

## The Birds and the Lilies

Matthew 13:34 *“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.”*

### The Birds and the Lilies

Our scripture for this lesson comes from Matthew 6:25-34. There is no doubt Christ was a lover of nature. I am sure during His time on earth He enjoyed what He had created in Genesis, though it was tainted by sin. He sure was close to nature, for I find no record He had a home to dwell in. Likely, the closest thing He had to a roof over His head was to dwell beneath a tree. The closest thing He had to a pillow was a stone. He ate fish often. He lived outdoors.

### *Worry*

In this parable the Lord uses that creation He had so gloriously made to illustrate an important point. Before we see the birds and lilies, notice the word *“therefore”* used to begin verse 25, our first text verse. This word is there to connect our present passage of scripture to the previous passage. The Lord just warned us in verse 24 that we cannot serve both God and mammon. To try to do so creates troubled, anxious people. Folk surrendered to the service of the Lord are not fretful people. One foot in the world and one foot toward God will lead to a life of restlessness. So, the Lord’s desire in this parable, the birds and the lilies, is to teach us about the futility of worry. This is an appropriate subject for this age, for never has there been so much anxiety, fretting, and worry. Again, if you have been saved you will experience anxiety trying to serve two masters. You need to surrender your life to Christ. Few saved folk can call Christ “Lord,” which means master, for they have never totally committed their life into His hands.

Anxiety is not God’s plan for your life. Psalms 23 says *“He leads us beside still waters.”* His rod and His staff “comfort” us, not “torment” us. I Peter 5:7 says we have a God on whom we can cast all our cares. Psalms 55:22 *“Cast thy burden on the Lord and he*

*shall sustain thee...*” Religion will drive you crazy, but God will give you peace.

Anxiety is evidence of the lack of faith in the sovereignty and sufficiency of God. In verse 25 *“take no thought”* means don’t be anxious. God does not forbid us to be concerned or to be thoughtful. God does not forbid us to plan our life. What He wants is for us to rid ourselves of the anxiety in our life. Have you ever experienced anxiety? Does anxiety rule your life? If so, it need not be. Anxiety will ruin you spiritually, mentally and physically.

In verse 25 we find anxiety over not having food, drink, and clothing. Rest assured these are not the only three things we can find ourselves worrying about. The Lord explained in verse 25 that life is more than a meal. He explained that our body was more than a suit of clothes. Without food, our life would end. Without clothing, our life would end. God gives life. He gave you yours and He gave me mine. Cannot the God who gave us life provide for and protect that life? If not, we don’t serve quite the God we think we do.

### ***The fowls of the air***

In verse 26 the Lord asked us to take a look around at creation. Sometimes the key to the riddle is in our yard. Christ said *“Behold”* or take a look at *“the fowls of the air.”* Thus, the Lord uses the birds to teach us something. They neither sow, reap, nor store-up food. The question that needs asking is “how many birds have you seen dead that you know died from starvation?” I know some have surely starved through the ages. Yet, starvation is not a common cause of birds dying.

It has been reckoned that a sparrow, if we may use the sparrow as an example, consumes a bushel of corn in a year. Where might a sparrow obtain and store such a quantity of corn? It surely would be nice if the sparrow could say on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year “I have my year’s supply of food stored outback.” Mark it down, little birds would perish if it were not for divine provisions. They cannot take thought for tomorrow, so God feeds them because of their helplessness.

Because we are more valuable than many sparrows, we are far more worthy of God's care. While He feeds the sparrow because of its helplessness, He feeds us because of His love toward us. He has mercy on the sparrow; he has *love* and *mercy* toward you and me. I am redeemed by His blood. I will not starve or go naked. I am nothing within self, yet I am far more noble and dearer to God than His soul-less creatures such as birds. God miraculously clothed and fed Israel for 40 years in the wilderness. During the 40 year trip their shoes and clothes never wore out. Do you have a pair of shoes you believe will last 40 years? Let me know what brand they are and where you bought them. God is able to provide all that is necessary for His children.

### ***How tall are you?***

Can anxiety increase your stature? Not according to verse 27. If anything, go through life with your head drooping while you worry, and you may get shorter. Can anxiety increase the length of your lifespan? Absolutely not and worry may, in fact, shorten your life.

### ***The lilies of the field***

Next, the Lord brings us another point of interest. He asks us to take into consideration the lilies of the field. The fowls of the air were associated with food. The lilies of the field teach us about clothing. We surely need clothing to live, remembering clothing refers not only to garments, but to our dwelling place as well. The lily used by our Lord in this parable likely speaks of the *huleh* lily of Palestine. It is renowned for its colors from brilliant scarlet to fine, deep purple. It is among the most gorgeous of flowers. Perhaps as the Lord spoke this parable, there were birds in the trees above Him and lilies growing in the meadow wherein He stood.

How much do you think a lily spends on cosmetics each year? How often do you think a lily consults with a fashion consultant? What would a lily's annual budget be for clothing? These flowers grow wildly and untamed. Yet, the greatest artist cannot capture the glorious beauty of this lily. Growing wildly, these flowers, according to verses 28 and 29, exceed the grandeur of the greatest of kingdoms, the kingdom of Solomon. We could speak volumes on the majesty of Solomon's reign.

The lily is temporal. Verse 30 describes it as “here today and gone tomorrow.” Why would God take such care to so clothe a lily that essentially has a lifespan of one day? Consider the care, then, that He must have for you and me to whom He has given eternal life! I am going to live forever! So, let the lily teach us, as did the birds, that anxiety, fretting and worry are to no avail.

What about a God so knowing that He knows what we need before we know it (verse 32). God knows the need of all 6 ½ billion on earth, even before the need occurs. I have often said and say again, God is in such control that He has never had to “plan.”

Verse 33 I have proven many times in my life. If I could paraphrase this verse I would say “put God first and He will take care of the rest.” There may have been a saved person hungry or even one that starved, but it was a saved person who forsook God. He said the “righteous” would never be forsaken. When we examine the situation, we find we do not even know what to ask God for because we don’t know what the situation will be in our life tomorrow. Verse 34 says “tomorrow will take care of itself.” How many “todays” have I wasted in my lifetime worrying about “tomorrow?”

Worry is disastrous to us and is dishonoring to God.