
Grace Provision of the Believer's Needs

Introduction.

The overall theme of this passage concentrates on priorities.

Even when the narrative turns to worry, the underlying theme remains in priorities.

A simple way to summarize this passage is to say 'Right priorities eliminate worry.'

I. Outline.

A. The Treasure Teaching, vv.19-21.

1. The Prohibition, v.19: "Do not treasure for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust disfigure, and where thieves break in and steal;"

2. The Positive Command, v.20: "but treasure for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust disfigure and where thieves neither break in nor steal."

3. The Summary, v.21: "For where your treasure is there also will be your heart."

B. The Lamp Illustration, vv.22-23.

1. The illustration, v.22a: "The lamp of the body is the eye."

2. The positive application, v.22b: "Therefore if your eye is single, your whole body will be illuminated."

3. The negative application, v.23a: "But if your eye is evil, your whole body will become darkened."

4. The summary, v.23b: "Therefore if the light which is in you is dark, how great the dark."

C. The Keystone of the Passage, v.24: "No one is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will cling to the one and despise the other. You are not able to serve God and Mammon."

D. The Application of the Keystone, vv.25-34.

1. The general statement of application, v.25a: "For this reason I say to you, do not worry what you might eat for your soul, nor what you might wear on your body."

2. The food application, vv.25b-27.

a. The first basis for the food application, v.25b: "Isn't the soul more than food and the body than clothing?"

b. The first illustration of the application, v.26a: "Consider the birds of the sky: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father sustains them. "

c. The conclusion to the first illustration, v.26b: "Aren't you better than them?"

d. The second basis for the food application, v.27: "And who among you while worrying is able to add to his age one bit?"

3. The clothing application, vv.28-30.

a. The transition to the application, v.28a: "And why do you worry about clothing? "

b. The illustration of the clothing application, v.28b-29: "Consider how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin; 29 But I say to you that Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these."

c. The conclusion from the illustration, v.30: "Now if God so dresses a flower of the field (living today and tomorrow being cast into the furnace) why not much more for you, Littlefaith?"

4. The final conclusion, vv.31-34.

a. The negative command, v.31, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or, 'What will we drink?' or, 'What will we wear?'"

b. The negative comparison, v.32a: "For all these things the Gentiles desperately seek;"

c. The essence of God related to the negative command, v.32b: "and your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

d. The positive command, v.33: "But seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

e. The final statement, v.34: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself; the evil of it on that day is enough."

II. The Exposition.

A. Verse 19, "Do not treasure for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust disfigure, and where thieves break in and steal;"

1. The negative adverb ME plus the present imperative of THESAURIZO adds up to a firm prohibition in the Greek; since this is a present imperative with durative action, the force of the prohibition extends indefinitely into the future, and so causes the idea of 'never treasure for yourselves.
2. This goes with a dative of advantage of the personal pronoun HUMIN "for yourselves." The act of treasuring is an advantage to the one who does it.
3. The direct object of the verb is THESAUROUS, 'treasures.' This is a very comprehensive category. There are almost as many treasures as there are people. Listen to this list of 'collectibles' from the Rocky Mountain News classified:
 - a. Beer steins, Hot Wheels, Star Wars trading cards, Avalanche limited edition Waterford crystal hockey puck, 1940's coke cooler, Green Bay Packers authentic footballs & helmets, Hummels, baseball cards, jukeboxes, dolls, Barbie dolls, comics, deer head, elk head, McDonalds' toys, slot machines, old phone booth, Richter pewter figurines, Wild Turkey decanters.
 - b. 2 way radios, jewelry, diamonds, watches, books, coins, stamps, art, perfume and cologne miniatures, antiques of various kinds, etc.
4. There are two categories of treasures, according to Christ; those that will perish in our lifetime - that moth and rust disfigure; and those that do not - that thieves break in and steal.
5. The Greek word APHANIZO means to 'make unrepresentable.' It does not mean 'destroy,' but merely indicates that the reason for its being a treasure is lost. If it is something made out of iron, it oxidizes; out of cloth, the moths eat it.
 - a. There are many other ways for worldly treasures to decay, but Christ chooses not to go into an exhaustive list.
 - b. So there are worldly treasures which decay and lose their charm.
6. But what of those things that have lasting value? What of gold and silver and precious stones that last for generations and even millennia?
 - a. Nothing is safe in this world.

- b. The thief breaks in and steals; war comes and devours; it is lost at sea in a storm; the divorce settlement snatches it away - and many other causes for loss.
 - c. And of course, the greatest cause of loss of all; you die, and even though they remain, you are compelled to leave them.
7. So the command of this verse is to stop treasuring away for yourselves treasures upon the earth, for they will be lost.
- B. The positive command is second: "but treasure for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust disfigure and where thieves neither break in nor steal."
1. Our treasures in heaven are imperishable. 1 Peter 1:3-4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you..."
 - a. Since our treasures in heaven are kept there, they are totally apart from any measure of the devil's world.
 - b. The resurrection body itself is a great treasure to all believers, but there is much more than that waiting for the one who fulfills the protocol plan for the church age.
 - c. See the Order of the Morning Star.
 2. A thief could never break in to heaven; heaven is protection against war, shipwreck, famine, storm, moth, rust, and even divorce (which some will be glad to know).
 3. So the question remains: which is the better treasure to pursue? Is it the earthly, or is it the heavenly?
- C. Verse 21 is a summary of the principle. "For where your treasure is there also will be your heart."
1. The translation is simple.
 - a. For where your treasure is (present tense of EIMI).
 - b. There also will be your heart (future tense of EIMI).

2. So a simple principle: what you treasure, that is, what you desire, will become the seat of all your thinking.

3. But this is a principle of surpassing importance. Your thoughts follow your desires.

4. There are six categories of lust: approbation, emotion, blood, money, stimulation, power.

5. What do you treasure? Whatever you desire, whatever you value - your thoughts will follow.

6. Essentially Christ is coming down to the basis for motivation. What desire forms a complex of thought in your soul so that you are moved to action?

7. Desire is formed from conclusive thinking. You evaluate and then judge what you like; and there is your desire. But what you now desire becomes central focus of your thoughts, and there lies the danger.

8. Now in the context of the passage, if you desire the things of the world, then certainly the world is going to become the central focus of your thoughts.

9. But if you desire the things of heaven, then there will be a central focus of thought on heaven.

10. So Christ has reversed His thesis to show a system of perpetuation; that is, the system has its own momentum. Listen: your desires focus your thoughts, and your thoughts form and reinforce your desires.

11. 1 John 2:15-17 is a rehash of these very principles.

a. 15 Do not love the cosmic system nor the things in the cosmic system. If anyone loves the cosmic system, the love of the Father is not in him.

(1) The first part of this verse is command and warning to abstain from having high esteem for the cosmic system.

(2) If you have high esteem for the cosmic system, that is, if you like being involved in it, then you are not in spiritual adulthood.

(3) You cannot enjoy being in the cosmic system and be a spiritual adult at the same time.

(4) The cosmic system is the enemy and opposite of God the Father's plan for your life.

(5) If you are in the cosmic system, then you are an enemy of God, even though you may be a believer.

b. 16 Because everything that is in the cosmic system, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the arrogance of life, is not a part of the Father but is a part of the cosmic system.

(1) John divides the cosmic system into three categories: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the arrogance of life.

(2) See the genius in this.

(a) There is a kind of lust that comes from within the body - sexual lust.

(b) The lust of the eyes is materialism - what things in life that you desire.

(c) And then there is a generic arrogance of life.

c. 17 And yet the world and its lust is deceiving itself, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.

(1) Again, the cosmic system and its components cause self-deception and self-destruction in the cycle of lust and unhappiness.

(2) Those believers who get involved in the cosmic system lose their rewards for eternity even though they still have eternal life.

(3) By contrast, those believers who stick it out in the plan of God have not only eternal life, but a fantastic system of rewards as well.

(4) Tragically, those who refuse to believe in Christ do not have eternal life, but instead are cast into the lake of fire.

D. The Lamp Illustration, vv.22-23.

1. The illustration, v.22a: "The lamp of the body is the eye."

a. The kind of lamp is the LUCHNOS, a small, hand-held oil lamp. The wick would descend from a notch in the side.

b. It provided light at night or in any dark place, but it was not a very long-lasting light. It would be more comparable to the modern flashlight than anything else.

c. So Christ compares the lamp to the eye. The eye is the lamp of the body, providing light.

d. The eye is the reception point - and it is very common for light to be a metaphor for Bible Doctrine.

e. Bible Doctrine in the soul is said to be constructed of light

(1) Psalm 43:3, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to Thy holy hill, and to Thy dwelling places."

(2) Romans 13:12, "The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."

(3) Ephesians 5:8, "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light."

(4) 1 John 2:8, "the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining."

(5) 2 Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who said, 'Light will shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

2. The positive application, v.22b: "Therefore if your eye is single, your whole body will be illuminated."

a. The word for 'clear' is HAPLOUS. This is a transition zone for the metaphor, so it is difficult to tell whether this word has a physical sense or an ethical sense.

(1) It means literally, 'single,' or more appropriately, 'unplural.' It therefore came to develop many meanings from that original theme.

(a) Simple, or uncomplicated.

(b) Of a single purpose; and from that, pure motive.

(c) Of liquids, pure.

(2) Because this is set parallel to PONEROS in the following verse, it seems that the ethical interpretation is the best.

b. The eye is a common metaphor of Scripture.

(1) In Genesis 3:5-7 the eyes represent the total process of perception and understanding: "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable

to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."

(2) Psalm 119:18 covers the realm of spiritual perception: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from your Law."

(3) Ephesians 1:18-19 shows that there is a perceptive ability in the heart related to spiritual matters: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might."

(4) In our passage, it seems to be about the perception and understanding of light, which is Bible doctrine.

c. Now the body is also a metaphor for the entire life of the believer.

(1) Just as the body is biological life, so it may represent the inner life of man; his spiritual life.

(2) The spiritual life of man may include both relationship with God and relationship with the cosmic system.

d. The singleness of the eye relates to motive.

(1) If you desire light [Bible doctrine], then you will be illuminated [live the quality of the Christian life].

(2) If you have concluded that the doctrinal way of life is the life for you, then you will certainly fill your entire life with light.

e. And the interpretation of the metaphor is this:

(1) The eye will collect information according to its motive. If the motive of the eye is to accumulate light, then the whole body will be filled with light. Light is a metaphor for Bible doctrine, so that if you are motivated to get doctrine with a singleness of purpose, you will fill your life with doctrine.

(2) Certainly James had this very metaphor in mind when he wrote: "Now if anyone of you lacks wisdom, let him ask from God who gives purely

[HAPLOS] to all and who does not insult and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, judging nothing [DIAKRINOMENOS]; for the one who judges is like a wave of the sea, being wind-blown and tossed about. For do not let that man suppose that he will receive anything from God, a double minded man, unstable in all his ways."

(a) Asking from God is the equivalent of the singly motivated eye.

(b) And that God gives purely is confirmation of James' repetition of Christ's principle. the motive of the eye is to accumulate evil, then the whole body will become darkened.

3. The negative application, v.23a: "But if your eye is evil, your whole body will become darkened."

a. The evil of the eye is the person motivated to bring in the cosmic counterfeits and lies; to concentrate on the inculcation of the cosmic system.

b. Naturally, this darkens the life. It is destroyed through the cosmic involvement.

4. The summary, v.23b: "Therefore if the light which is in you is dark, how great the dark"

a. What is this 'light which is in you'? This is an interesting phrase to catch our attention!

b. It is an oxymoron. As defined by Bullinger, in *Figures of Speech of the Bible*, "This is a figure, in which what is said at first sight appears to be foolish, yet when we come to consider it, we find it exceedingly wise. It is a smart saying, which unites words whose literal meanings appear to be incongruous, if not contradictory; but they are so cleverly and wisely joined together as to enhance the real sense of the words."

c. The light within is the motivating factor of the soul. If you have dark motive toward the counterfeits and lies, then your life will be dark indeed!

d. The final phrase is TO SKOTOS POSON. That final Greek word is the key. It means 'how great.' And so it is, "how great the dark."

e. Motive is a thought or complex of thought that leads to action. If your motive is darkness, then the darkness in your soul will be great indeed.

5. So this metaphor of Christ's concentrates on motive related to the feeding of the soul.

a. But you can easily perceive how this illustration fits into the overall narrative; how the treasure

and the singleness of perception are one in the same.

b. Compare these two statements: "For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart;" "Therefore if the light in you is dark, how great the dark." You can perceive that they are opposed to one another in an elementary way, even though they are from different metaphors.

E. The keystone of the passage is verse 24, where Christ moves away from the metaphor and into a more direct form of communication: "No one is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will cling to the one and despise the other. You are not able to serve God and Mammon."

1. It does begin with a metaphor, however. The general principle of the metaphor is stated first: "No one is able to serve two masters."

a. DOULEUO is the verb for serve. Our English serve is greatly watered down. This verb means to 'perform the duties of a slave.' Although the idea of benevolent service is certainly present at the time, this always has the shadow of slavery behind it.

b. It does not have the idea of benevolent service; as Kittel says, "The meaning is so unequivocal and self-contained that it is superfluous to give examples of the individual terms or to trace the history of the group. Distinction from synonymous words and groups is made possible by the fact that the emphasis here is always on "serving as a slave." Hence we have a service which is not a matter of choice for the one who renders it, which he has to perform whether he likes it or not, because he is subject as a slave to an alien will, to the will of his owner."

c. The master is KURIOS. Again from Kittel: "In the concept of the lord two things are conjoined in organic unity: the exercise of power as such, and the personal nature of its exercise, which reaches beyond immediate external compulsion into the moral and legal sphere... KURIOS means having legal power."

(1) The institution of slavery was viewed differently in the ancient world, and even through the Bible:

(2) Since there are provisions regulating slavery in the establishment code.

(3) But if slavery were an evil institution, then why would God allow for its regulation? We might seek an answer in two ways: through the doctrine of dispensations, and through a closer examination of the Mosaic provisions.

(4) The dispensational answer is inadequate.

(a) Remember, the establishment code of the Mosaic Law remains a valid option for any nation in the church age.

(b) It was brought over because the millennial kingdom was rejected by the Jews; the restraint of the ruling Christ and the incarceration of the fallen angels must wait until the second advent.

(c) Divine establishment protects the freedom of all so that there might be a perpetuation of the angelic conflict; in essence it prevents the self-destruction of the human race.

(d) The Mosaic Law's establishment provisions were designed for a nation under the spiritual guidance of God; there is not an exact parallel to the Gentile client nations of the church age.

(e) This is why no church age nation may legitimately adopt the spiritual code of the Mosaic Law; indeed, even the establish code's provisions for spiritual offenders should not come into Law.

(f) The nature of slavery remains the same some 3500 years after the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai; it is a legitimate establishment issue; therefore, the Mosaic provisions are as valid today as they have ever been.

(g) The New Testament does not adopt mandatory manumission; not in the book of Philemon, not anywhere.

(h) Christian slaveholders may reconsider their position on slaveowning due to Christian convictions, but they certainly have no right to force the freeing of slaves on anyone else.

(i) The New Testament sees the institution of slavery as a legitimate authority; "slaves obey your masters" is mentioned more than once by the apostle Paul: Ephesians 6:5-6; Colossians 3:22; 1 Timothy 6:1.

(5) Therefore, we must study the concept of slavery more closely.

(a) There were two sources of slavery in the ancient world: poverty in peacetime and captured prisoners in war.

· Leviticus 25:39-41, "If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service. He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers." This passage tells us a couple of things.

- That slavery was a welfare system of Israel. That is, when people became impoverished, they could sell themselves to someone else as slaves.

- But not all could be taken as slaves; a Jew could not accept another of his own countrymen as a slave but instead only in the de facto sense. He could be hired as if he were a migrant worker, which is the best parallel to our modern times.

- The analogy to this in our own time is the Christian; you could never in good conscience keep another Christian as a slave. Listen to the explanation in verse 42, "For they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold in a slave sale."

- By working this way for a private citizen, the impoverished person retained some measure of self-respect; there was then no slavery nor total poverty.

- The year of jubilee occurred every fifty years; it could conceivably be a lifetime of slavery before a person thus obliged could be set free.

- This also represents an irrevocable contract until the jubilee.

· As an effect of war many unfortunates were left in abject poverty. The conquering nation solved this situation by enslaving the people of the devastated land.

(b) Slaves could be bought and sold as property, Exodus 21:7. For instance, a father could sell his daughter or son into slavery to pay off the debts. Nehemiah 5:5.

(c) A woman could sell herself into slavery, Deut 15:12-18, "If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six

years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free. When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. you shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today. It shall come about if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you, because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with; then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant. It shall not seem hard to you when you set him free, for he has given you six years with double the service of a hired man; so the Lord your god will bless you in whatever you do."

(d) Slaves were often acquired through trade, purchase, payment of debt, as a gift, through birth, plunder in war, or by self-determination.

(e) Slaves were manumitted by the elapse of time (six years), Exodus 21:24, by the year of jubilee (the fiftieth year), Jeremiah 34:8-10, through physical disability or being maimed, Exodus 21:26. In this case the master was responsible to take care of the slave for life.

(f) Rights of the Master.

· He had the right to hold slaves from foreign lands as personal property. Leviticus 25:44-45: "As for your male and female slaves whom you may have - you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you. Then, too, it is out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition, and out of their families who are with you, whom they will have produced in your land; they also may become your possession."

· He had the right to leave slaves as an inheritance to his children, Leviticus 25:46: "You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another."

· He had the right to hold as property the wife and children of all slaves who were unmarried at the

time they became slaves, Exodus 21:4: "If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone."

· He had the right to punish or discipline slaves, but not to kill them, Exodus 21:20-21: "If a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod and he dies at his hand, he shall be punished. If, however, he survives a day or two, no vengeance shall be taken; for he is his property."

(g) The Rights of the Slave.

· He had the right to freedom by the purchase of his redemption, or by the elapse of time, or in the Year of Jubilee, or he could work his way into freedom. And because of the threefold mandates on the release of slaves, the slave always had the hope of freedom.

· The Jewish slave had the right to good treatment, Leviticus 25:43, 46: "You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God."

· He had the right to marry, have children and live a normal life, Exodus 21:5.

· He had the right to voluntary slavery where having been freed could choose to remain a slave, Exodus 21:5ff; Deuteronomy 15:16. His request had to be honored. This was done in front of two witnesses. The mark of this voluntary slavery was having his ear lobe nailed to a door.

· He had the right to worship God without interference from the master, Exodus 12:43-44, "This is the ordinance of the Passover, no foreigner is to eat of it, but every man's slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it."

(h) The responsibility of a master to a slave is taught in Ephesians 6:9 and Colossians 4:1.

· Ephesians 6:9, "And master, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him."

· Colossians 4:1, "Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven."

(i) Even the epistle to Philemon doesn't advocate the abolition of slavery, but emphasizes just treatment of slaves who are believers or otherwise. It also gives strong emphasis on the personal op-

tion to free slaves under principles of grace righteousness. However, this is an option to be exercised by the individual slave owner and not the federal government.

(j) Nowhere in Scripture is slavery portrayed as an immoral institution. It is an institution that requires an extra helping of virtue, because of the inordinate amount of power that the master has over the slave.

(k) It is really therefore the unvirtuous nation that should not own slaves; the virtuous can handle it.

(l) A critique of American slavery.

- American slaves were ill-gotten; the motives for acquiring them were economic, not compassionate. The Africans of the time were almost universally evil; their lives have been romanticized, but they really were demon-worshipping evil men. There is no such thing as the innocent savage. They were brutal, murderous, rapacious; they treated their women with horrifying ruthlessness. In short, they were not virtuous. This of course does not justify taking them.

- There was not a fair and consistent system of manumission. Certainly not a Biblical one.

- Slaves were more often than not treated with fairness, but there was also significant abuse.

- Slavery gave opportunity for evangelism; many slaves came to Christ who otherwise would have had no opportunity. God certainly used the unfortunate conditions of slavery to bring many positive slaves to Christ.

- In the thirty years before the civil war, American churches took a turn away from doctrine, and concentrated on inward experience and emotion. As such, it was easy for the abolition crusade to gain a foothold and then flourish in the very liberal north.

- Slavery in America was never founded on the Biblical doctrine; if it had been, the story might have been truly different. Many masters ran their slaves on Biblical ideals; many more did not.

- As such, it should have been reformed or stopped altogether.

- The question remains: was it worth the ravaging of the constitution? Was it worth a war in which 600,000 Americans died? Was it worth the wanton

destruction of the South in reconstruction, which embittered their people for a hundred years?

- The American Civil War was divine discipline, set upon this nation for two reasons:

- For the anti-doctrinal movement of the North, where the plan of God was abandoned for emotion and crusader arrogance.

- For the illicit slavery of the South, where their refusal to reform their institution fed the flames of abolition.

- This discipline extended the war for much longer than it should have ever gone. It could well have been over in either direction in the first year or two, had there been any competency in the military operations.

- Abraham Lincoln was one of the most eloquent presidents that we have ever had. He had a great ability to communicate.

- He was a genuinely poor commander in chief, whose meddling in the affairs of the military and inability to discern competent generalcy extended the war by at least two years.

- He was anti-constitutional, favoring a view of relative morality over and above principle.

- Had he not been assassinated he would have presided over a much gentler reconstruction. He would have saved the United States much grief by two measures. Liberating the former slaves back to Africa; and welcoming the Southern states back into the Union much sooner.

- But assassination always results in evil, and so this one did. Our nation has no more recovered from Lincoln's assassination than JFK's.

- The release of the slaves into the American populace was also a tragedy; the majority had little understanding of the responsibilities attendant to liberty. And five or six or seven generations later, we continue to pay for that.

d. Therefore, the slave was under a master's absolute authority, and could be commanded to do many unfair (though not immoral) things.

e. With the absolute realm of authority, no slave could serve two masters. This is rather like a farcical sitcom about someone trying to keep two wives and keep them secret from one another.

(1) But here the masters are more cosmic; they are the KOSMOS of Satan, or the plan of God.

(2) You cannot serve the KOSMOS and the plan at the same time. These two, of all masters, put on demands that are diametrically opposed.

(3) When you are in a cosmic system of lust, you cannot please God, nor can you fulfill His plan.

(4) When you are in God's plan there is no way that any of Satan's plan seems savory.

f. In the verse, there are two sets of words in opposition to one another:

(1) MISO and AGAPAO are the first two; love and hate. These are the mental attitudes related to masters.

(2) ANTECHO and KATAPHRONEO are the second pair; cling and despise. These are a little different; the first is related to touch, while the second is related to thought; but it is the kind of thought that would never touch. These are simply synonyms for the preceding pair.

(3) Christ makes a very important point: the feelings that one has for masters that are so diametrically opposed will certainly polarize after a while. If your two masters are at war with one another, they will give commands in opposition to one another, and you will have to choose.

g. Now this dovetails with what has gone previously.

(1) Do not treasure for yourselves treasures on earth;

(2) Have a single good motive.

h. You are not able to serve God and Mammon.

(1) MAMMON is an Aramaic word which concentrates on the business world; it is not private property, but rather a way of doing business. That is the exact formulation of the word in Luke 16:9,11.

(2) Therefore it is representative of the cosmic system, with all of its lusts. This is well supported by 1 John 2:15-17, where the KOSMOS is defined by three systems of lust.

(3) So it is, "You are not able to serve God and the cosmic system.

i. This is the keystone of the passage, because it summarizes the main principle and links two concepts important to most people.

(1) The accumulation of wealth;

(2) Just staying ahead.

j. You see, the cosmic system can separate you from God through either system.

(1) The accumulation of wealth can become so consuming that you are distracted from the plan of God.

(2) Just staying ahead may develop into a fatal distraction just the same way.

F. The food application, vv.25b-27. "25 For this reason I say to you, do not worry what you might eat for your soul, nor what you might wear on your body. Isn't the soul more than food and the body than clothing? 26 Consider the birds of the sky: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father sustains them. Aren't you better than them? 27 And who among you while worrying is able to add to his age one bit?"

1. Christ issues a command. The present imperative of MERIMNAO plus the negative adverb ME gives the force of 'do not ever worry.' The action of the present imperative is ongoing, and so extends the prohibition indefinitely.

2. PSUCHE is the word Christ employs for 'soul.' It is the soul as the seat of life. So this is not about spiritual food, as we might assume from a first reading, but rather about the food that keeps body and soul together.

3. In ancient Palestine, shelter was not considered one of the essentials. Elsewhere it could be included in this list.

4. The first illustration of the application, v.26a: "Consider the birds of the sky: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father sustains them."

a. The verb TREPHEI describes the action of God the Father in sustaining the birds. It means to feed or sustain someone who is helpless to provide for himself.

b. This verb is in the present tense, and it describes the continuous action of the Father in His provision for the helpless.

c. And this even in the devil's world. It is the devil's world, and the Father provides for the helpless animals.

5. The conclusion to the first illustration, v.26b: "Aren't you better than them?"

a. This is an idiomatic translation. If it were literal, it would more like this: "Don't you compare favorably with them?" And even that is a fudge.

b. But the point is this: people are much more important in God's eyes than animals.

c. So this is a logical argument: if God takes care of the birds, and human beings are much more important than birds, then God will certainly take care of human beings.

d. There is no dispensational influence in this passage. Christ speaks of current conditions, and not the conditions of His heavenly kingdom.

6. The second basis for the food application, v.27: "And who among you while worrying is able to add to his age one bit?"

a. The Greek PECHUN is a cubit. It would more literally be 'one half-yard.' But in the English we do not add spatial measures to our units of time. In the ancient world they were much less picky.

b. So Christ says that worry does not add one bit to your years, and of course He is perfectly right.

c. Worry does not add to life or improve life in any way. Instead it has the opposite effect. Worry is perhaps the worse lifestyle choice that you can make. It ruins capacity for life completely.

7. The inclusion of the matter of logistics at this point is intriguing. Remember, Christ began our passage by concentrating on the matter of treasure. By no means is the matter of logistics comparable with the treasures of this life. One is far below the other.

8. But Christ has rendered the matter of earthly treasures to the status of a non-issue. So if earthly treasure is a non-issue, then what really is an issue? Well, many would say logistics. But they would be wrong.

9. You see, Christ begins with earthly treasures, then He states His keystone principle; you cannot serve God and Mammon. You cannot fulfill the plan of God and at the same time please the dictates of the cosmic system.

10. Now you see that Christ is telling us that the worldly view of logistics is all wrong as well. Logistics is not something to be worried over. Not even in the devil's world.

11. The bottom line: either it's your time to go, in which case you can do nothing at all about it, or it's not. And if it is not your time to go, then God is going to provide you with the logistics you need.

12. So Christ is saying here that you can waste a lot of time and energy in worrying about logistics, and that to do so is a great compromise of heavenly potential.

13. And He is building up to something more. Right priorities in life serve a dual purpose.

G. The clothing application, vv.28-30.

1. The transition to the application, v.28a: "And why do you worry about clothing?"

2. The illustration of the clothing application, v.28b-29: "Consider how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin; 29 But I say to you that Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these."

a. The lilies of the field grow in one place; they do not go searching here and there for nourishment. They are not the lilies of the garden, carefully tended by the gardener; these are wildflowers.

b. The lilies find nourishment where they are, and that is it. From their nourishment they grow their beautiful flowers.

c. Solomon was the wealthiest man of his time, and indeed the wealthiest man in the history of Israel; he was arrayed in the finest splendor, and yet he was not as well-dressed as a lily of the field.

3. The conclusion from the illustration, v.30: "Now if God so dresses a flower of the field (living today and tomorrow being cast into the furnace) why not much more for you, Littlefaith?"

a. God dresses the wildflowers in the finest array, and they do not run around frantically trying to provide for themselves.

b. And those wildflowers are here for only a season, and sometimes less than a season. Many wildflowers in the high Rockies are there for a couple of weeks.

c. Christ coins a new word, OLIGOPISTOI. It is literally 'Littlefaith.' It is a descriptive word that includes a noun and adjective in one. Kind of like fathead.

d. This is another great comparison. Human beings are much more important to God than wildflowers; human beings resolve the angelic conflict, and wildflowers do not.

e. So with the matter of clothing logistics, God will take care of us, unless it is our time to go.

H. The final conclusion, vv.31-34.

a. The negative command, v.31, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or, 'What will we drink?' or, 'What will we wear?'"

(1) The negative adverb ME plus the aorist subjunctive MERIMNESETE is a very strong prohibition in the Greek language.

(2) This forms a conclusion from the preceding teachings on food and clothing logistics.

b. The negative comparison, v.32a: "For all these things the Gentiles desperately seek;"

(1) Now Christ turns to the Gentiles.

(2) The Gentiles were the unbelievers of the ancient world, separated from Israel by their attitude toward the gospel.

(3) EPIZETOUSIN describes a frantic search for something; a desperate, seeking action.

(4) The Gentiles frantically, desperately seek after the logistics of life. So this would be a great insult to the Jews around Him. They hated the Gentiles and always sought to distinguish themselves in every way from them.

(5) So Christ mentions that this is the lifestyle of the Gentiles, and that they, the Jews were guilty of the same thing.

(6) And the Jews of all people should have known about logistics and should have been very relaxed about those things.

2. The essence of God related to the negative command, v.32b: "and your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

a. God is aware of our logistical needs; and we are extremely important to Him.

b. A knowledge of the capabilities of God is essential to your relaxation about logistics.

c. But more than that, you must add the attributes of God to the equation.

(1) He loves you; He is gracious; He is orderly; He is sovereign; He is faithful.

(2) Understanding these things adds up to this: He wants the best for you, He knows the best way to provide for you, He has the best plan for that provision, He does it, and He never fails to do it.

3. The positive command, v.33: "But seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

a. This is the priorities solution to logistics.

b. It is a simple solution indeed; God is going to take care of you no matter what; and more than that, for Christ includes all the things He has spoken about, including the treasures.

c. There is a catch, though. You must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

(1) The kingdom of God and His righteousness has been already presented in this sermon; it is the spiritual code given in the beatitudes.

(2) The spiritual code (see Beatitude Quick Review).

d. PROSTITHESETAI is the future passive indicative of PROSTITHEMI. The verb means 'to add one thing to another,' or 'to grant something to someone.'

e. Here it is more likely the latter. God grants us the logistics and even more, the treasures of this life if we keep our priorities straight.

f. If you keep your priorities straight you are going to make it to maturity. That is really the only trick to the entire process.

g. The simplicity of the presentation here make that extremely lucid. Seek God's kingdom first, and all these things will be granted to you.

h. So you must do these things on a daily basis; you must exercise faithfulness in the intake of doctrine, and the rest will work out.

i. The treasures added are simply a preview of coming attractions in eternity.

4. The final statement, v.34: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself; the evil of it on that day is enough."

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- a. This final statement operates as a kind of summary. But the final clause is a little mysterious.
- b. I have translated it in a very literal manner; it comes down to a statement concerning the function of evil on every day of your life.
- c. Evil functions every day. Every day of your life has its own challenges; why worry about the challenges of tomorrow, then?
- d. Keep your focus on the tests of today. And the solution to the tests of today is Bible doctrine.
- e. The intake of doctrine today is the solution to the challenges of tomorrow.
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