

**Sermon by pastor Shabalala
On Matthew 6:25-34
In Hannover
On the 19th of Sept. 2004**

Don't worry!

Since arriving here in Germany almost three years ago I have never had the opportunity to preach in English. This makes me a bit nervous since I may be tempted to talk for an hour without noticing it. It could also happen that I take only five minutes. This has been bothering me as I was preparing this sermon. When I have to preach in German I always have to worry about my poor German and keep asking myself if it makes sense at all. It is however not only when I have to preach in a foreign language that I get worried, because even when I have to preach in siSwati, my mother language, I get nervous. My wife thinks I worry too much about everything.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we all have our worries in life and some worry more than others. In our sermon text today Jesus tells us not to worry. I believe it is a good feeling not to be worried about anything in life, especially those things that are essential for our welfare.

Jesus mentions our very basic needs, like food, drink, clothes and shelter and says we do not need to worry about such things. Coming from Africa where such basic human needs are still a dream for most people, I may be forgiven for not taking what Jesus says seriously. There people, as I speak who do not know if they would have gotten something to eat when they go to sleep tonight. There are children who have to go to school tomorrow but they still do not have the money they need to pay for their school fees. And Jesus says to them „Do not worry!“

Or is he talking to us here in Germany where there is a very good social security system – although things seem to be changing now? Where many people cannot even imagine how it is to go to sleep without food or to go to school barefooted. What does Jesus mean here when he says „Do not worry“?

Let us go back to Africa for a little while. This text is also read in church services where the listeners would go back home after the service still not sure what they would eat for that day. These are the very people who celebrate joyous services, where they sing and dance to give praise to God. Their faith in God is such that they actually experience what God promises all of us in his word. Jesus wants us to look beyond our needs and to see the one who supplies our day to day needs.

That is the biggest challenge to all of us, to let God take control of our lives and to trust him. God feeds the birds and dresses the grass and plants in such a way that we cannot even understand. And there comes the challenge from Jesus, „Are you not more valuable to him than the birds are?“ and „won't he more surely care for you“ than he cares for the flowers? That makes me stop and think. Of course he set us above his creation, we are made in His image. Jesus came to earth as a man, not as a bird or a flower – God became man – that's how valuable we are.

When Jesus says do not worry about tomorrow, he does not mean that you should resign from your job, sit and do nothing. He also does not mean that we should be poor. All what he is saying is that we should not put all our faith in material things and forget the source of life. He means that we should not be too busy with our material things that we even have no time to worship him and to thank him for the things that we have. The lack of certain things in our lives should not make us sick or disturb our relationships with one another, it should not lead to hopelessness. We should not be so worried that we become selfish and even unprepared to share the little that we have with others.

Trusting God in this way is not simple, we all want to be in control of every situation. We always try to plan and manage things properly so that there are no unexpected surprises in our lives. We have to budget well and not spend on anything that is outside our budgets. We trust in our planning and budgeting skills and not the one who gives us skills. Jesus says, let God be at the centre, let him be number one in your life, after all he is the only one who knows your future.

Putting God at the centre of your life means making the Kingdom of God your primary concern. The Kingdom of God is a place where God is in charge, it can be your personal life, a church or even a bigger community. You only need to believe in him and in the Lord Jesus Christ and surrender yourself, your will and all that you are to him. Jesus makes a promise that God will then give you all that you need from day to day.

**The peace of God,
which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN**