

He Knows **Matthew 6:25-33**

INTRODUCTION

Before I read the Gospel lesson for today, I would like us all to sing a song many of us learned as children. If this is new to you, don't worry. It's a children's song! I am confident you will pick it up quickly.

HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS.

- He's got the whole world ...
- He's got the tiny little baby ...
- He's got you and me brother ...
- He's got everybody here ...
- He's got the whole world ...

NOW LISTEN TO THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY: Matthew 6:25-33

On the slope of Longs Peak in Colorado lie the ruins of a huge tree. Naturalists say that this tree stood for over 400 years. It had weathered thousands of storms and had been hit with lightning 14 times. At the end, an army of beetles attacked the tree and leveled it to the ground. This tremendous giant, that age had not withered, that lightning had not blasted, that storms had not subdued fell at last before beetles so small that a man could crush them between his forefinger and thumb.

- It wasn't the big things that brought it down. It was the little things.
- Many people are able to survive rare storms and lightning blasts that come into their lives, but somehow they allow the tiny beetles of worry, fear, stress, and tension to destroy their happiness and effectiveness.
- This Gospel text speaks to that problem.

I'm reminded of a single line from another simple little song, written and recorded by Bobby McFerrin in the late 1980s: Don't worry; be happy.

- The first half of that four word sentence is good: Don't worry. That's what we read in this text.
- But the last two words have little to do with the first two. The cure for worry is thankfulness, not happiness.
- Don't worry. Be thankful.

Why can I be thankful when the tiny beetles of worry start to pester me? The key is in verses 31-32:

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... your heavenly Father knows that you need them. (Matthew 6:31-32)

You don't need to worry. God already knows about it. So instead, be thankful.

Listen to the reassuring words of Psalm 139:

- ¹ You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.
- ² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- ³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.
- ⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
- ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
- ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

Ken Gaub is an evangelist and musician who tours the world. He has a book titled "God Has Your Number." In it he wrote about an experience he had back in the 1990s:

At the time I was driving on I-75 near Dayton, Ohio, with my wife and children. We turned off the highway for a rest and refreshment stop. My wife Barbara and children went into the restaurant. I suddenly felt the need to stretch my legs, so waved them off ahead saying I'd join them later.

I bought a soft drink, and as I walked toward the nearby Dairy Queen, feelings of self-pity enshrouded my mind. I loved the Lord and my ministry, but I felt drained, burdened. My cup was empty.

Suddenly the impatient ringing of a telephone nearby jarred me out of my doldrums. It was coming from a phone booth at a service station on the corner. Wasn't anyone going to answer the phone?

Noise from the traffic flowing through the busy intersection must have drowned out the sound because the service station attendant continued looking after his customers, oblivious to the ringing. 'Why doesn't somebody answer that phone?' I muttered.

I began reasoning. It may be important. What if it's an emergency? Curiosity overcame my indifference. I stepped inside the booth and picked up the phone. 'Hello?' I said casually and took a big sip of my drink.

The operator said: "This is a long distance call for Ken Gaub."

My eyes widened, and I almost choked on a chunk of ice. Swallowing hard, I said, 'You're crazy!' Then realizing I shouldn't speak to an operator like that, I

added, 'This can't be! I was walking down the road, not bothering anyone, and the phone was ringing...'

"Sir, is Ken Gaub there?" the operator interrupted, "I have a long distance call for him."

It took a moment to gain control of my babbling, but I finally replied, "Yes, he is here." Searching for a possible explanation, I wondered if I could possibly be on Candid Camera!

Then I heard another voice say, "Yes, that's him, operator. That's Ken Gaub."

I listened dumbfounded to a strange voice identify herself. "I'm Millie from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. You don't know me, Mr. Gaub, but I'm desperate. Please help me."

"What can I do for you?"

She began weeping. Finally she regained control and continued. "I was about to commit suicide and had just finished writing a note, when I began to pray and tell God I really didn't want to do this. Then I suddenly remembered seeing you on television and thought if I could just talk to you, you could help me. I knew that was impossible because I didn't know how to reach you, I didn't know anyone who could help me find you. Then some numbers came to my mind, and I scribbled them down."

At this point she began weeping again, and I prayed silently for wisdom to help her. She continued, "I looked at the numbers and thought, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if I had a miracle from God, and He has given me Ken's phone number?' I decided to try calling it. I can't believe I'm talking to you. Are you in your office in California?"

I replied, "Lady, I don't have an office in California. My office is in Yakima, Washington."

A little surprised, she asked, "Oh really, then where are you?"

"Don't you know?" I responded. "You made the call."

She explained, "But I don't even know what area I'm calling. I just dialed the number that I had on this paper."

"Ma'am, you won't believe this, but I'm in a phone booth in Dayton, Ohio!"

"Really?" she exclaimed. "Well, what are you doing there?"

I kidded her gently, "Well, I'm answering the phone. It was ringing as I walked by, so I answered it."

Knowing this encounter could only have been arranged by God, I began to counsel the woman. As she told me of her despair and frustration, the presence of the Holy Spirit flooded the phone booth giving me words of wisdom beyond my ability. In a matter of moments, she prayed the sinner's prayer and met the One who would lead her out of her situation into a new life. I walked away from that telephone booth with an electrifying sense of our Heavenly Father's concern for each of His children.

What were the astronomical odds of this happening? With all the millions of phones and innumerable combinations of numbers, only an all-knowing God could have caused that woman to call that number in that phone booth at that moment in time. Forgetting my drink and nearly bursting with exhilaration, I

headed back to my family, wondering if they would believe my story. Maybe I better not tell this, I thought, but I couldn't contain it.

"Barb, you won't believe this! God knows where we are!"

In another similar passage of Scripture, Jesus says:

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. (Luke 12:6-7)

Your Heavenly Father knows...

- Where you are
- How much hair is on your head
- When the sparrows fall from the sky
- What you need

For all this and so much more we give thanks this night.

I close with a prayer that is referred to as "The Pilgrims' Prayer." Truthfully, the Pilgrims did not believe in scripted prayers, so no one knows exactly what they prayed on their first Thanksgiving. But the creator of this prayer, I think, captured the sentiment of their hearts:

O Lord our God and heavenly Father, which of Thy unspeakable mercy towards us, hast provided meate and drinke for the nourishment of our weake bodies.

Grant us peace to use them reverently, as from Thy hands, with thankful hearts: let Thy blessing rest upon these Thy good creatures, to our comfort and sustentation: and grant we humbly beseech Thee, good Lord, that as we doe hunger and thirst for this food of our bodies, so our soules may earnestly long after the food of eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, Amen.

And Amen.