

Dear Friends,

I have become very paternal over the last week or two. I spotted blackbirds collecting bits of twigs to make a nest and was delighted to find that they have made one in my pyracanthas just outside my patio doors. The nest is conveniently at eye level so I can see when they are on the nest and when they are not, and I find myself getting worried if they have not been on the nest for some time. I have now started putting out mealworms for them. I feel as though they are mine and I have been given a great responsibility to care for them and their new family when it arrives.

My concern and worry for the birds reminds me of something Jesus said to a crowd when he sat down to teach them one day. He was talking about 'worrying' (Matthew 6:25-34.). Most people think that I'm very laid back, but in fact I can be the world's greatest worrier. I can lie awake at night worrying about stuff that in the big scheme of things is trivial. Jesus said to the crowd that they were not to worry about their lives, what would be on the meal table to eat or drink and what clothes they were going to wear. He said that there is far more to life than the food you put in your stomach and more to your outward appearance than the clothes you wear.

Jesus then reminded the crowd of the birds, who neither sow nor harvest nor gather the crop into barns yet their heavenly Father feeds them. And the wild flowers in the fields that grow, they neither labour or spin, yet God creates them in all their beauty. Jesus added that even King Solomon in all his finery was not dressed like the flowers, but if God clothes the flowers and feeds the birds how much more will he look after you?

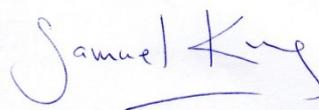
If there is one thing set to irritate me, it is when someone says to me "Stop worrying!" It is as though they believe that one can turn off worrying with a switch. I wish it were true, but sadly it isn't. Yet worry doesn't help us. It doesn't add anything good to our lives. It drains us and brings with it doubt and fear. I have found that it steals my time, it steals my joy, my peace, and it steals my energy. However, I have found that the times that I worry most are the times when I rely least on God. I find that handing my worries over to God doesn't get rid of them completely but it does help me to off load something of the burden and reminds me that he is in control.

St Paul once wrote as part of a letter:

'Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life.' (Philippians 4:6-7 The Message)

It's like God's own version of "Don't worry, be happy" — but with a glorious twist deeper than the universe.

God bless you all



Samuel King

N.B. If you have anything that you or the children might like to share with us all on our Sunday broadcasts please do let me know.