

People of God, in our passage today, the Lord Jesus is teaching us once again about living according to proper priorities. In the passage from last week, Jesus told us about prioritizing the heavenly and the eternal over the earthly and the temporal. He told us to focus our hearts and our eyes on God and the things of Heaven, and to not have a covetous eye toward earthly pleasures and possessions. For no one can serve two masters. You cannot love and worship God, while you are also loving and serving the things of this life. You cannot serve God and Mammon.

Now many of us know from experience that when our focus is on the things of this world we are filled with anxiety and worry. Anxiety is the shackles that keep us bound and imprisoned to the slave master Mammon. But being content, trusting our Heavenly Father, and being more concerned about His kingdom and His righteousness is the key that will set us free from the chains of anxiety's prison.

But someone might say, if we are to prioritize the heavenly life over the earthly life, then what are we supposed to do about food, drink, and clothing? Don't those things matter? Am I to be so heavenly minded that I let my earthly body just starve to death and freeze in the winter? God forbid.

Jesus is talking about priorities. He is not saying you have to choose between his kingdom and what you are going to eat and drink. He is not saying you have to choose between being clothed with his righteousness or having adequate clothes to wear. Neither is Jesus condemning wise planning for the future, nor working hard in order to provide food, drink, and clothing for oneself and family. All Jesus is saying is. there is a right way and wrong way to pursue

these things. The wrong way is to worry about these things. Because to worry about food, drink, and clothing says that you do not believe that God is going to provide for you. Worry and anxiety is rooted in unbelief.

Thus, he says in v. 25 – **Do not worry about your life, what you will eat and what you will drink and what you will put on. Is not life more than food and body more than clothing?**

To worry and to be anxious means to be divided, or distracted. Martha's attention was divided when she told Jesus to make Mary help her serve. And the Lord said, **Martha, you are anxious, or worried, about many things, but one thing is needful. And Mary has chosen the better part.**

To be anxious is to be divided and distracted away from the one thing that is needful and better. God wants you to give more thought and consideration to your life from the his perspective, and not the perspective of your always changing feelings, emotions, and circumstances. If you do that, it is of course going to produce anxiety and worry.

Life, therefore is more than food and drink and clothing. Life is believing God's words and obeying his will. As Jesus said to Satan, Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. So life is to be lived by faith, and not anxiety and unbelief.

Jesus says, **Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them.**

Jesus is not saying that because the birds neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, therefore you don't have to either. That is NOT

his point. Scripture is abundantly clear that God gave us work to do. Even in Paradise we were created to work, and even when we are resurrected and live in the New Earth, we will be working there too. Work is not a result of the fall. To work is to imitate God. God is a worker. So you have to work because you are made in His image. Paul had to encourage the Thessalonians, “If a man does not work, he does not eat.” So Jesus is not saying that by considering the birds how they neither sow nor reap or gather into barns that you do not have to work.

In fact, the birds that he tells you to consider, are they not always working? Birds are extremely diligent and busy and industrious creatures. They are always looking for food, building a nest, or migrating or preparing to migrate so they can find food for the winter.

The point is, that your Heavenly Father feeds them. And if he feeds even the birds, he will most definitely feed you, because you are worth more than the birds. And your Heavenly Father is not going to let his children go hungry and die. So, a lack of worry should not make lazy hands.

So, what are we to take away from the birds then? That the birds go about their work carefree, but men are often careworn. You should go about your work with a good strong work ethic, not being lazy, but diligent. That is good and true. But you should do your work worry free and with joy, because your Heavenly Father cares for you more than he does for the birds. If you show up, and do the work, and plan accordingly, you don't have to worry. God will take care of you. That is the point. So do your work without worry.

The question you need to task yourself is, Do I believe that? Do you really believe in the loving care of a Sovereign God who cares so much for his creation that because he feeds the birds, he will most certainly feed you? You are of more value than the birds, right? Then what do you have to worry about? Trust God and stop worrying.

What is the point of worrying anyway? Is it not to attempt to expand the length of our life for as long as possible? We get worried that we might die earlier than God intended if we don't worry about the future. But Jesus, always ready to answer our questions and objections says:

Which of you, by worrying, is able to add any length of time to your life? People may worry themselves to death, but never has a person worried themselves to longer life. Is not our God sovereign? Has not our God numbered all our days before there were any? (Ps. 139:16).

The day of your death was determined before you were born.

There is no amount of worrying that can change God's plan for your life.

The Lord brings death and the Lord gives life (Deut. 32:39).

There is an appointed time for everything under the sun, a time to be born, and a time to die (Ecc. 3:11).

The Lord has numbered our days, every one of them.

Therefore, since life and death are completely in God's hands, no one can prolong his days by wringing his hand in anxious worry about what is going to happen in the future. So trust your Heavenly Father to care for you. He can do it better than you can. So don't

be divided in your mind and heart. If you cannot serve God and Mammon, neither can you trust God to care for you and also trust in yourself at the same time. So Trust God and rest assured that he is going to care for you.

Or, as Stonewall Jackson said: *“My religious beliefs teach me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time of my death. I do not concern myself with that, but to be always ready whenever it may overtake me. That is the way all men should live, and all men would be equally brave.”*

So be brave and take courage, and stop being filled with anxiety and unbelief.

The same thing goes for clothing. What is your priority in relationship to your clothing? **Why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.** Here I think Jesus is primarily talking to women, since it was the woman's job to work with wool and spin yarn and make clothing for the family. And he could have in mind the worry that could consume the heart and mind of the mother since she was responsible for so many domestic duties, that making the clothing could easily fall by the way side.

If that were the case, then Jesus' directives here are the same as before. Attend to your work without worry. Work hard, trust God, and he will provide. If god can make the sun stand still he can provide enough time for you to get everything done. Simple enough.

But most of us today don't make our own clothes, we buy them at the store and we have plenty to go around. So worrying about clothes is not really something that we would struggle with. Well then, what is the lesson for us?

We may not worry about having actual clothes. But we certainly worry about what we are going to wear in terms of what looks good. We often say, with a closet full of clothes, "I have nothing to wear." Innocent enough, I understand. You want to look nice. And sometimes finding an appropriate outfit is frustrating. I get it.

But some of us are overly concerned about how you look and how you dress. Your desires in this respect are divided, because instead of seeking first to honor and please God, you are worried about whether other people will like what you are wearing. You are more concerned with external beauty than you are with internal beauty.

I am not saying that wearing nice clothes is wrong. Nor is the desire to look good wrong. With the way people dress today, I wish there was more concern to dress in a way that was pleasing to the eye of other people. Lord knows we could use some more of that.

But I am not talking about that either, at least not in the sense of having a general respect for your self and others when pick your clothes. No, what we are talking about is the anxiety that fills some of your hearts when you are picking out clothes to wear. Because this type of thing reveals the a lot about the priorities in our lives.

If you spend 45 minutes on your makeup, and another 45 minutes trying on the right dresses, at least, and you spend no time at all in the word of God, in prayer and meditation, then your priorities are divided. That reveals a problem.

But perhaps even more concerning is, that if you put on your clothes to give a good appearance to others, but your heart is ugly and your spirit clashes with the profession of your faith. If you have more concern to dress well than you do to live well, then your priorities are divided. You are more worried and anxious about your clothing and your external glory, than you are about the eternal glory that is to be yours when you die.

If you want to look good, then go ahead, and do what you have to. But your priorities in your life are to prepare your soul for eternal beauty and glory that is to come.

As 1 Peter 3 says, *Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*

Again ladies, this is not saying don't have nice hair, or wear make up and wearing nice clothes. But the point is, where is your priority. You are so much more than the clothes and makeup you wear. You are an immortal being who is going to live forever with an imperishable glory. Make sure that you are giving your attention to that and clothing that body with glory, more than you give to this body which is passing away, just like the flowers of the field.

This is why Christ says **seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.** To 'seek' means to devote serious effort in order to realize one's desires or objective. To 'seek' means to strive for, aim at, to pursue. Or, as we have been saying, it means to make it a priority in ones life.

So, make the kingdom of God your priority and obeying his commands your primary concern. And do not worry about food and drink and clothes and what the future is going to hold for you. God will give you your food and drink and clothes and take care of you. He promised to do so.

But more important than your earthly food and drink is hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Which he promised, those who do so, will be satisfied. And, those who by patience continually seek for glory, honor, and immortality, God will clothe you with the righteousness of Christ.

And thus, the person who prioritizes eternity will not have to worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow can worry about itself. But you, trust God to care for your temporal life, so you can give the proper attention to your eternal life first. The person who does that will not be anxious and filled with worry, but will be filled with faith and satisfied in God. Amen.