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By the Rev. Mary Norton

I don't know about you, but every so often, perhaps even frequently, some part of the daily reading of scripture or devotional hits me right between the eyes. It is exactly what I needed to hear that day, whether for inspiration, comfort or correction.

But there is one passage of scripture that always seems to come across that way, no matter what else is going on, and it is Matthew 6:25-34, which begins with: "Jesus continued, 'Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life.'" The passage ends with, "Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day."

So let me ask, is there ever a day you are not worried or concerned about something? I'd like to say otherwise, but it is not so. I suspect that for most of us, there is always something. It may not be top of mind, but it plays across your consciousness like the words across the bottom of a news channel screen. Always present — sometimes you notice it; sometimes you don't.

Why is that? You'd think that the idea of being stress- and worry-free would be so appealing; we'd just chuck it all and say, "Ok, Jesus, I take what you say to heart and have no worries. Here, I give them all to you."

Very few if any of us can truly do that. It may be because we have such an inherent need to try to control our world, or at least our lives, that we just cannot hand over everything to him. It may be that we are so saturated with knowledge and information and crowding our day with as much as possible that worry or concern is built in to our days (or at least our nights).

And we truly do not know what will happen tomorrow or the next day. In fact, I have always thought it ironic that as we believe in, love and live in God through Jesus Christ, we live in the surety that we will have eternal life, but we have absolutely no idea what will happen here on earth in the next minute, hour or day here on earth.

And for the most part, we cannot do anything to affect or change those coming minutes, hours or days, especially those things in the unknown long-term future. So why do we worry? Why are we anxious about things? Obviously, I cannot answer that, but I can affirm that most people are more anxious than we should be, or than is healthy, or more than what is appropriate for people of faith.

Through scripture and our spiritual teachers, we are often reminded that we should not seek any of the false predictors of the future (such as horoscopes or a fortune-teller) because only God knows, and that is sufficient. So worrying is like imposing our own personal fortune-telling on an event. I'm pretty sure God is not too keen on that. So for now, perhaps just for today, we can be reminded to stop worrying and hand it all over to Jesus as best we can. Most of us take it all back from him pretty quickly so we can fret over whatever it is. But if we can worry just a little less, and trust more, that is a step in the right direction.

Matthew 6:26-27: Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?