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**Christ Church West Wimbledon 8 February 2026**

**Sermon Title: The Weight We Were Never Meant to Carry**

**Gospel Reading: Matthew 6 vs 25 to 34**

**New Testament Reading: Romans 8 vs 18 to 25**

Before we turn to the readings themselves, I would like to invite you to do something quietly, just for yourself. Think for a moment about something that has been weighing on you recently. A worry, a concern, perhaps a situation, that keeps returning when your mind slows down. You don't need to name it out loud, just notice it.

*Live Illustration in church*

*Now, I need a volunteer for a moment. (Volunteer comes forward; weights are handed to them.)*

I'd like you to hold these weights out in front of you, arms straight.

*Do those weights look particularly heavy?*

Probably not. They look manageable. Ordinary.

But let's leave them there for a moment.

*What's happening now?*

The weight hasn't changed, but holding it for longer begins to strain. What was manageable becomes tiring, uncomfortable, even painful.

*You can relax your arms now, thank you.*

This is an illustration of what worry does to us.

Most of the things we worry about are not unbearable in themselves. A decision, a bill, a health concern, an unknown future. But we don't carry them for a moment, we often carry them through the night, into the next day, and often far into the future. We carry weight we were never meant to hold for that long.

That is why Jesus speaks the way he does in today's Gospel.

*"Do not worry about your life."*

These are not careless words. Jesus is not dismissing hardship or pretending that life is easy. He knows hunger. He knows uncertainty. He knows fear. But he also knows something deeper: that worry slowly drains us.

So Jesus invites us to look around, to notice the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. They are not idle or careless. They live fully as what God created them to be. And they are sustained. Cared for. Known.

And then Jesus asks a question that is meant to settle our hearts:

*"Are you not of more value than they?"*

This is the heart of the Gospel. Our worth does not depend on how well we manage life, or how much we try to control the future. Our worth is rooted in God's love. And because of that, Jesus says,

*"Do not worry about tomorrow. Today is enough for today."*

St Paul, in our Romans reading, echoes this truth in a different way. He speaks of a creation that is still waiting, still groaning, still unfinished. Some of us know that feeling. We live in the space between promise and fulfillment. Yet Paul insists that even this waiting is held by God.

Hope is not wishful thinking, it is trust that God is at work even when we cannot yet see the end.

So what does this look like when worry shows up in our own lives? Jesus doesn't just name the problem, he offers us a way of living. Let me offer four faithful, practical responses grounded in Scripture. These responses are not an exhaustive list but some practices that we can take up straight away.

**Firstly: name the worry and give it to God.**

Peter writes,

*"Cast all your anxiety, (your cares, your burdens, your worries) on him, because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5 vs 7*

Worry grows when it remains unnamed and unspoken. Faith begins when we tell the truth in prayer. Naming the worry does not make us

weak, it opens the door to grace. We place into God's hands the worries and burdens that we were never meant to carry alone.

**Secondly: return to the present moment God has given.**

Jesus brings us back to today. Not yesterday. Not tomorrow but today. When worry pulls us into imagined futures, faith asks, "*What is mine to do now?*" God gives grace one day at a time. We are not asked to solve everything, but to look at what steps we can take at the present time.

**Thirdly: pray with thanksgiving as well as need.**

Paul in Philippians tells us to bring our requests to God with thanksgiving. He says

*"Do not be anxious about anything but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" Philippians 4 vs 6 to 7*

Gratitude does not deny difficulty, but it reminds us that God has been faithful before, and will be faithful again. Thanksgiving shifts our focus from fear to trust, from scarcity to grace.

**Fourthly: allow others to share the burden.**

Scripture reminds us to carry one another's burdens. Worry isolates. The Gospel gathers. Sometimes God's care reaches us through another person, through listening, prayer, encouragement, and presence. We are not meant to hold everything by ourselves. I like the old adage,

*"a problem shared is a problem halved".*

So in closing, we return, to the worry you thought of at the beginning. What would it look like to place it gently into God's care today? Because the God who feeds the birds, clothes the lilies, and sustains a groaning creation knows you by name. And you are held, today, and always.

Amen.