



## Our Father 'Our Father's Delight'

**Date:** Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November

**Speaker:** Becky Stamps (South Site)

**Key Verses:** Luke 12:29-34

### Talk Summary:

There are three key parts to this passage: 'Do not worry...' 'Seek first the Kingdom' and 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

We don't need to worry about getting what we need – clothes, food, housing, affection, whatever it is. The pagan world 'run after' these things – God knows they are necessary, and he knows that they worry us when we aren't secure in getting them. However, if we follow Jesus, we are part of the 'little flock' - we have a Father who loves us and knows that we need them. We can trust God's goodness because of our relationship with him. Our confidence is in his love for us and what's already been paid for us (like an all-inclusive holiday, or going to your parents' house at Christmas). Worrying isn't a sin, it just isn't God's best for us – he'd love to invite us to live trusting in his love and free from fear about the future.

Seeking the Kingdom first means giving to the poor – in fact, it means doing so in a sacrificial way, giving of your best and until it means you go without, 'selling your possessions' and doing so. When we have a relationship with the Father and can leave aside our own fear about whether we'll have enough for ourselves, it can free us to give to others who have needs without worrying. We are God's plan to help the world (notice, the 'poor' are potentially both 'flock' and 'pagans' – we are to love those inside the church and outside it). We can give our money, our time and ourselves. This might look like giving to the church, serving on a Sunday team or a through-the-week team, giving to a Compassion ministry, serving your neighbourhood during the week, with church, with another organisation or just on your own or with your family or household. This is especially hard to talk about at the moment because of how much fear is out there and how real the financial struggle is (and how much worse it is getting and predicted to get) for so many people. Jesus' disciples would have come from a range of backgrounds, including some extreme poverty. Jesus doesn't shy away from asking us to give him everything we can but also celebrated every

small gift and every step of faith. The woman who gave two small coins was applauded by Jesus for her generosity – it wasn't about the amount but the heart behind it.

God invites us into a life that is set free from the fear of lack, that frees us to be generous and put the Kingdom first. This means putting our lives into God's hands and looking to the future for reward and comfort, rather than seeking it now. God is building a kingdom where there will be no more death, pain or poverty, to be fulfilled completely when Jesus returns. What we do won't alleviate all of this for ourselves or others now, but leaning into generosity with all our resources will give us freedom in this life, and increase the fruit that we'll see in others and in the future. For us at Birmingham Vineyard, we are invited to generously give ourselves to love the people of Birmingham, to invite them into relationship with Jesus and serve his vision for our church to multiply groups, sites and ministries across the city.

## **Worship**

*Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.*

*(Small group worship resources can be found at [bvc.so/sgworship](http://bvc.so/sgworship))*

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

*If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:*

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

## **Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)**

- Where can I cut back what I don't really delight in? (i.e. – what is it that I'm giving my heart, my time, my resources that I actually don't care about very much? What's worrying me unnecessarily?)
- Where can I lean into the Kingdom & trust God more? (e.g. start giving to church, increase my giving, start or change my church serving, start or change my serving in local community or neighbourhood, or other areas?)
- Where do I need God to help me? (Encourage your group to talk about their needs for breakthrough in finances, housing, relationships, faith or other areas. Remind them that they can also be the answers to each other's prayers – you could pray for ways to bless people you know, in church and outside it, over the Christmas season and beyond.

## **Witness - How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?**

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
  - Upcoming Events (go to [bvc.so/whats-on](http://bvc.so/whats-on) for details)
    - Reflective Service – 26<sup>th</sup> November

## **Other Notices:**

- Birmingham Vineyard are partnering with Birmingham City Mission to provide toys and food for families in need over Christmas. As a small group, community or ministry leader we would like to invite you to nominate households who need extra help:
  - If they need toys for their kids Christmas' presents (for families with children under 16)
  - If they need help with food vouchers for the Christmas period (any household)

- We can refer people who are in our church or outside it, who are known to us via friendship, outreach, neighbourhood or in any other way.
- If you know of a household who would benefit from this, **you need to ask their permission** to refer them and then pass their details to **Abi Hastings, our Pastoral Assistant for Compassion, by December 1st**. Contact [abih@birminghamvineyard.com](mailto:abih@birminghamvineyard.com) or 07582582022.