

## Gospel of Matthew Chapter 6 -- John Karmelich

1. There is an age-old expression that goes, "If you are going to kill a king, make sure you kill him."
  - a) What that means is, if you are going to assassinate a king, make sure you kill him or else he, and all his power will come back with a vengeance.
  - b) The first section of Chapter 6 reminded me of this expression.
  - c) Remember that Chapter 6 is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount.
  - d) It is a three-chapter-long speech given by Jesus.
    - i) The central theme is all about keeping God on the "throne of your heart".
      - a) This is a constant, moment-by-moment thing, as our ego's constantly want us to be in charge.
      - b) In order for God to be in charge, we have to personally get off the throne ourselves, or dethrone whatever "idol's" we worship with our time and our resources.
  - e) Which leads us to Chapter 6.
    - i) The first section of Chapter 6 has to do with our response to God for the eternal salvation. The specific topics here are prayer, fasting and giving.
    - ii) The reason I opened with the expression "If you are going to kill a king" is because our old-self, our ego, just doesn't want to die. Even after we accept Jesus as king over our lives, we still want to be in charge. We fail to kill "our old king" and our old king still wants to rule.
    - iii) Remember in Chapter 5 we dealt with such issues as not being angry, praying for your enemies, showing love (giving of oneself) to the unlovable and those who hate you.
      - a) Chapter 6 goes to the next step, which is our religious acts.
      - b) It is almost as if our old egotistical nature is saying, "Well, if I can't do all of that stuff in Chapter 5, at least let me rule in Chapter 6". To put it another way, "If I have to submit to God's will in my relationship with other people, at least let me be in charge in doing "religious stuff".
      - c) Chapter 6 starts with a discussion of prayer, fasting and giving.
        - (1) Our old nature, our egotistical self, wants to be noticed by people.
        - (2) We want to "serve as good examples", so we parade our religious acts publicly. Ultimately, we are glorifying ourselves and not God.
    - iv) This idea of having God-in-charge of our lives in our religious acts can be summed up in Verse 1 of Chapter 6:
2. Chapter 6, Verse 1: "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."
  - a) Verse 1 is a summary verse for most of chapter 6.
    - i) In the next 15 verses, Jesus gives illustrations on this principal.
  - b) The word to underline in Verse 1 is "no". "You will have no reward in heaven for this"
  - c) This verse implies a number of things:
    - i) First of all, there are rewards in heaven.
    - ii) Second, any religious effort done for the purpose of being seen by people gets no reward in heaven. again, the emphasis is on the word "none".
    - iii) Third, the things we are going to talk about in Chapter 6 are not bad things, it is only the motivation that Jesus calls into question.

- d) One of the key words to underline in your bible in Chapter 6 is the word “when”.
    - i) Jesus says, “When you give to the needy” (Verse 2)
    - ii) Jesus says, “When you pray” (Verse 5)
    - iii) Jesus says, “When you fast” (Verse 16)
    - iv) There are no “if you give, pray or fast statements here.
      - a) Jesus is assuming you are going to do these things.
      - b) Jesus then focuses on our attitudes when we do those things.
  - e) Let’s move on to Verse 2 that starts the topic of giving of our time and resources.
3. Verse 2: "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
- a) Notice that the topic of giving to the poor is given priority over the topic of praying.
    - i) It is not that praying isn’t important, but I suspect that this principal is given a priority as an issue over praying and fasting.
  - b) In the historical context, there were religious leaders at this time that would literally blow trumpets in the town square as they were giving money to the poor. This was common knowledge and Jesus used that fact as an illustration.
    - i) You can almost hear the logic of people giving that way: “You know, I need to be a good example for the common people. I need to be a leader, and show the importance of giving of my resources to the poor. It is important that I sound the trumpet as I give as to inspire others to give”
    - ii) It is so easy to give that way, as it builds our ego. The attitude is you don’t care so much about the poor as much as you care about your own self-esteem.
  - c) Let’s look at modern examples.
    - i) Go walk around a university or a hospital and notice all the plaques and signs given to the people who donated to that university or hospital.
    - ii) There are buildings at universities named after donors.
    - iii) There are wings of hospitals named after donors.
      - a) By the way, I have nothing against donating to major charities.
      - b) The key is one’s motivation.
      - c) Sometimes the receiver wants to show public gratitude as a way of saying thank you. Simply tell them, “if you want to thank me, keep it quiet”.
    - iv) Jesus is teaching in a sense “Well, good for you, hope you enjoy seeing your name there, because that is all the reward you are going to get.”
    - v) A big theme of the Sermon on the Mount is all about having eternal-perspective.
      - a) If our desire is eternal-rewards, than we should not care about our rewards here in earth.
    - vi) Unfortunately, it is just as bad in the Christian church.
      - a) We have rooms and plaques in churches named after the donors.
      - b) I have seen services where people publicly give checks.
        - (1) “I have a vision that there is someone in this room who wants to give a thousand dollars to this church. Will that person stand up so God can collect that check?” I hope that person enjoys that moment, because that is all the reward he will get.
      - c) Personally, I don’t even like those “big red thermometer posters” that show the church’s fundraising goals and progress. Ask yourself if they are giving glory to God or to the congregation who gives?

4. Verse 3: But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
  - a) When Jesus is saying, “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing”, this is an expression. Your hand’s don’t have the capacity to think, so it is not literal.
    - i) It is the idea, of when you give of your money and resources, it should be in a way that is so casual, so quick that it is almost as if you are unaware of your giving.
  - b) I want to deviate a little on the topic of giving.
    - i) Giving of your money (and your time) to the church isn’t so much for the church’s benefit as it is your own. It is about trusting God for today’s and tomorrow’s financial provision as you are trusting him with the first of your earnings.
    - ii) You should give primarily to your church, but other causes are just as good.
    - iii) Think of one’s giving as investing in the stock market. You want to pick companies with good earning potential. The same should be with Christian causes. Are they doing good things for Christian causes? If you see God blessing a particular ministry and you feel lead to give to support it, do so.
    - iv) Remember all that you have belongs to God. God asks that you give ten percent (called a “tithe” in the bible) as a way of testing and trusting.
      - a) By giving the first of one’s net earnings (“take home paycheck” or net profit if one is self-employed), one is saying to God “OK God, I am trusting you with my resources. All of my money and time belongs to you, but I am giving you a percentage of what I earn to show that I am trusting you daily to provide for me financially.
      - b) Personally, you cannot out give God. Giving of one’s money is the one way I know where you can put God to the test to see if you can out give God. I’ve yet to see a person file bankruptcy because he or she gave too much of their income to God.
  - c) Next, we move on to the topic of praying.
5. Verse 5: "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
  - a) The words to underline here are “to be seen by men”.
  - b) Jesus is not condoning public prayer. He is condoning bad motivation for prayer.
  - c) Notice it says these people love to pray in ways to be seen by men.
  - d) Remember in my introduction I talked about our ego’s getting involved in our religious activities. Here Jesus is applying this idea to praying.
  - e) This is very easy for us to do. Let me give you an illustration.
    - i) We could be in church with our children. We could easily not be sincere because we want our children to see us praying “as good examples”. There is nothing wrong with being good examples to our children, but when we love this more than actually praying to God, “we have a problem”. ☺
    - ii) The same could apply to friends or acquaintances. It is easy for ourselves to think “Hey, I haven’t seen that guy for a long time. Maybe if they watch me praying here in church, they’ will get the idea and be more like me”.
6. Verse 6: But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
  - a) It is verses like this that remind us of the importance of private prayer.
    - i) Notice Jesus doesn’t say anything about what time of the day to pray, or how one should dress when praying, or even the position of the body.
    - ii) Jesus emphasis is on privacy when praying.

- iii) Jesus is encouraging us to go to a place with a minimal amount of distractions.
        - a) Personally, I like praying early in the morning before others wake up only to avoid distractions. For others, late night works well. For moms of young children, “nap-time” may be the ideal time of the day.
        - b) I have met families where they organize “quiet time”. They pick a time of the day where everyone is to be quiet for bible reading and praying.
    - b) It is important to emphasize that Jesus is not condemning public prayer. There are times for public prayer and times for private prayer.
      - i) You must read this verse in context of the surrounding verses.
      - ii) The topic is not to have the attitude of prayer about being concerned about communicating with God, and not to be seen by people.
      - iii) There are times when public prayer is important.
        - a) In Matthew 18, Jesus is discussing prayer again, “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I (Jesus) with them.” (Matthew 18:20, NIV)
          - (1) Jesus point in Matthew 18 is that there is “something special” about praying with one or two others (or more).
        - b) In Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> letter to Timothy, he talks about praying in times of worship (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:8). The point here is simply there are times for public prayer and times for private prayer.
7. Verse 7: And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.
- a) The over-riding topic here is about our ego’s. God is constantly working at getting us off the throne so He can be on our throne.
  - b) There is nothing wrong with a repeated prayer.
    - i) Jesus prayed three times to avoid the path of the cross, but finally accepted the idea of not Jesus’ will but God the Father’s will has to be done. (See Matthew 26:39-44)
    - ii) Verse 7 is not a condemnation against repeating prayers. It is a condemnation about our ego’s thinking “God must answer my prayer, because I’ve said it seventeen times and now He owes that to me”.
    - iii) In fact, in a few verses, we are going to get to the “Lord’s Prayer”.
      - a) In Luke 11, that prayer is repeated almost verbatim.
        - (1) Yet Luke 11 took place sometime after the Sermon on the Mount.
        - (2) Luke 11 is not the same occasion.
        - (3) The point is Jesus taught the exact same prayer later and is implying there is nothing wrong with repeated prayer.
        - (4) The point is our attitude in praying, not our number of repetitions.
8. Verse 8: Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.
- a) John’s loose translation of Verse 8: “When you pray, get to the point”. ☺
    - i) We are not rewarded for how long we have been praying.
    - ii) An old Christian idiom is, “It is not the length of the prayer, but the weight of the prayer that matters”. (Source John MacArthur’s Commentary on Matthew)
  - b) Imagine praying, “You know God, there is that guy down the street, I can’t think of his name. He lives in that yellow house, you know, the one with the fancy hedges. I think the address is 3114 Rose Street. Anyway, here is what I want to say about Him.” ☺
    - i) That isn’t necessary. You don’t have to describe the house. God, who knows all things, is quite aware of this person, even before you started on that description.

9. Verse 9: This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
- a) There is a classical debate among Christians as to whether or not one should pray this prayer literally (word-for-word) or whether one should use this prayer as a model as one should pray.
    - i) Personally, I think the sincerity of our heart matters more than whether we pray it verbatim or as a model.
    - ii) What is important is that we understand what we are praying when we recite this prayer and mean it when we pray it. The danger of a memorized prayer is going through the motions without giving it much thought.
  - b) Before I get into the specific's of this prayer, there are a couple of things to point out:
    - i) Notice the pluralism on our part. The pronouns involving us are in the plural.
      - a) It doesn't say for example, "deliver *me* from temptation, but deliver *us* from temptation. It does not say give to *me* my daily bread, but it says give to "us" our daily bread.
      - b) Jesus taught a few verses back to pray in private. Yet contrast that with the plurality of this prayer. It is designed to be a corporate effort on behalf of all believers as well as individual requests.
    - ii) The other thing to notice is that it is mostly about God and the things we want God to do in our lives and very little about what God expects of us.
      - a) In fact the only verse in the prayer about us has to do with "as we forgive those who have sinned against us". The rest focuses on who God is and what we ask of him to do for us.
    - iii) Another thing to notice is the priorities of the items in the prayer.
      - a) The request for daily sustenance (give us our daily bread) doesn't come until after we recognize who God is ("hallowed be thy name"). One should keep that in mind when we pray. Our prayers are often a "laundry-list" of things we desire. There is nothing wrong with bringing those requests to God. One simply has to remember priorities. One needs to think about the opening verses of this prayer in perspective of how God wants us to pray.
    - iv) I should also add that I've never liked the title "The Lord's Prayer".
      - a) It is the Lord's Prayer in that He, Jesus gave it to us.
      - b) It is not Lord's Prayer as it is not designed for Jesus, but it is for us.
  - c) Lets Get back to Verse 9: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
    - i) This opening line has great balance between personal relationship with God and having reverence (respect) for his Holy name.
    - ii) There are two dangers in our relationship with God:
      - a) One is getting too personal and not having respect for God as the sovereign ruler of the universe.
      - b) The other is to get too much in fear of his power that we are afraid to approach God as a loving father.
      - c) The word used here for Father, in Hebrew, is a personal term. The best English paraphrase would be "daddy". We would be like loving children approaching our daddies who love us dearly and unconditionally.
        - (1) The balance is the second sentence: "hallowed be your name".
        - (2) God is sovereign. He is in control of the universe. Yes God loves us unconditionally, but He also is perfect and can stand no sin whatsoever.
        - (3) This opening line keeps both aspects in balance in our lives.

10. Verse 10: your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- a) Another classical debate in Christianity has to do with the phrase “your kingdom come”.
    - i) Some argue it is just a reference to the second coming of Jesus.
      - a) Not that there is anything wrong with that. ☺
      - b) If you have lived your life on earth with the awareness of how rotten sin can be, how difficult life can be at times, our desire is “Jesus, get here and get here fast, because I’m having difficulty taking handling this!” ☺
    - ii) The other view is to see Verse 10 as one continuous thought.
      - a) One of the big theme’s I’m emphasizing over and over again is about God ruling in our hearts now. It is about us getting out of the way so God can take over and rule. It is a continual action of getting our self-interests out of the way and doing the will of God the Father.
      - b) One has to remember that we cannot let God rule without prayer.
      - c) It is not a matter of self-discipline to say “OK God, I’m stepping down now, come on in.” Prayer in this verse is for God’s help in stepping in. We are asking in this portion of the prayer for divine help to let God rule in our lives.
    - iii) Going back to the issue of “your kingdom come”, some see this phrase as part of a single thought with “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”.
      - a) It is about God ruling in our lives now just as when we get to heaven God rules in our hearts then.
      - b) To me, the biggest difference between life here on earth and life in heaven is not God, but us. In heaven, God is going to take away our old sinful nature so that we won’t have to struggle anymore between “us” being in charge versus God being in charge.
        - (1) God designed it this way to keep us close to Him. We have to constantly see sin as a reminder of how bad it is. We have to constantly battle it and pray to God to help us overcome its pain.
11. Verse 11: Give us today our daily bread.
- a) After praying for our recognition of God’s love and holiness (Verse 9);
  - b) After praying for God’s will to be done in our lives (Verse 10)
  - c) Now comes the personal request for God to provide for us “our daily bread”.
    - i) One can read this literally as bread, or more likely, it is about our daily sustance.
    - ii) As Americans who have more food collectively in our refrigerators than most of the world can imagine, it is hard to be literal about this one.
    - iii) Why should we pray for “our daily bread” when we have a full loaf sitting somewhere in the kitchen or can run to the store in a matter of minutes?
    - iv) Most of us who have lived a while know that one never knows how and when our life can change. An injury, a loss of a job or some other catastrophe can change our whole outlook in a moment.
    - v) This prayer is a reminder that we do depend upon God daily for our sustance.
    - vi) This prayer is a reminder to us to be grateful for what we have and to trust in God and not our own resources.
  - d) The big-picture idea of this section of Scripture is about keeping our focus on God.
    - i) If we look at our refrigerator and think “I’m set for awhile” or we look at our bank statements and think, “I’m set for awhile”, we start to get our focus off of God.
    - ii) This part of the prayer is our reminder that all our blessings come from God and further, we are daily dependant upon God to keep those blessings coming.

12. Verse 12: Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
  - a) The word “debts” are also translated “transgressions” and “sins” in other bibles.
  - b) “Debts” is my favorite translation of this word. In the Greek, there are a number of words for sins. The idea of debts here is that we are indebted to God for forgiveness.
  - c) The second part of Verse 6 is the only part of this prayer that requires us to do something.
    - i) Every other part of the prayer is about God doing things:
      - a) “Give us our daily bread (a prayer request to God);
      - b) “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (a prayer request to God);
      - c) And “Forgive us our debts” (a prayer request to God).
      - d) I could go on, but you notice the pattern of that this prayer is all about requests of God to intercede in our life. The opening verse is the reminder to us about who God is and what He expects of us in our attitude toward Him. (“Hallowed be your name”).
    - ii) “Forgiving our debtors” is a prayer request for God to help us be forgiving to others who have hurt us. Jesus comments on this in Verse 14, which we’ll get to.
13. Verse 13: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. '
  - a) The final request is to keep us strong against temptation.
  - b) This verse, in the English is misleading. It sounds like God leads us into temptation.
    - i) Notice what James says later in the Bible:
      - a) “When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone,” (James 1:13 NIV)
      - b) James is not contradicting Jesus.
  - c) This verse is about rescuing us from temptation.
    - i) Our old, egotistical nature constantly wants to take God off the throne of our hearts and put ourselves, or something else back on.
    - ii) Our sinful nature still exists. There are things that are tempting to all of us. Many are more subtle than others. Anything that gets your focus off of God and unto ourselves is a temptation to sin.
  - d) Paul also comments on this. It is one of the more famous verses in the Bible:
    - i) “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1st Corinthians 10:13 NIV)
      - a) I personally underline that part of the sentence as a promise by God.
      - b) Notice it says, “When you are tempted”. God promises there will always be a way out of that temptation.
  - e) Finally the verse ends with “deliver us from the evil one.”
    - i) I see this as all one statement. Anything that is not of God is “satanic in its origin” whether or not those forces were behind those sins.
      - a) “He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.” (1st John 3:8 NIV)
    - ii) Revelation Chapter 20 speaks of a 1,000-year period where Satan is chained up and Jesus rules from the earth. I take the view that one of the reasons for this period of time is to show just how sinful man is even *without* Satan’s influence.
      - a) In Revelation 19:15, it is said Jesus will rule at this time with an “iron rod”. The implication is that sin will still exist and Jesus will need to rule with a strong show of force.
    - iii) Back to this verse, the big-picture is about praying to keep our focus on God. Praying to overcome temptation is part of that prayer.

- f) I should also mention that some translations have an additional sentence at the end of Verse 13: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:13b, NKJV) That sentence is not in the NIV translation.
  - i) The oldest manuscripts we have do not have this sentence. Even the footnotes of some King James and New King James Bibles admit that fact.
  - ii) Whether or not this verse exists in the original text has no philosophical bearing on the big-theme ideas of the Sermon on the Mount.
  - iii) If it is in the original text, it is simply an epilogue to give thanks to God for what he has done and what he will do in prayer.
    - a) Often it is a good idea in prayer to thank God in advance for what he is going to do. It adds to our confidence that God is working in our lives.
  - iv) If this text is not in the original, certainly the concept and ideas behind this verse can be found all over the New Testament.
    - a) Here is an example: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:11 NIV)
- 14. Verse 14: For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.
  - a) Here is Jesus' commentary on the prayer He just finished.
  - b) First notice what Jesus does not comment upon:
    - i) He doesn't comment on anything on God's part. Most of the prayer are things we ask God the Father to do for us. He doesn't comment on that because Jesus knows God the Father is faithful to do his part.
  - c) Faithfulness on our part is another matter. ☺
    - i) Thus the necessity for Jesus to comment further.
  - d) It is important to understand that these two verses are not about eternal salvation.
    - i) This verse is not saying that if we don't forgive others, we don't go to heaven.
    - ii) Our salvation is only based on our trust on what Jesus did for us on the cross.
      - a) This is another verse about *rewards* in heaven. That is an overriding theme of this section.
      - b) Remember Jesus is talking about giving, prayer and fasting. Each time Jesus says that if you do this for others to see you, that is all the reward you will get. The only other type of reward is heavenly rewards.
  - e) The Sermon on the Mount is about eternal perspective.
    - i) Jesus taught in the last chapter about “loving our enemies” and “turning the other cheek”. Verses 14-15 of Chapter 6 are additional commentary on the same topic.
    - ii) When we're angry with somebody, it blocks our relationship with God.
      - a) We may be absolutely right about that pain. It maybe a legitimate reason why that person hurt you. But when you pray, you are now focusing on that hatred. This in turns, blocks our love-relationship with God.
      - b) One of my favorite verses in the bible on marriage talks about this:
        - (1) “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7 NKJV)
        - (2) What this verse is saying is that arguing with your wife hinders your prayer life. Personally, I don't want my prayer life hindered. I want answers. This motivates me to make up after an argument.
        - (3) Peter's comment is an example of what Jesus is saying here.
          - (a) If we have some sort of hatred in our heart, it gets our focus off of God. That includes arguing with your spouse.



15. Verse 16: "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
- a) This section is a comment about fasting. The idea is not to fast to be seen by men. Jesus is even teaching to "make yourself look good" so no one knows you are fasting.
    - i) The big-picture idea is to not do religious things to be seen of people, but to do it for God's sake.
    - ii) Religious Jews would make a big public display of their fasting. Their motivation was "we have to be good examples to others". The problem with that attitude is it puts one's ego as their primary motivation.
  - b) Again, notice the word "when". Jesus says, "When you fast".
    - i) In the Bible the word "fasting" is always combined with prayer. One can pray without fasting, but one cannot fast properly without praying.
    - ii) Fasting is simply giving up something to better focus on God. It is usually associated with the deprivation of food, but it can also be the deprivation of certain items (See Daniel 10:3).
    - iii) The human body has physical needs. One of them is food.
      - a) Occasionally, fasting is a way of saying "God is more important than my stomach right now". I want to give God priority over eating.
    - iv) There are a number of reasons for fasting given the bible.
      - a) They include sorrow, repentance, corporate prayer (e.g., prayer for a nation) and seeking God's will for a major decision.
      - b) I also like the type of fast where you are so content in prayer, or are so content reading your bible or in doing some service for God you simply forget about eating. It just is not important at that moment.
      - c) I don't want to get into all the details about a fast here. Christian bookstores have good materials available on this topic.
16. Verse 19: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.
- a) How many people have heard a sermon on the topic of "You can't take it with you?"
    - i) How many people have heard the illustration of "I've never seen a U-Haul attached to a Hearst"? It is a reference to a dead person taking possessions to the grave with them.
    - ii) I am here to tell you that is wrong. You can "take it with you".
      - a) The key is to "send it up ahead of time!" ☺
      - b) You and I have eternal rewards in heaven.
      - c) Jesus says in Verse 20 "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven".
      - d) That is a command for us. Jesus wants us to have great rewards in heaven. Eternity is a lot longer than our life here on earth. The rewards of this lifetime last only a lifetime, at the most. Eternal rewards are far greater.
  - b) Jesus uses the illustrations of "moths, rust and thieves" to remind us about what can happen to our "stuff" here on earth.
    - i) If you want to be technical, the word translated "rust" can refer to bugs that get inside grain and make it worthless.
      - a) In that culture, they didn't have bank accounts or stock certificates to store their wealth. Any "savings" were put in expensive clothes, grain, oils, etc. These were small commodity items that could be sold or bartered if other things were needed.

- ii) Jesus is simply reminding us that material things on earth can be lost at anytime.
    - a) This verse is not a condemnation of owning things; it is a condemnation of our perspective on things as compared to eternal rewards.
- 17. Verse 21: For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
  - a) I have to admit, Verse 21 is my favorite in the chapter.
    - i) If you can grasp this verse, you don't have to worry so much about the others. ☺
  - b) Read this verse carefully. It does not say where your heart is, there is your treasure,
    - i) it specifically says your heart will follow after where your treasure is.
    - ii) Let me give you a prime example. Did Jesus "feel" like dying on the cross?
      - a) Did Jesus say, "you know, my heart tells me I need to do this, I just feel it is the right thing to go to the cross, so I'll do it!" No!
      - b) In fact, Jesus did just the opposite. As I stated earlier in this lesson, three times Jesus prayed not to go to the cross (See Matthew 26:39-44)
      - c) Jesus did this because it was God-the Father's will.
      - d) Jesus followed "his treasure" so to speak. The heart follows.
  - c) This verse teaches us to be leery of "feelings".
    - i) "Feelings" are fine. God designed us with feelings for lots of purposes.
      - a) Often those feelings keep us alive as reminders of needs or dangers, etc.
    - ii) I am simply saying that behavior is more important than feelings. That is what maturity is all about.
    - iii) Jesus is saying our motivation is what drives our behavior. The "feelings" follow.
- 18. Verse 22: "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"
  - a) One has to read Verse 22-23 in context of the Sermon on the Mount.
    - i) The main theme is about the eternal perspective and keeping our focus on God.
  - b) Notice what Jesus says in the Gospel of John
  - c) When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12, NIV)
    - i) Now reread Verses 22-23 in perspective of Jesus "light of the world" comment.
      - a) If we are focusing on God, our proper behavior will follow. That is "light".
      - b) If our focus is off of God, our behavior will also follow. That is "darkness".
  - d) Jesus uses the illustration of the eyeball as the entrance point to our inward soul.
    - i) If we "see" Jesus moment by moment, our behavior will follow.
- 19. Verse 24: No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.
  - a) In that culture, most of the world was in slavery. The vast majority of people living in the Roman Empire were slaves. I suspect most of Jesus' audience were slaves.
    - i) As a slave, you had to be loyal to only one master. You can't have two.
    - ii) Most of the New Testament writers call themselves "bondservants" to Christ.
      - a) A bondservant in the Old Testament is one who out of their own free will chooses to be a slave to his or her master for life.
  - b) To read this verse in context of the surrounding passages is to understand that Jesus is saying we have to make a choice. Either we serve God, or we serve ourselves. Money is simply a symbol of wanting things for ourselves.
    - i) Money in itself is not bad. It is the love of money that is condemned as the root cause of all sorts of evil. (See 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:10)
  - c) This verse can be read two ways:
    - i) The first is about eternal salvation. One has to make a choice in life about either following Jesus or focusing our efforts on our life here on earth.

- ii) Personally, I believe this passage is written to believers.
    - a) It is another reminder of our moment by moment choice in life about having God on our “thrones” or having something else be our primary motives at that moment.
    - b) It is about constantly asking yourself, “who I am glorifying at this moment, God, or myself”? You cannot do both.
  - iii) This verse is a call to “despise ourselves”. It is a reminder to make our lives a priority to God, and to serve others over serving our own needs.
    - a) I believe the greatest purpose one can have in our life is to glorify God. That means to constantly put our own needs secondary to serving God and serving others.
    - b) The “balance” is there are times when we need to think about our own needs. Jesus anticipates that thought in the next paragraph.
- 20. Verse 25: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? <sup>26</sup> 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? <sup>27</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"
  - a) The previous section was about totally giving of one self to others. While reading that section, one could think, “what about my needs? I still need to eat don't I? If I spend all of my time focusing on God and serving others, when do I stop to eat or shop for clothes?"
  - b) Verses 25-34 are Jesus' response to that thought.
    - i) To paraphrase what Jesus is saying here is “Yes, yes, I know you need things for yourself. I am God, you know. ☺ I know you need food, shelter and clothing to live. Tell me, do you see a bird arguing with his wife about whether or not to have Mexican food or Chinese food for dinner tonight? ☺ NO! The birds just find food as I, God have provided it for them. I care a lot more about you than I do birds. Stop worrying about where your next meal will come from. Focus on the eternal perspective and I'll take care of dinner”.
  - c) The key word here is “worry”.
    - i) Jesus is not talking about planning, he is talking about worrying.
    - ii) Planning your next meal, or planning for your future is responsible and proper.
      - a) In Luke 14:28, Jesus talks about the importance of good planning.
      - b) Here Jesus is condemning the idea of worrying.
      - c) Worrying is a common problem, with myself included. When things are not going well, it is easy for us to get our focus off of God and unto the problem itself.
      - d) A bible teacher friend once told me “Most of the things we worry about in life never happen”.
    - iii) Worrying is the opposite of faith. My favorite quote on this is as follows:
      - a) “Worrying is taking responsibility upon yourselves that God never intended for you to have”. (Source unknown, heard via Chuck Missler).
- 21. Verse 28: "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.
  - a) Again, the key word here is “worry”.
    - i) It is not about planning to buy clothes is about worrying over clothes.

- b) This whole section of scripture is a good one to read over and over again in times of trouble. It is a reminder that God is still on the throne, even during difficult times.
- c) Let me throw out a prayer suggestion during difficult times:
  - i) “Heavenly Father, who loves us unconditionally and provides for all our needs, I am worried right now because of. I know you have a purpose for me going through this situation, although I don’t understand it right now. Help me to accept the situation and give me discernment in the decisions I have to make regarding this situation. Further, help me to learn the lessons you want me to learn from this situation so that I may apply it to my life and eventually use it for your glory. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.”
    - a) That prayer may not make your pain go away, but it may help to see the eternal perspective that Jesus is talking about here in Matthew Chapter 6.
- d) Jesus uses Solomon as an example of wealth and glory.
  - i) Of all the people in the bible, Solomon was known for his riches. Other than possibly Abraham, Solomon is the richest person mentioned in the Old Testament. He ruled as king of Israel at the height of its power and had tremendous riches.
  - ii) Yet Jesus is saying that the lilies of the field “was not dressed as well as Solomon”
    - a) What did Jesus mean by that? Glad you asked ☺
    - b) Jesus is referring to the “splendor” of natural beauty.
    - c) God’s creation, referring to nature, is of greater beauty in God’s eye than any king in all of his power and majesty.
    - d) We may see a king “dressed to the hilt”, but from God’s perspective, the beauty of a field of lilies surpasses man-made beauty.
    - e) Further, Jesus went on to say that we are “clothed” in greater splendor. Reading this in context of the surrounding verses, I don’t think Jesus is referring to physical clothing.
    - f) I believe Jesus is referring to “spiritual clothes”. Our “cleanness” by our trust in Jesus payment is our “clothing”.
    - g) “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride (the church) has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Revelation 19:7-8, NIV)

22. Verse 33: But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

- a) OK, here’s my second favorite verse in this chapter. Remember this one as well. ☺
- b) In my bible, I underline the word “all”.
- c) It is a promise that if we seek God first in our lives, he will take care of all of our needs.
  - i) Notice the “all” does not refer to every desire and wish.
  - ii) Jesus does not say (paraphrasing) “Seek me first thing in the morning every day, and I’ll drop a Mercedes in your garage tomorrow.” ☺
  - iii) The topic was our needs, and Jesus used the example of food and clothing.
  - iv) If we make God a priority in our life and keep our focus upon Him, we receive a promise we’ll never starve or never go without clothing.
    - a) I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. (Psalm 37:25, NIV)
- d) Remember God has put his reputation on the line here. He is making a promise that if we seek Him continually and regularly we will never have to worry about our needs. I have seen God take people very close to this point, but I have yet to ever hear of one Christian starving to death or die of cold due to lack of proper clothing.

23. Verse 34: Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.
- a) The final verse (we're still in the middle of one speech) of this chapter closes the thought on worrying.
  - b) Jesus is giving a "live one day at a time philosophy".
    - i) Again, this is not an "anti-planning" command. It is about not worrying about what might happen tomorrow. It is preaching against the "what if this might happen" possibilities of our lives.
  - c) Notice this verse starts with a "therefore". The "therefore" connects to God's promise that He will supply all of those needs if we seek God first in our life.
24. With that, let's close in prayer. Father, Forgive us for putting ourselves before you. Help us, moment by moment to keep you on the throne of our hearts and keep our focus upon you. Forgive us for our worrying and our self-centered ways, and thank you in advance supplying all our needs so we never, ever have to worry about them. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.