

IDENTITY: WHERE DO I FIT IN? FEAR AND ANXIETY

CHRIS HORN • HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
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READ: Matthew 6:25-34

“Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they?

Can any of you add one moment to his life-span by worrying?

And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread.

Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these.

If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you—you of little faith?

So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’

For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

What do these quotes tell us about fear and anxiety?

- ‘We carry our prisons with us’
- ‘I feel like everybody secretly hates me’
- ‘I over analyse situations because I am scared of what will happen if I am not prepared for it’
- ‘I’m terrified that even if I try my hardest it still won’t be enough’
- ‘Even my anxiety has anxiety!’

As a person living in South Africa, what fears do you have?

Think through the following newspaper headlines as you discuss this:

- African migrants in South Africa are in fear for their lives.
- 'Bury them alive!': White South Africans fear for their future as horrific farm attacks escalate
- 'I will never trust white people again, I'm too afraid' Black farm workers fear.
- Majority of LGBT South Africans live in fear of discrimination
- South African farmers fear forced land redistribution
- Analysis: South Africa a country of fear and anxiety, say latest crime perception stats

What is Jesus NOT saying when he says, "Do not worry about your life"?

- *We are not being told to not plan.*
- *We are not being told to not be concerned.*

Look at the passage

- How could Jesus' words in Matthew 6:25-34 be used to justify idleness? Is there a difference between being anxious and being irresponsible?
- According to Jesus, why is it unnecessary for us to feel anxious about our physical and material needs (Matthew 6:25-30)?
- What causes anxiety? What, ac-

ording to Jesus, is its cure?

- How do we honor Jesus' command to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33)?
- Why should the ambitions of a Christian be different from those of non Christians? (Matthew 6:32-34)

Share together

- How might watching birds and examining the flowers help you to deal with fear and anxiety?
- What do you feel anxious over the most? Why? What does constant fear or anxiety reveal to you about your faith?
- As a person living in South Africa how should this passage help us rethink who we are in a South African context? How should it shape our views on what is happening around us in South Africa?
- How has this passage challenged you to reexamine your goals and ambitions?

When we caught in the grip of fear and anxiety we should be encouraged all the more to practice faith in Jesus

Pray together

- Share ways you can be praying for one another in view of what we have just studied