

Do Not Worry?

Study 12 • Luke 12:22-34



Text: Luke 12:22-34 Page 57 of The Portrait Gospel

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”

²⁷ ‘Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you – you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³² ‘Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Painting Caption

It can be easy for phrases in the Bible to become so familiar that they almost lose their meaning. When Jesus tells us “do not worry” and asks us to be like the flowers of the fields and the birds of the air, the words can glide past us with the ease of a pre-printed greetings card.

In this painting, we see the images of birds and flowers in the background, contrasted with the Iain’s friend, Fiona Morrison, going through her last chemotherapy session. There is a deliberate contrast between the birds and flowers and a familiar situation where it is all-but-impossible not to worry. There is no resolution to this dissonance: we are invited to embrace it as it is.