

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 6:24-25

This week is the first Lord's Day on which the church is not meeting, because the government officials have instructed us not to have any unnecessary gatherings, to stop the spread of the virus from which so many people in the world have died this year.

When people around us heard that there might be an interruption in supply lines due to the epidemic, the shelves of the stores soon became bare of basic necessities like toilet paper, fresh food, and sanitation supplies.

As the government officials have tried to head off the spread of the disease, they have requested or mandated many businesses be closed. Combined with the wealth lost as stock prices have plunged, many people have already lost their business profits or their wages, and are wondering how bad this will get before it starts to get better, and how long that will take.

Recently it was confirmed that the disease is no longer something far away from our homes. At least one person right here in this county has the disease, and he and those he live with may have been in contact with any number of other people before he realized he had it. At least two of you, our brothers, drive down to the big city to work in the medical profession.

This certainly is not the first crisis in history, and not the worst. But it does seem to be the most severe crisis that I remember. And it certainly is providing us, the disciples of Jesus Christ, with many strong temptations to be anxious. So I am very glad to have this opportunity to speak to you from the word of God, even if it has to be electronically over the internet.

As we face the unusual circumstances brought on by this epidemic, take heart that our Lord Jesus has told us, "Do not worry."

TEXT

Matthew 6:24-25 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (25) "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

BODY

As we face the unusual circumstances brought on by this epidemic, take heart that our Lord Jesus has told us, “Do not worry.”

I. Our Lord Jesus Tells You That You Cannot Serve Both God and Money

A. No man can serve two masters

1. the devil has been trying all along to convince us that it is possible to serve two masters
2. in our flesh is the desire to do so.
3. in the world is the lying message that it is possible to do so.
4. it can seem that it is possible, because masters often are going the same way.
 - a) both going to market the same day
 - b) God tells men to work hard at their jobs to earn their money; so does covetousness tell men the same thing
5. it is when they go opposite directions that this is proven

B. Rather than serving two masters, what you will do is hate the one, and love the other; or else you will hold to the one, and despise the other

1. we would tend not to put it this strongly; but the Lord Jesus does put it that strongly, and He knows us.
 - a) 1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
 - b) James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

C. Since a man cannot serve two masters, you cannot serve God and mammon.

[ESV, money]

1. if something is impossible to do, then you cannot do it, whatever it is
2. this is how you must view the matter or serving God and money

II. Since You Cannot Serve Both God and Money, Do Not Worry About the Things You Need

A. I am saying, “do not worry,” but our different Bibles put that in different words

1. oldest, including Geneva **be not carefull** for your lyfe
 - a) you realize that means, “do not be full of care”
 - b) but by the time the KJV was being made, “careful” had come to mean more like how we use it now
 - c) think what a misunderstanding for people to think the bible tells us not to be careful, not to take proper care
2. KJV **take no thought** for your life
 - a) the word “thought” at the time, was used to indicate anxiety or grief; Shakespeare and others of that time used it that way; to “take thought” in Shakespeare was to “give way to grief.”
 - b) but by the time the 20th century translations were made, the connotation of anxiety had left the word

- c) now, for someone to take no thought, to be thoughtless, would be considered a vice
 - 3. 1885 RV be not anxious ESV **do not be anxious**
 - 4. NKJV and others **do not worry**
- B. See the logical connection between “you cannot serve God and money” and “do not worry”
 - 1. the first word of verse 25 is “therefore” But what is the reason?
 - 2. part of the relationship between a servant and his master is that the master provides what the servant needs
 - 3. if you are God’s servant, you should trust that He will provide what you need
 - 4. if you are careful or taking thought or anxious or worried that you will not have what you need, you are acting like God is not your master

III. To Prove That You Need Not Worry About the Things You Need, Our Lord Jesus Asks You Two Questions

- A. The two questions paraphrased
 - 1. Is not life more than food, or meat? Is life a greater thing than food, a more excellent thing?
 - a) Is human life a greater thing than a piece of bread?
 - b) Is a human life, just dawning in the womb of the mother, when she doesn’t yet even know it is there, a greater thing than a gourmet 7-course meal?
 - 2. Is not the body more than clothing, or raiment? Is the body a greater thing than clothing, a more excellent thing?
 - a) Is the human body a greater thing than a sock?
 - b) Is a human body, not even fully formed yet in the mother’s womb, a greater thing than a tuxedo or a ball gown?
- B. The Lord Jesus asks us those rhetorical questions as help to us in obeying His command, “Do not worry, do not be anxious, about what you will eat or drink or wear;” that is, “Do not worry, do not be anxious, about having enough money to buy what you need.” But how are we helped? If we have had it brought to our attention that life is greater than food, and the body is greater than clothing, how does that help us not worry?
 - 1. First, it points us to God’s provision for us at creation, to see that part of what it means for us to be creatures, and God to be God, is that to whom He gives life (the greater thing), He also gives food (the lesser thing).

Genesis 1:26-30 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (27) So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female

He created them. (28) Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (29) And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. (30) Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so.

Genesis 2:7-9 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (8) The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. (9) And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- a) see, part of what it means for us to be creatures, and God to be God, is that to whom He gives life (the greater thing), He also gives food (the lesser thing).
- b) this arrangement still holds even after we have sinned. God is gracious to us. Even when we sinned, He still maintained that to whom He had given life, He also would give food.

Genesis 3:17-19 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. (18) Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. (19) In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

- c) if we find it hard to get the things we need, we remember that we caused that trouble for ourselves when we sinned against God; it does not negate the order God created.
- d) so, we arm ourselves against anxiety with this knowledge: part of the created order is that God gives us life, the greater thing, and also gives us food, the lesser thing. If He created this order, He will abide by it. If He is our master, and we are His servants, He will feed us.

2. second, it points us to God's provision for us in matters not part of the created order, but brought on by our sin. You know, we needed food from the first day, but we needed clothes only after we had sinned. Yet when we sinned, God did provide us clothes.

Genesis 3:21 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

3. so, we arm ourselves against worry with this knowledge: part of God's gracious dealings with us sinners is that even though we, by our sin, have caused the body He gave us to need clothing, He will provide us the clothing we need to cover our bodies. If He gave us our first clothes, He will give us our clothes always.

IV. What the Lord Jesus Taught Us Here Shows Us How to Think Even About the Most Extreme Situations

- A. Despite the assurances we have just now considered, we are left with a nagging question: what if there is some severe trouble, and we actually go without enough food or proper clothing? Isn't that a possibility, and so doesn't that cancel the Lord's promise that God will provide our needs? Isn't it true that God's people, even His most devoted servants, have sometimes been deprived of enough food and clothing?
 1. we hear stories about that
 2. it is also in the bible: 2 Corinthians 11:24-27 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. (25) Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; (26) in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; (27) in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in **hunger and thirst**, in fastings often, in cold and **nakedness** [ESV exposure]
- B. The Lord Jesus taught us not to worry or be anxious about having enough money to buy what we need, by reminding us that life is greater than food, and the body is greater than clothing. But there is an even greater lesson to learn based on that same line of reasoning. If someone has been taught by the Lord Jesus what we have learned today, then he observes that although that lesson is true, there is still the matter of extraordinary cases, where even the saints lack food and clothing, how does he think? How does he take what Christ taught us and apply it to such extraordinary situations? He asks:
 1. which is greater, the Son of God, or food?
 2. which is more excellent, the Son of God, or clothing?

3. Romans 8:32-39 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (33) Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (34) Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or **famine, or nakedness**, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written: "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE KILLED ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER." (37) Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (38) For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, (39) nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
4. God gave us His own Son, Jesus Christ
 - a) we consider that our attachment to Him ultimately meets all of our needs for eternity
 - b) and we believe that nothing, even having to go without food or clothing, can separate us from Him
 - c) So, because Jesus Christ is so much greater than food, and so much greater than clothing, we believe that in Him we have all that we need, even if in some extreme trial we are deprived of those things for a time.

CONCLUSION

We are not to worry about food and clothing, because God has given us the greater things: life and the body, and so will give us also the lesser things: food and clothing.

We are not to worry even about extraordinary times, when perhaps we will lack food and clothing, because God has given us the greatest thing, His own Son, and so will give us freely all things that we truly need, because of His great love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

