中的應許，我們每晚都可以安然入睡。第二天，我們存著感恩的心睜開眼睛，因為神賜給我們生命氣息。祂的恩典每早晨都是新的。無論我們走到哪裡，主都與我們同行。我們還有什麼理由憂慮嗎？

結論 CONCLUSION

我們的神比我們想像的要偉大得多。祂的愛比我們所能理解的更豐富。對神有信心就是在祂的時間裡期待祂的計劃。神比我們更了解我們的需要。祂以恩慈賜給我們最好的一切。一首名為「野地的花」的優美詩歌說明了這些真理。它的歌詞是根據我們今天學習的經文：「野地的花，穿著美麗的衣裳，天空的鳥兒，從來不為生活忙。慈愛的天父，天天都看顧，祂更愛世上人，為他們預備永生的路。一切需要，天父已經都知道，若心中煩惱，讓祂為你除掉。慈愛的天父，天天都看顧，祂是全能的主，信靠祂的人真是有福。」我們的天父照顧我們所有的需要。祂藉著獨生兒子耶穌基督賜給我們永生。祂還為自己的兒女預備了一個天上的家。當你心裡有這些確實的盼望時，你就會每天都充滿喜樂，知道天父會看顧你的每一步。