

**I Said, "Lord, Give Me One Good Reason *Not* to Worry!" He Told Me to Take a Walk and Sit in the Park.
There, As I Watched the Birds, I Heard, "His Eye is On the Sparrow, and I Know He Watches Me."**

"Of the many things that are prone to annoy us in life, nothing can be so irksome as someone telling us *not to worry*," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon Sunday. "During my life, when someone has come alongside me and said, 'Don't worry,' it often made things worse, not better, because in many cases that person knew very little about me or the need in my life."

In Mt. 6:24-34, Jesus five times directly tells his disciples not to worry, and a few more times indirectly, Pastor Thelander said. "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat and what you will wear. Just seek God, and he will provide. But God knows that these men have cause for worry. Some of them still have families that depend upon them. They live in a day and age where provisions could be scarce, and where it was common to wonder from where tomorrow's daily bread might come, or whether it would come at all."

In Paul's words to the Corinthians, he tells them that he goes hungry and is thirsty, without enough clothes to keep warm. "This seems a far cry from, 'Seek God's kingdom, and all these things will be added unto you,'" Pastor Thelander said.

"It can be irksome and even annoying when someone tells us not to worry—even when that person is Jesus—because God knows there is plenty for us to be worried about in 2008. . . . As I wrestled with this text this week, I did something I don't ever recall doing. I had a conversation with Jesus, and said, 'Lord, give me one good reason *not* to worry!'

"He didn't offer me a reason. Instead, he told me to stop what I was doing and slow down. Then he told me to go outside and take a walk and sit for a while in the little park near my house. So I did. I went for a walk and found myself sitting in the park. As I sat there quietly, do you know what I saw and heard? I saw birds, flying back and forth and singing and enjoying the beauty of the day. I immediately remembered times on the golf course with Jack Dunsmoor. Jack could tell the presence of a bird by its song, and he knew long before we saw the bird what type of bird it was. Jack knew the colors and features of birds intimately, and he could even distinguish different types of the same species of bird simply by their sounds and colors. Jack and Helen know how birds migrate, what they like to eat, their preferred habitat. (p.2→)



"Everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand." Mt. 7:26, part of the Gospel reading for this Sunday. Pictured here is St. Andrew's Church at Burnham-on-sea, Somerset, England, built in 1316. The church is near the sea front and is built on sand—but it's still more or less in place, nearly 700 years later. The top of the tower on the north side leans about three feet past the base.

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Sundays, 10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

Sundays, 11:45 a.m.: Moderated post-service discussion

Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.: Evening Prayers

Readings, 6/1: Deut. 11:18-28; Ps. 31:1-5; Rom. 3:21-28; Mt. 7:21-27. **6/8:**

Hosea 5:15—6:6; Ps. 50:7-15; Rom. 4:13-18; Mt. 9:9-13.

Prayer Emphases: Peru; Presbyterian Church USA; Covenant Presbyterian Church, Boise, and the Rev. Phil Moran; Yonge Street Mission, Toronto; parishioners on Lynwood Place.

(Sermon, cont'd.) They've traveled the world for the sheer joy and excitement of being attentive to these tiny creatures. I sat in silence and watched as a robin flew by, and then a sparrow. And then I heard these words: [Singing] 'Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come, why should my heart be lonely, and long for heaven and home? When Jesus is my portion, my constant friend is he, his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.' If my friend Jack Dunsmoor can know every species of bird intimately . . . how much more does God . . . intimately care for you? . . . There are two days in particular about which we should not worry: yesterday and tomorrow. Today's worries are sufficient, and God gives us what we need." Our response should be to "seek God first in all that we do." The bread and wine today are God's "visible message to you" that the One who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies "is watching over your life, and all the things that you need you shall have."