

## LESSON 11: RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM (PART 5: Matt. 6:19-34)

## I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Today we continue our study of the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher that ever lived...Jesus' sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7; cf. Lk. 6:20-38; 11 & 12).
2. **3** Recall we've been considering Jesus' statement: "*For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matt. 5:20)
3. Jesus has already given us several examples of the superior righteousness required in His kingdom.
4. In the process Jesus gets to the heart of true righteousness, because true righteousness begins in our hearts! Matt. 15:17-20  
 "If that does not make a person squirm, then he probably is not understanding what he is reading."  
 (John Smith, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 34)
5. Through these contrasts, Jesus sweeps away the spin and gets to the heart of the true righteousness kingdom citizens must possess.
6. **4** At the beginning of chapter 6 Jesus turns from addressing aspects of moral righteousness (chapter 5) to religious righteousness; the scribes and Pharisees not only perverted morality, they were also corrupt religiously.
  - A. Vv. 1-4: our charitable deeds are to be done to glorify God, not ourselves.
  - B. Vv. 5-8: the proper attitude in prayer (i.e., not to be seen of men, not to be offered in a way to draw attention to ourselves, not to use vain repetitions).
  - C. Vv. 9-13: Jesus gives us a model prayer (addresses God first; praising Him and thanking Him; our needs are secondary; our forgiveness dependent upon our forgiving others).
  - D. Vv. 14-15: re-emphasizes our need to forgive others for God to forgive us.
  - E. Vv. 16-18: our fasting, like prayer, is done to glorify God and not bring attention to ourselves.
7. It is so important to ask ourselves some questions Jesus' teaching raises here. Regarding my religious activities (i.e., charity, prayer, fasting):
  - ☛ Why do I do what I do? Is it a matter of habit, tradition or heartfelt need?
  - ☛ Am I doing this because they're expected by society/brethren; or because it is God's will?
  - ☛ Do I do these things to gain notoriety/popularity? Or, to receive the praise of God?
  - ☛ Is my purpose to glorify myself or God?
  - ☛ What are my motives? Pure or impure?
8. **\*\*** Jesus continues His discussion of kingdom righteousness in Matthew 6:19-34 by addressing some threats to kingdom righteousness. In these verses Jesus addresses two related themes:
  - A. Materialism: what is the focus of our lives? Is the focus of our life material or spiritual?
  - B. Trust: do we trust in God's providential power to provide for our physical needs?
9. **5** As we continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount let's remember:
  - A. What Jesus teaches here (i.e., the concept of what standard our righteousness must rise to) should challenge us to the very core of our being and permeate how we view every aspect of our lives; every thought as well as every action.

- B. Kingdom standards of righteousness grow naturally out of the character traits required of kingdom citizens Jesus gave us in the beatitudes.
- C. \*\* The character of kingdom citizens is radically different from people of the world, and these traits are absolute and enduring requirements:
- ☛ “poor in spirit” (5:3)
  - ☛ “meek” (5:5)
  - ☛ “merciful” (5:7)
  - ☛ “peacemakers” (5:9)
  - ☛ “mourn” (5:4)
  - ☛ “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (5:6)
  - ☛ “pure in heart” (5:8)
  - ☛ “persecuted for righteousness sake” (5:10)
- D. And, kingdom citizens must put that character to work in the world!
- (1) Salt of the earth: 5:13
  - (2) Light of the world: 5:14-16
10. 6 So, let’s continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount considering Matthew 6:19-34.

## II. Discussion: (continued from Lesson #10)

### 9. 7 Jesus teaches on materialism: Matt. 6:19-24

- A. Christians (kingdom citizens) are supposed to be different from the people of the world:
- (1) We are in the world, but not of the world (Jn. 15:19; 17:14-15).
  - (2) We recognize and appreciate that the things of the world are going to pass away (1 Jn. 2:15-17; 2 Pet. 3:10).
  - (3) But, we still have a fleshly side that is attracted to things of the world (not sinful per se; houses, cars, fishing boats, motorcycles, furniture, clothing, jewelry, money, etc.).
  - (4) Our society puts a great deal of emphasis on material things (peer pressure):
    - (a) Television shows fascinated with millionaires (“Who wants to be a millionaire?”).
    - (b) Forbes magazine maintains a list of billionaires (1,810 in the world in 2016).
    - (c) The popularity of the lottery is testimony of the average person’s “love of money.”
- B. Anyone who claims he/she doesn’t find some material things quite attractive is probably not being honest (\*\*Boss 429 Mustang, \*\*Beech King Air, \*\*P-51 Mustang).
- C. But God wants us to recognize that the true riches are heavenly things not temporal things.
- (1) One day every Boss 429 Mustang will be burned up!
  - (2) One day every Beech King Air will be burned up!
  - (3) One day every P-51 Mustang will be burned up!
  - (4) One day, whatever material thing(s) you and I hold dear will be burned up! **2 Pet. 3:10:** “...the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”
- D. 8 That’s one of the reasons Jesus says: **Matt. 6:19-20:** “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”
- (1) We are eternal beings! **Eccl. 3:11:** “Also He has put eternity in their hearts...”

- (2) Hence, material things, because they are temporary, have no lasting value! No hearse pulls a U-Haul!
- (3) Thus, material things can provide us with no lasting satisfaction!
- E. In fact, material things can serve as a major distraction: **Matt. 6:21**: “*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”
  - (1) Some material things are necessary for life (e.g., food, clothing, and shelter).
  - (2) But, if we’re not careful we can turn our needs into a desire for things and it can rule our lives and draw us away from God.
  - (3) It is important to consider that Jesus uses the word “*treasure*” in a broad sense (e. g., He’s not limiting treasure to just money.).
 

“The word ‘treasure’ is being used in a very broad sense to refer to one’s basic outlook on life. For instance, what is your goal in life? From what do you derive your main satisfaction? Where are your ambitions directed? What’s first in your life? What do you love above all else? Your answers will not be determined simply on the basis of your verbal responses, but on what your everyday life expresses. Jesus directs our attention away from the here and now to that ‘somewhere beyond the blue’ where the saints are to be laying up treasure.” (Smith, p. 59)(all emphasis mine, cvt)
- F. It is foolish for a disciple to tether our heart’s devotion to things of the earth.
  - (1) They don’t define true life (**Lk. 12:15**: “*Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.*” Why the fate of the “*rich man*”? **v. 21**: “*So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*”).
  - (2) Jesus is not forbidding the Christian the enjoyment of material possession (Gen. 1:28ff; **1 Tim. 6:17-19**: “*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*”; **Eccl. 9:9**: “*Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.*”).
- G. What Jesus is forbidding is making of material things of more importance than spiritual things; allowing the accumulation of material things to exclude or just interfere with spiritual goals.
 

“Rather, it warns against putting one’s emphasis on what will ultimately be lost. ‘To ‘lay up treasure on earth’ does not mean being provident [i.e., providing carefully for the future, cvt]...but being covetous’ (Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, 155; Col. 3:5, 1 Tim. 6:10).” (Chumbley, p. 125)
- H. **9** “It is foolish for a disciple to tether his heart’s devotion to the things of the earth.” (Smith, p. 60)
  - (1) **\*\*** First, as we all know, earthly possessions don’t last! 1994 Honda Accord story So, it’s foolish to invest our lives in things that don’t last! No U-Hauls behind a hearse.
 

“The Lord’s injunction is based on logical reasons. Earthly treasures are transitory and corruptible. Moths, rust, and thieves strip one of the many earthly treasures. There is an element of decay, ruin, and peril in all things physical. One may protect his earthly goods with insecticide, rust-proof paint, and burglar alarms only to see their value disintegrate through inflation, devaluation, economic slump, or his own death.” (Smith, p. 60)

- (2) \*\* The love of “things” leads us into temptation, that’s why Jesus said what He said in Luke 12:15.

**1 Tim. 6:10:** *“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*

- (3) \*\* Earthly treasure is inherently incapable of satisfying our deepest need, therefore, once we start down the road of covetousness the tendency is to grab for more and more despite the lack of lasting satisfaction.

“Earthly treasure never fully satisfies. They may satisfy one for a moment, but soon they are not enough. A person can tire of his latest gadget and lay it aside to gather dust. The value of all things earthly is subjective and prone to change.” (Smith, p. 60; my transistor radio)

**Eccl. 5:10:** *“He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. this also is vanity.”*

- (4) \*\* We can only enjoy so much “earthly treasure,” hence, its pursuit is vanity.

**Eccl. 5:11:** *“When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes?”* For example, Jay Leno owns 169 classic cars and 117 motorcycles; reported to be worth over \$50 million (He has no children, doesn’t drink, smoke or gamble.).

- (5) \*\* We cannot transfer our possessions to heaven, so somebody is going to inherit them.

**Eccl. 5:15:** *“As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came; and he shall take nothing from his labor which he may carry away in his hand.”*

**Eccl. 2:18-19:** *“Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.”*

- I. From a logical standpoint, it’s foolish and vanity to make material things the focus of our life.

“In regard to my earthly treasures, I am but a caretaker, a custodian, so why cling to them? Someday, I’ll leave them all behind. Why then should they be the center of my life and existence? Why live for them or be absorbed by them?” (Smith, pp. 60-61)

- J. **10** Furthermore, to emphasize material things is spiritually deadly!

- (1) Our emphasis in life reveals the true nature of our “heart”: **Matt. 6:21:** *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

“‘Tell me what you are eager to buy, and I will tell you what you are.’ What we treasure—center our life on—reveals what we are.” (Chumbley, pp. 125-126)

“‘Whatever gets your attention gets you’ (Jones, 224).” (Chumbley, p. 126)

\*\*“That which does not last is poor treasure. It is far better to labor for the eternal rather than the transient. **The one great thing we have to invest in life is our life,** and we should spend it in ways (‘holiness of character, obedience to all of God’s commandments, souls won for Christ, and disciples nurtured in the faith,’ Bloomberg, 123) that will gain us eternal wealth when the temporal is gone.” (p. 125)

**Lk. 9:24-25:** *“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?”*

- (2) \*\* To emphasize the danger of an earthly heart, more focused on the material rather than the spiritual, Jesus uses a figure involving the eye: **Matt. 6:22-23**: “*The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*”

(a) Here is the gist of the figure:

- (i) The activities of our body are directed by light which is received by the eye.
- (ii) When that organ is sound and working correctly, the eye perceives objects as they really are; and the whole body is illuminated and able to discharge its functions safely and properly.
- (iii) However, if the eye is faulty then we do not perceive objects with clarity and distinction. We then are likely to stumble, as if in the dark, and cannot perform our tasks properly. We are in constant danger and will lose our way and face disaster and ruin.
- (iv) The “eye” in this parable represents our understanding; the faculty of the soul which gives direction to the whole man. What a man believes determines how he lives—“*as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.*” (Prov. 23:7; Recall Concepts chart.)
- (v) “An enlightened understanding, perceiving objects according to their real nature and worth, enables its possessor to form a true judgment, to make a wise choice to act aright respecting them. But a darkened understanding, conveying a wrong estimate of things, results in an erroneous choice and a disastrous end.” (Pink, p. 201)

(b) \*\* In this context, to have a “good” eye is to have a heart set on heaven, an understanding that one’s life should be prioritized on the things of God.

(c) **I** A “single eye” (KJV) involves making material things a means to an end, rather than an end in and of themselves:

☛ \*\*Material things serve us as we serve God! (i.e., meet our basic human needs while we “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*”; v. 33).

☛ We also use material things to help others (**Eph. 4:28**: “*Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.*”; **1 Jn. 3:17**: “*But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*”).

...a single eye involves generosity; and one of the best ways to store treasure in heaven is to give it away on earth; vv 3-4, 19:21).” (Chumbley, p. 126)

(d) \*\* The “bad” eye (NKJV) or “evil” eye (KJV) describes a heart that pursues earthly treasure to the hurt of spiritual needs; it is a sick eye unable to judge rightly the true treasure in life; the heavenly treasure.

(e) \*\* If we pursue earthly possessions to the hurt of our spiritual needs our “eye” is focused on the wrong thing! Hence, earthly things block the true light from entering our heart and guiding our lives in the right direction! Indeed “*If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*” v. 23

K. **12** Christ then uses an unforgettable terse saying to emphasize His point about the dangers of materialism: **Matt. 6:24**: “*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.”

- (1) \*\* He doesn't say we 'should not' or 'must not' serve two masters; He says we 'cannot.'" (Chumbley, p. 127) It is an impossibility!

"We cannot serve two masters any more than we can walk in two different directions at the same time (Josh. 24.15). ). The alternatives Christ presents here are God or mammon (*mamona*, the Aramaic word for riches or wealth, comparable to 'the Almighty Dollar')." (Chumbley, p. 127)

- (2) \*\* What is "mammon"?

\*\*"Mammon, n. The god of the world's leading religion' (Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*, 85)." (Chumbley, p. 127) In our vernacular: "the Almighty Dollar."

\*\*"...an old Aramaic word that meant wealth, property, or riches. These things can become the treasure of a person's life and thus gain control of his heart's affection. In Colossians 3:5 Paul equates this attitude with idolatry!" (Smith, p. 61)

- (3) Any attempt on our part to serve "mammon" is an insult to God!

"God, not Mammon, has redeemed us from the slavery of sin (Rom. 6:17-18) while we were still in rebellion (Rom. 5:8). God put us into Christ (Gal. 3:27) and put Christ in us (Eph. 3:17). He has given us rich and abundant blessings (Eph. 3:20). When we attempt to divide the place of preeminence in our heart between Jehovah and anything else, we become guilty of an inexcusable affront to his graciousness." (Smith, p. 61) Think unfaithful spouse! Hos. 2:8-13

- (4) **I3** We "cannot serve God and mammon" because their marching orders are diametrically opposed and cannot be reconciled with one another!

**\*\*Marching Orders:**

God	Mammon
Walk by faith	Walk by sight
Poor in spirit	Haughty in spirit
Affections in heaven	Affections on earth
Look to the unseen	Sight limited to the visible
Share with others	Hoard for self
Citizenship in heaven	Citizenship on earth
Pursue the eternal	Pursue the temporal
Self-less	Self-centered

- (5) **I4** It is an impossibility to live by God's standard and the demands of the world at the same time! **Jas. 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."
- (6) \*\* Many believe they don't serve "mammon"; "I'm not rich!" But, nonetheless, they put the material before the spiritual (e.g., Constantly work overtime to have more "things." Bring the boat to services, then rush out as soon as the Lord's Supper is over to go to the lake.).
- (7) \*\* Show this lady your home, your furniture, let her peek inside your refrigerator and take a look at your pantry; show her your multiple, fully equipped bathrooms, take her for a drive around town in just one of your vehicles, let her and her



children go with you on your next vacation. Then tell her, “I’m not rich. I can’t spare a few dollars to help out those in need.”

- (8) \*\* We must be very careful! It is so easy to get caught up by material things!

“We piously affirm that we have chosen to serve God, not mammon, but in our daily life it is mammon that sets our priorities and determines our choices. We would like to show a more bountiful eye toward the poor, but we cannot, because we need so much for ourselves. We plan to be more charitable in the future, but at the moment there are too many things we have to buy. We work overtime or at a second job rather than spend time with our children, because there is so much we want to get for them’ (Hare, 73).” (Chumbley, pp. 127-128)

- (9) We don’t have to be “rich” to have a problem with “mammon”!

\*\*“There is an ‘Armageddon’ going on under the hat of every man—a crucial and decisive battle for the ultimate control of the heart! Anyone who divides allegiance between God and mammon has already given in to mammon as Jehovah can only be served with entire devotion (Matt. 10:37-39; 16:24-26; 22:37).” (Smith, p. 62)

- L. \*\* We must never forget who we are, where we’re going, and that only total devotion to God can get us there! “here we are but straying pilgrims...”

**Heb. 11:13-16:** “*confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*”

- M. **Remember: We don’t have to give mammon your full allegiance, partial allegiance will do just as much harm!**

- (1) “Service to God can be no half-hearted affair (22.37), but is something that demands our total devotion.” (Chumbley, p. 128)
- (2) \*\* “The one great thing we have to invest in life is our life.” (Chumbley, p. 125)
  - (a) We are all free to choose what will be the master of our life: God or mammon?
  - (b) We are all free to choose the goal of our life: heaven or earth?
  - (c) And everyone makes that choice!
- (3) I particularly want to appeal to our young people: make the right choice early in life, don’t make the mistake of allowing your life to revolve around material things! Explain (esp. easy credit available today!)

## 15 STOP

10. **16 Jesus teaches on trust in God:** Jesus’ teaching on materialism naturally leads to a consideration of the true disciple’s trust in God. **Matt. 6:25-34**

- A. Note that Jesus begins this next section with the word “therefore.”

- (1) “Therefore” is always serves as a signpost; it informs us that the author or speaker wants us to reflect on something.
- (2) In this case, Jesus wants us to further reflect on His teaching concerning materialism (vv. 19-24).

**\*\*Matt. 6:25:** “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?”

- (3) Problems with “things” is a sickness suffered not by just the rich, but also by the poor.
- (4) “It doesn’t matter much to Satan whether we lay up treasure on earth or just worry about them, either way he has met his goal. As long as our eyes are off God and heaven, he has won.” (Smith, p. 66)

B. **\*\*** Our focus on the material, even just the necessities of life, can easily turn legitimate concern into anxious worry that indicates a lack of trust and confidence in God.

- (1) We must overcome our natural tendency to worry about our own physical security (i.e., food, clothing and shelter).

- (2) **17** Orphan story:

“In World War II, the death of many adults left many orphans. At the close of the war, the allies provided some camps for the orphans in order to feed them and to try to find a place to locate them. They began to develop and grow. They received the finest care and the finest food. But in one of these camps the officials became very perplexed because the children couldn’t sleep. They would eat three good meals, but at night they would lie awake. They brought in some psychologists to do a study of these orphans to find out why they couldn’t sleep. The psychologists came up with a solution. Every night when the little children were put to bed, someone would come down the row of beds and place in each little hand a piece of bread. **18** So, the last thing they would experience at night would be to close that little hand around the bread. In a matter of days they were sleeping through the night. Why? Even though they were fed to the full during the day, experience had taught them that there was no hope for tomorrow. They couldn’t sleep because of anxiety over what might happen the next day. They could not enjoy what they had because they were afraid of the future. When they had that bread tucked in their hands, they knew that at least they would have breakfast the next day.” (p. 67 from John MacArthur in *Overcoming Materialism*)” (Smith, p. 67)

- (3) “We ‘can be unfaithful to God through care as well as through covetousness’ (Bruce, quoted by Morris, 157). ... ‘There may be greater sins than worry, but very certainly there is no more disabling sin’ (Barclay, I, 264).” (Chumbley, p. 128)
- (4) **19** Worry is the favorite pastime of many, but it is fraught with dangers. It takes a severe toll both physically and spiritually.

**\*\***“Worry is faith in the negative, trust in the unpleasant, assurance of disaster and belief in defeat...wasting today’s time to clutter up tomorrow’s opportunities with yesterday’s troubles” (William Ward as quoted by John MacArthur in *Overcoming Materialism* 62).” (Smith, p. 69)

B. **20** Jesus gives us four reasons why we need not worry about the necessities of life.

- (1) **\*\*** God’s providential care: **vv. 26-28** God’s providential care should exclude worry from our lives.

- (a) **Food**: v. 26

- ☛ God feeds the birds “the birds of the air” (v. 26),
- ☛ An argument from “the lesser to the greater.”
- ☛ Man is the pinnacle of God’s creation not birds! Gen. 1:26-27



- ☛ Yet God provides adequate food for the “lower” part of His creation.
- ☛ In fact, they don’t even have to “*reap nor gather into barns*” yet they are fed.
- ☛ Rhetorical question: “*Are you not of more value than they?*”
- ☛ An obvious “YES!” They weren’t created in God’s image! We were!
- ☛ If God insures the “lower” creation is fed, surely He will make sure we are fed!
- ☛ It doesn’t mean we will dine on lobster and filet mignon every day, but, like the “*birds of the air,*” God will not let us starve.
- ☛ “If God cares for the flowers and the grass which are fleeting, will he not care for mankind with their immortal souls?” (Smith, p. 68)

(b) **Clothing:** vv. 28-30

- ☛ God clothes “*the lilies of the field*” (v. 28),
- ☛ Another argument from “the lesser to the greater.”
- ☛ Man is the pinnacle of God’s creation not lilies! Gen. 1:26-27
- ☛ Yet God provides the “lower” or “lesser” part of His creation with adequate clothing!
 

“Flowers—here called ‘the grass of the field,’ a standard phrase for something worthless—do not rank on the scale of nature. In fuel-starved Palestine they were used as kindling. But if God lavishes such beauty on that which serves as fuel, can He not be trusted to care for those served by fuel?” (Chumbley, p. 130)
- ☛ In fact, they the lilies clothes are not only adequate, they surpass in splendor what even the richest king of Israel wore! It is estimated that Solomon had a yearly income of ~\$800 (in today’s dollars). Imagine his wardrobe!
- ☛ Rhetorical question: “*...if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*” (v. 30)
- ☛ An obvious “YES!” The lilies weren’t created in God’s image! We were!
- ☛ If God takes insures the “lesser” of His creation is clothed, surely He will make sure we are clothed!
- ☛ It doesn’t mean we will be clothed like Solomon, but, like the “*lilies of the field,*” God will not let us go naked.
- ☛ “If God cares for the flowers and the grass which are fleeting, will he not care for mankind with their immortal souls?” (Smith, p. 68)
- ☛ **Matt. 7:11:** “*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*”

(2) \*\* Worry is unproductive: v. 27

- ☛ “Worry is not productive of any good. We cannot change our circumstances through worry. It will not produce improvements. Instead, it will lead to deterioration.” (Smith, p. 68)
- ☛ Worry achieves nothing; e.g., We cannot add to our “*stature*” (v. 27),
- ☛ Some are divided on what Jesus means here: Is He talking about our physical height, or the length of our life.

- ☛ It doesn't matter, both fit exactly the point He is making.
  - ☛ Man is impotent to change even the most basic things of life (e.g., length of life or our height).
  - ☛ That being undoubtedly true, why be anxious; it is totally unproductive!
  - ☛ That doesn't mean we sit on our duff and do nothing! **2 Thess. 3:10**: "*If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*"
  - ☛ God is the Creator of the entire Universe, including our physical bodies; surely, He wouldn't create us and then abandon us!
- (3) **\*\* Worry is paganistic: v. 32** recall Jesus said "vain repetitions" in prayer were paganistic (v. 7).
- "Anxiety is akin to agnosticism and atheism (vv. 32-32). Jesus said that his disciples should not possess characteristics that mark an ungodly person. For us to worry is *needless* because of God's bounty. It is *senseless* because of God's promise. It is *useless* because of our impotence to do anything, and *faithless* because by doing so we put ourselves in the same category as the unbeliever." (Smith, p. 69)
- The English word "worry" comes from an old German word (*wyrgan*) meaning "to choke" or "to strangle." Mental strangulation! The Greek word for worry means "to be drawn in different directions, to be distracted and included an element of fear." (Smith, p. 69)
- "Anxiety is natural for pagans (Gentiles) who have no concept of a 'heavenly Father' who cares for them. In contrast, Christians live secure in the knowledge that God knows their needs and will bless us with what we need (Phil. 4.6, 1 Pet. 5.7)." (Chumbley, p. 131)
- ☛ To anxiously worry about the necessities of life is to leave God out of the picture!
  - ☛ It demonstrates a lack of faith and trust in God to care for the pinnacle of His creation!
  - ☛ God is the Creator of the entire Universe, including our physical bodies; surely, He wouldn't create us and then abandon us!
  - ☛ Jesus has already, regarding material things, called us to live on a heavenly plane (vv. 19-21: laying up treasure in heaven vs. treasures on earth).
  - ☛ "God says don't worry about the basics. I'll take care of that. Look to securing of heavenly treasures." (Smith, p. 69)
  - ☛ Don't be like the Gentiles! Focus on what is really important!
- (4) **\*\* Worry is needless: Because God knows our needs (v. 32)**:
- ☛ God is not ambivalent to the needs of His creation.
  - ☛ He vividly demonstrates that in the case of providing food for "*the birds of the air*," and in the provision of clothing for "*the lilies of the field*."
  - ☛ As an omniscient Creator He knows exactly **what** the needs are of everything He created.
  - ☛ He is all wise, thus, He knows **how** to provide for the needs of everything He created.
  - ☛ He is also faithful and will not abandon His creation; He doesn't abandon "*the birds of the air*" and He doesn't abandon "*the lilies of the field*."
  - ☛ Thus, we have no reason to doubt His providential care of our necessities!

- ☛ “How shall we rely upon the mercy of God in the hour of death if we are afraid to trust His providence for the things of this life.” (Pink, p. 224)

C. **21** It is critical for us to reach the goal of heaven to suppress our material desires and make them serve only our spiritual needs. Thus, the solution to such anxiety is to: “...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” (v. 33).

- (1) By “seeking the kingdom,” Jesus is about much more than attending services on Sunday, or more than being “a member of the Lord’s church.”
- (2) The word “kingdom” here is used in a broader sense; it points to God’s rule.
- (3) Jesus said “For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Lk. 17:21)
- (4) It is “within” us when we willingly submit our will to His will!

**Matt. 6:10:** “Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.”

**Rom. 14:17-18:** “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.”

- (5) Furthermore, “The kingdom is not one among competing aims but that which comes first of all’ (Morris, 161).” (Chumbley, p. 131)
- (6) “To seek first the kingdom means we have an undivided loyalty for and obedience to the things of God. The most important thing in life is that we constantly seek (present indicative) to do God’s will on earth, as it is done in heaven (v 10).” (Chumbley, p. 131)
- (7) “When God’s rule and righteousness control our lives, ‘all these things shall be added to you.’ ‘All these things’ refers to the things the Gentiles worry about (v 32). Christ is not promising that Christians will never be in need (2 Cor. 11.23-28), but that God can be counted on to provide the temporal luggage needed to reach our heavenly home.” (Chumbley, pp. 131-132)

D. **\*\*** I would like to add a thought here: We need to realize that we are tools of God’s providence for those less fortunate than us.

- (1) We must come to a realization that we are so blessed to live in this land of plenty.
- (2) We can easily take our great abundance for granted and fool ourselves into thinking we are not materially rich.
- (3) God didn’t give us great abundance for us to live a self-centered life of leisure and luxury.
- (4) God expects us to help those in need! **1 Jn. 3:17:** “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”
- (5) An important criterion of our judgment will be how we have helped those in need! Matt. 25:31-46 Will you be a “sheep” or a “goat”?
- (6) **22** I urge you to get involved in helping others! You will never regret it!
  - (a) It doesn’t take much to do a lot of good.
  - (b) The Lord appreciates it and requires it:

**Prov. 19:17:** “He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.”

**Isa. 58:7-8:** “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? 8 Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.”

**1 Tim. 6:17-19:** “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

- (c) “Oh, Paul is describing someone else, not me.” **\*\*WRONG!** (use pictures)\*\*
- (d) Our duty in such matters is not done when we put something in the collection plate on Sunday. God expects more! Matt. 25:31-46
- (e) You will benefit from it more than you can imagine (Acts 20:35; explain).
- (f) **\*\*** “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.” —Mother Teresa

E. **23** Jesus ends His discourse on materialism and trust in God with some very practical advice:

**Matt. 6:34:** “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

- (1) Once again, the paragraph begins with “Therefore”: Jesus is drawing the conclusion about trust in God.
- (2) Since God guarantees life’s necessities, there is no need for us to be filled with anxiety; it’s useless and renders us miserable because we have control over so little of life.
- (3) **\*\*** God makes this guarantee because He loves us and wants our minds and energy free to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”; so to worry is faithless.
- (4) We are creatures bound by the fetters of time; thus, the only way to trust in God and seek Him first is “one day at a time”; that requires us “to not worry about tomorrow.”
  - (a) This doesn’t mean we don’t plan for tomorrow (Prov. 6:6-8); but it does mean we need to exercise our faith on a daily basis in God’s providential care.
  - (b) But, we must not focus on “tomorrow” because it robs us of today. Tomorrow has its own problems (“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”) and those problems can only be dealt with then, not now.
  - (c) We compound our problems by being anxious for tomorrow; why double our trouble; especially when God guarantees to get us through TODAY.
  - (d) **\*\*** Someone said, “Today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday. Each day that passes proves the worry for the previous day was unnecessary.” (versebyversecommentary.com)
  - (e) Focusing on tomorrow causes us to limit the focus of our life to the material and neglect the spiritual.
  - (f) “He who neglects the present for the future is acting opposite to the order of God, his own interest, and to every dictate of sound wisdom. Let us live for eternity, and we shall secure all that is valuable in time.” (StudyLight.org)

**24** “One major thing wrong with being anxious “for the morrow” is that “Anxiety focuses on the future (‘the morrow’) to the detriment of the present. To counter

this we must 'acquire the art of living one day at a time' (Barclay, I, 261). Worry cannot solve tomorrow's problems, but it can compound today's by draining the spiritual and emotional resources needed to tackle present difficulties. ...So don't borrow trouble. 'Today's trouble is enough for today' (NRSV). Things are bad enough as they are; don't add to your present stress by anticipating future problems (Lam. 3.22-23)." (Chumbley, p. 132)

### III. CONCLUSION: 25

1. Lord willing, we'll continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount in the future.
2. Christ's teaching here reverberates through the ages issuing the greatest and clearest challenge for us to examine our level of devotion to God:
  - ☛ Where is my treasure? In heaven, or on earth?
  - ☛ Is the way I'm living my life consistent with my claims of where I'm actually laying up my treasure?
  - ☛ We can fool one another in this regard, but we will never fool God!
3. Christ calls on us to only give God what He deserves: He deserves all of us!
  - A. "The one great thing we have to invest in life is our life.
  - B. And, that is exactly what God deserves and asks:
 

**Lk. 9:24-25:** *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?"*
4. Our investment will reap rewards beyond our ability to even imagine!
5. \*\* What is your investment in life?
6. Invitation (Matt. 11:28-30)

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