

Slides and Questions for Children

Which is more valuable?

Which do you look after more carefully?

Which is more important?

If you lost both of these things which would upset you more?

Which do you spend more time looking after?

Why do people spend more time looking after their babies than their plants?

Comforting bit

In our Bible reading this morning Jesus gets us to imagine a field. This field is full of beautiful flowers and birds eating.

The flowers look good, colourful and vibrant

The birds are happy; hopping along pecking at the food, which they didn't plant or grow.

You are much more important than birds and flowers says Jesus,

God values you much more than those things... so if he provides for their needs what are you worrying about? – He'll provide for yours!

But there are loads of opportunities for anxiety and worry in life! We work hard to get money to pay our rent or mortgage, our bills and food. Petrol, insurance, tax, tuition fees

Cost of living is increasing, and real world income isn't keeping pace – or is falling!

We work Monday through Friday and most of us have to take our work home with us. As a nation we're increasingly 'living for the weekend' and have less and less of that weekend for ourselves!

The last hundred years has given us loads of new labour saving devices in the home and in industry, but the average person is not getting any more time for their own lives and families – just more time for work

Meanwhile the message from society is incessant: we need things, we need more things, we need better things, buy things and you'll be happy, buy things and your friends will think you're cool

Isn't that basically the message of most adverts?

But here Jesus says, 'don't worry' God values you, God knows what you need, God will provide for you

A big readjustment is needed, but at the moment it sounds a little simplistic doesn't it?!

You see, flowers wilt and birds get eaten

Later in Matthew's Gospel (ch10) Jesus builds on today's reading when talking about being in fear of those who can hurt us. He says *'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known... Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs on your*

head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven.'

Yes life is tough, yes bad things happen...

But this is a comforting message: you are known by God, you are valued by God, you are loved by God and you do not have to live with your anxieties or your worries

This is a comforting message: we do not have to play the game the way the world wants us to play it

That next purchase you make will not make you happy or fulfilled

Your savings do not make you safe or secure. Only God can do that, only God will provide what you need

So don't worry! God has it all in hand, God has your future and your family's future in hand

Do not worry and struggle for more, instead strive for the Kingdom of God and he will provide for your needs along the way

Challenging bit

And here's the challenging bit: it requires a massive readjustment!

We're challenged in our Bible passage today to not build our life around the messages we hear on the TV

Not to think that our savings account or our pension pot is the thing which makes us safe and secure

Not to think that we will be happy, satisfied, once we get the fantastic holiday or the latest phone

But to strive for the Kingdom of God... then *as we do that* God will provide what we need

But what is the Kingdom of God?

His Kingdom is that over which God is recognised and valued as King and it's spreading here on earth

This is a great challenge but it's also a wonderful invitation to the greatest adventure the world has ever seen

Come and be involved in spreading God's Kingdom here on earth

Help people become aware of how magnificent he is, how much he loves them, what he offers them

Come and make his priorities your own:

Loving, treasuring, admiring God above and before all things

Communicating the gospel

Loving our neighbours

Forgiving our enemies

Helping the poor and the sick

Don't waste your life waiting for relaxing holidays

Don't waste your life on chasing promotions, come invest in something better!

Build your life on his priorities, his message, his love

Be radical in your Christianity; make God more valued in your life and in your communities

And as you strive to make God more valuable to people and society, as you make those radical life choices... God will give you all those things you need

Not necessarily the things you want, but the things you need

Do not worry and struggle for more, instead strive for the Kingdom of God and he will provide for your needs along the way