

Bennochty church 9th September 2012

Are you a worrier? Are you the kind of person that worries, if you have nothing to worry about? To worry is part of the human make up. On the news recently it was reported by *Save the Children* that 1:4 parents went without food so as to feed their children. Think of the worry for such families in Britain living below the poverty line. It is all about responsibility; the responsibility of a wealthy nation to look after its vulnerable citizens, particularly children, and the responsibility of people themselves to discern what is priority and what limited resources should be spent on.

On the BBC's *breakfast* program the discussion was whether TV, broadband, mobile phones were now necessities of life and no longer luxury items. We will all have our own views on this, and I suppose how we think, will be determined by whether we look at it this from the outside, looking in, or have experience of living with the reality of poverty.

How apt then, in this context, does Jesus say; *"This is why I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you*

need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth more than clothes?

I wonder how much comfort that is when you do not have enough food, drink or clothing. How do these words sit alongside, our UK poverty, let alone the poverty and struggle of millions around the world, for example, the children and families supported by the *Play4all* project in Zambia or literally millions of people in India who know nothing else but survival, rather than living. Lives we can't even imagine. I think one of the big definitions of poverty is how much choice you have in life. I will leave you to reflect on that.

In an agricultural society, that was 1st century Palestine, it comes as no surprise that Jesus' examples are birds and flowers. His listeners were people who depended on the seasonal rains for their food. So they would be anxious from year to year for a good harvest. Yet still today, many who struggle for the basics of life live in such agricultural communities, so maybe this example is very poignant for our time?

It is a strange thing for Jesus to say, 'life is worth more than food', yes it is, but to live you need to eat. The 'body is worth more than clothes', yes it is, but I suspect not many of us would give them up! His examples are true, birds don't gather a harvest, but are fed, and flowers are indeed clothed in beauty. The idea is that God takes care of all his creation and we are right there at the top. We are indeed worth more than the birds and he will cloth us as he does the flowers.

As I hinted earlier, if we wanted to, we can punch holes in these arguments, none more so than those who are not fed and not clothed, and I don't have an answer for that, other than to say those of us with the choice, have the choice to share more of what we have.

But there are other significant things going on here in the words of Jesus. *"Can any of you live a bit longer by worrying about it?"* No, but we give it a good go! *"Do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own."* That is true, but we do it anyway! At this very moment you might be concerned about something that is to happen in the future. It is not easy to live in the 'here and now'.

So where does our faith come in? To truly trust God, that in the really crisis moments of life, God will not let us down? Is it a challenge to our faith, to test us, that God might know we see our faith as more important than food, drink or clothing? That faith is understanding that God knows own situation and asks us, in spite of what is happening all around, and particularity when we do not understand what is happening to us or to others, to seek first the Kingdom of God.

I don't believe it is a logical sequence, have faith and all will be well, faith is more than that. Faith comes from God and is a mystery. We don't have all the answers, we will never fully understand the mind of God; what is asked of us, is to love God and to love our neighbour. Worrying, well that is just part of life! Amen.