

you'll be gripped with fear. Where do you store your treasure? In iffy things or certainties?

So why do *you* worry? What life objectives snuff out your awareness of God? What makes you want to control your world? Understand those things, and Jesus' alternative will become very, very precious to you.

You've Got Better Reasons *Not* to Worry!

Jesus has no interest in simply talking about what's wrong with us. He's always going somewhere good. He does make reference to our temptations and failures, but he's more concerned with giving you solid reasons not to worry. Yes, you have reason to worry because things are uncertain. But you have many, much better reasons *not* to worry!

Some things are *certain*!

Jesus lays them out for his disciples, wooing, informing, and encouraging them. Be persuaded and heartened as you read. "Don't worry" doesn't hang in space as a moral platitude! Jesus gives you solid reasons to live without fretting—even when you're facing the very things that are inherently uncertain and uncontrollable.

Below are seven promises Jesus makes,

seven reasons for you not to worry. Which one do *you* find most inviting? Which one is most necessary and helpful, where you can say, “If I remember _____, I’ll be a different person this week. I would not worry about money, health, friends, whatever”? Which of these *better* reasons do you most need?

1. *Your life is so much more than food or clothing.* There’s so much more to who you are than what you have or don’t have. Jesus refers back to the story of the rich fool whose money couldn’t give him identity or meaning or security or life. Therefore, Jesus adds, “If your life isn’t *made* by having money, then your life can’t be *unmade* by the lack of it!” What matters a lot more is “Whom do you fear?” and “What do you do with Jesus?” Those are matters of life and death.

Everyone knows people who are living for empty, foolish things. The twenty-three-year-old woman who is living to be beautiful will only find that she will grow old and wrinkly. It’s a losing bet from the start.

Those who live for health or athleticism or adventures inevitably start to get knee injuries after age thirty-five. Reflexes slow down. Systems start to break down. Sooner or later,

death surely comes. It's foolish! There is more to life than health and sports and vacations!

It's like that with everything we live for—and worry about. If you live for money, you are banking on a clunker. The “car” is a lemon; it will *always* break down and give you reason to worry. There are better things to give your energies to. There is something much more important going on in your life than the stuff you worry about. Go through your worry list one by one. Jesus promises, “Your life is more than _____.” That's promise Number 1.

2. Jesus tells people to look around at the world. In this case, *look at crows*. Jesus says, “Consider the ravens. God feeds them even though they don't put a single seed in the ground. They don't ever water their crops. They don't store a thing for next year—not even for tomorrow. They live in the moment, but God provides for them.”

How does God feed them? It's not romantic in the least. A crow is a scavenger. They are dirty, tough, aggressive, and smart. They are noisy, obnoxious pests. How does God feed crows? Road kill. Trash picking. Raiding your crops. That's why you have scarecrows. God feeds the crows as they steal your food and pick over your garbage!

God's provision for the crows came home vividly to me one summer. A treasured plum tree grows in our yard. That year it was the only one of our five fruit trees to bear fruit. As summer unfolded, no less than forty, beautiful, sweet plums (I counted them!) were coming to ripeness. I couldn't wait!

One day when I came home, there were only twenty plums left on the tree. A gang of crows was having a feast on *my* precious plums! Earlier in the year this gang of six crows had moved into our neighborhood. I called them the Crow Boys. They made all kinds of racket early in the morning and they were always scavenging. And the Crow Boys had found *my* plum tree. I was not happy. We had planted this tree as a family. I prune it regularly and spray it faithfully. I had been eagerly looking forward to those forty juicy plums. And now there were only twenty left.

I mobilized our defenses. I threw ice cubes at the crows, banged trash cans, and ran to buy netting to put over the tree. By the time I got back, there were only twelve plums left on the tree. I draped the netting. When any crow tried to land, he would get a big, unpleasant surprise. Sure enough, a few minutes later, the first crow swooped in. He hit the netting, got