

Sermon on the Mount Part XXXIV

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading for the morning will be taken from Matthew chapter 6, if you will turn to that please. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 19. And before we begin the reading, I would have you just look ahead with me to one word that I want to comment on before we read the text.

And that's in verse 32 of Matthew chapter 6. Where our Lord says, for all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek.

For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. And all I would like to establish at the outset here is that Christ is making a very clear distinction between the Gentiles, of whom he is not speaking, and to whom he is not speaking in this passage.

Then who does that leave? It leaves only the Jews. There are only two classes of people in the whole world, insofar as the biblical designation is concerned.

There are Jews and there are Gentiles. If you are a Jew, you are a biological descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[1 : 27] The likelihood is you are not, and neither am I. If you are a Gentile, you are descended from everybody else. The vast majority of the world's population, and by that I mean more than 99% of the world's population, is Gentile.

The tiny percentage that is left is Jewish. That distinction is absolutely critical in studying and understanding the Bible.

And in this passage right here, we will see, as we have seen before, we will see again that his audience is exclusively Jewish. The reason that we are studying it and concerning ourselves with it, I think this is the 34th or 35th message, something like that, in the Sermon on the Mount, is because even though it is not to us, it contains principles that are for us, as does the Old Testament, as does the Psalms.

There are scripture passages that are written to us. They are for our learning, and we need to take them to heart. But there are those that are written to others, like what is written to the Jews, and certain commandments that were given to them.

And probably the most notable example of that has to do with the law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments and all the rest of it. That was given exclusively to Israel, and they are identified as the recipients.

[2 : 58] So the Gentiles, who do not have the law, have a different law, the law which God has placed in our hearts. That's something entirely different that involves the conscience, etc. So this great distinction is made throughout scripture.

And if you do not allow for it, then you will be trying to fulfill things that were given specifically to the Jews. You will be trying to fulfill them, perhaps out of an obedient heart and good intentions, but they're not for you to fulfill.

You don't have to keep a kosher kitchen. You don't have to keep the Sabbath. You don't have to offer animal sacrifices. All of those things were for another time for another people.

And when we come into the Gospels, like here in Matthew, for instance, we find another example of this continuing right into the New Testament. So all of this content is for the Jew.

But please understand me when I say, and this is something that our dispensational friends are often accused of. Well, you're just saying that the Gospels don't mean anything. Oh, my goodness, I can't imagine taking a position like that.

[4 : 03] The Gospels are the word of God. They are extremely valuable. But they have to be approached and interpreted in the way they were intended. You just cannot try to embrace these things willy-nilly.

And like the little ditty goes that they sang in Sunday school years ago, every promise in the book is mine, every word, every line. No, it isn't. No, it isn't.

Not every promise is yours. God made promises to some other people, not to you. So we ought not to feel shortchanged because we aren't in on all the promises. Let me tell you, God has provided us with more than enough.

He has already enriched us. He has spiritually blessed us with all blessings and heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And we are in no way, shape, or form shortchanged over what has been provided through God's grace.

So, I want you to keep in mind as we read this passage, and when Christ is talking to you, you, you, he's not talking to you. He's talking to the you's who were in front of him at the time, and that was the Jewish community.

[5 : 13] So, let's begin with Matthew chapter 6 and verse 19. Would you just follow along as we read? I'll be reading from the New American Standard. Christ is saying, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The lamp of the body is the eye. If, therefore, your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 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! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor for your body, as to what you shall put on.

[6 : 34] Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. That they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns.

And yet, your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single cubit to his life span?

And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin. Yet I say to you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, did not clothe himself like one of these.

And if God so have raised the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not much more do so for you, O men of little faith?

Do not be anxious then, saying, What shall we wear? What shall we drink? Or with what shall we clothe ourselves? For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek.

[7 : 41] For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

And before we go back to verse 19 and offer some comment, I'd like to, again, up front, look at verse 33 that we just read.

It's a matter of prioritizing one's life. But it is not the prioritizing of our life today. It is the prioritizing of the life of those people to whom he was speaking.

And what their focus was to be about was the coming kingdom of heaven. That's why he said, in the midst of all of these material things that people tend to be so concerned about, Christ said, Look, here's where your priorities need to be.

[8 : 49] Seek ye first. Make that job one. The kingdom of heaven and his righteousness. Make that your number one objective, and then all these things shall be added to you.

Well, there is a kind of parallel as to what we are to focus on, but it isn't the coming of the kingdom of heaven, like it was to them, because they were the recipients of that promise.

And we, too, will benefit from that kingdom when it comes. It's the kingdom of Christ, kingdom of God in heaven, come to earth and be established. And that's the very thing, and the singular thing, that the Jewish people lived and longed for, more than anything else.

Because when the kingdom of heaven comes, everything that is broken is going to be fixed. And all of the injustice is going to be brought to justice.

All of the corruption is going to be cleared away. Everything that is wrong with this planet is going to be fixed, restored, renewed, refurbished.

[9 : 56] Because Jesus Christ himself is going to be at the helm, and he will see to it that it is done. That's the promise that God gave, and he gave it to and through the Jewish people.

When Jesus said in John 4, talking to the woman at the well, You know not what you worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

That is a loaded statement. And you know something? It's a statement that most Jews today would be embarrassed about. But it's true.

Salvation is of the Jews. Deliverance is of the Jews. How so? Jesus was a Jew. He was talking about himself.

He later identified himself when the woman was talking about the Messiah. I know when the Messiah comes, he's going. And Jesus said, he who speaks to you.

[10 : 59] It's the Messiah. Wow. Jews worldwide, historically, have taken such an incredible amount of abuse and persecution.

And there are a host of reasons that would answer to that. But one of them is simply being the chosen people of God.

That sets them up for abuse from those who are on the outside. And everybody else is on the outside when it comes to that chosen factor. And the reason that they are designated as the chosen people is because they are the people through whom God was going to bring the Messiah that would bring deliverance to the entire world.

They are that spearhead nation. And do you know, a lot of Jews today don't even believe that. They've long since abandoned that. Many of them have. And, of course, there are many Gentiles who do not believe that of the Jew either.

They're more for placing everybody on an equal plane. But this all began back in Genesis chapter 12 when God chose Abraham. And as I've often said, if God is going to choose anybody, he has to choose somebody.

[12 : 15] And he chose Abraham. And Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And that's what this is largely all about. So we are looking here at a bigger picture that is still promised that has not yet been fulfilled.

But when Christ uttered these words, and this is confusing, so let me explain this. When Christ uttered these words, the kingdom was a very viable thing.

Christ knew when he uttered these words that Israel was going to reject him as their Messiah. He knew that full well. But they didn't. They didn't know that. And I am convinced that Christ entered into this and played this whole thing against the backdrop of what was anticipated.

He knew full well this kingdom was not going to materialize. But he had to come and present that as an option to Israel. And I believe that the kingdom that he talked about would have come into fruition had they embraced him after he paid the penalty for man's sin.

And that was realized, of course, on the cross. It was Jesus Christ dying on the cross that gave God the legitimate cause or ability in a righteous sense to forgive man's sin and to usher in this kingdom.

[13 : 38] And once Christ had made that payment, that kingdom was very much a possibility. But the nation of Israel, of course, went on to reject it. So all of this portion here that we are considering has to do with money is something, of course, that concerned all of the people in his day, the Jewish people in that generation.

And it concerns us today, too, doesn't it? There are few things that so well define us as our attitude toward money.

What you think and how you value money goes a long way to telling what kind of person you really are.

Our attitude towards money tells us what we truly value. Someone has said that money is a wonderful servant, but a terrible master.

And it is not the presence of money, nor the possession of money, that is the root of all evil. But as Paul wrote to Timothy, it is the love of money that is the root of all evil.

[14 : 47] Money, wealth, gold, silver, whatever, gets a hook in an individual. And it creates a psychological sense that nothing else does.

We all know that money represents power and the ability to get things done. One of the words that's going to be used in this passage is mammon, M-A-M-M-O-N.

And Jesus says you cannot worship God and mammon. What is that? What is mammon? It's almost akin to the word money.

Mammon means anything and everything that can be purchased with money. That's mammon.

Maybe a good synonym for it would be materialism. If you have the money, you can buy virtually any kind of material good that is available in any shape, size, form, or whatever.

[15 : 54] We say money talks. Money sets off something in people that creates a kind of frenzy. Back in 1849 when they had the famous gold rush in California and all these prospectors and people were heading to California hoping to strike it rich and find all of these nuggets of gold and become filthy rich overnight.

They called it fever. That's what it is. It's an insatiable appetite. It creates a drivenness in people that is intoxicating and rightly named gold fever.

And then the same was experienced in Alaska. And when people get bitten by this gold bug, they just almost lose all perspective of everything. It's just like it overcomes them and overwhelms them.

The possibility of this is a big reason why people buy lottery tickets. It's a hope to strike it rich. They have this fixation on money.

And you would be surprised how many people think that they don't have any problems that money wouldn't fix. And if you happen to be one of those people who think that money would fix any and every problem that you've got, then you've got a big problem that money can't fix.

[17 : 27] So I want to give you some background to this passage because not only are we talking about a different time and place, we're talking about one in a different culture a long, long time ago.

And I want to appeal to a well-written book by George M. Lamza that I mentioned at the outset. And you need to take into consideration what he is saying because the cultural apparatus that existed then is so radical from ours today.

And let me just share with you a paragraph that he's got here based on Matthew 6, 19. Banks and safe deposits were unknown in most eastern countries.

Well, today they, of course, have them, but they didn't back in our Lord's time. There was no such thing as a bank or a safe deposit or anything. Coins of silver and gold and other valuable articles are buried in the ground to keep them safe from bandits and robbers.

Costly garments and perishable goods are hidden in secret vaults constructed in the walls. They may escape being stolen but are frequently exposed to destruction by rust and moths because the earth is invariably damp and houses were infested with insects.

[18 : 48] Now we're talking of houses that were much along the line of close to what we would call adobe brick houses, some of them. And very often they had large elements of straw mingled in with them just like the Israelites made straw for the Egyptians, made bricks made with straw.

And they would use these sun-baked and then sometimes they would plaster the inside and it would give rise, the whole setting and the dampness and everything would give rise to insect infiltration, all kinds of bugs and things that eat garments and that eat all kinds of stuff.

So they were always in danger of that. And of course there's always the element of rust because these were invariably damp and they didn't preserve things that were in them. So they very often resorted to burying treasures in a field.

They owned a field, just go out secretly at night when nobody's watching of course and dig your hole and put your treasures there in that field. Now we look at that as somewhat nonsensical, but I am told there's almost no end to the number of people who during the Depression when money was hard to come by and those who had little wanted to make sure they kept it, would put their money, their coins and their bills in a coffee can and go out in the backyard and bury them.

Because you couldn't put them in the banks. The banks were failing. The banks were unreliable. You didn't know if you'd be able to get your money out or not. And we laugh and talk about that, but there were a number of people who did that.

[20 : 20] They actually hid their money in a can in the backyard. And you know what? A lot of that money is still there if you only knew where to dig. It's that way.

Here in Springfield, Ohio, I am convinced that if you only knew where the money was, you'd go buy that house. You'd go purchase that house.

There were people who secreted money away, stashed it in the walls, pieces of gold, \$20 gold pieces, stacks of them hidden in the walls because they wanted to make sure they would be safe and secure.

And then the next thing you know, the person is run over by a horse and buggy and killed. And nobody knows that it's there. So, like I said, if you only knew where to dig, there are these catches found all over.

And archaeologists, archaeologists sometimes in excavating some of these ancient sites get into these former homes and they could tell pretty much what the layout was like and what the size of the building was.

[21 : 23] And they start digging in these places. And it is not unusual at all to run into a cache of coins, old Roman or Jewish coins. And they may be the equivalent of what we would think of as maybe several hundred dollars.

Some of them are gold. Some of them are silver. They were just buried there by people with these concerns that Christ is talking about. And then they were never found. People died. Nobody knew they were there.

Generations come and go. Centuries pass. Excavators come in. They start digging and, lo, this is what they find. And this has happened many, many times when they unearth a whole cache of coins.

Our author goes on to say, Easterners generally hope that someday they may discover hidden treasures. Therefore, when they plow or dig foundations for buildings, they always expect to strike a treasure.

When it is discovered, and this is an interesting thing, when it is discovered, it becomes the property of the finder, no matter to whom it belonged. You remember as a kid that little saying used to have, finders keepers.

[22 : 29] You find it, you keep it, it becomes yours. I wonder if it didn't come from something like this. As treasures are buried secretly at night, the identity of the owners is unknown.

Moreover, the owners always deny they possess any treasure. To avoid lending money to people. This is a way to keep your relatives from putting the arm on you.

Just say, you don't have any money, you're broke, you know. So, you hide your money away. To people and to escape the payment of unjust taxes.

The place where money is buried is only known to the person who buried it. If he happens to die, the treasure is virtually lost to the family, and according to an unwritten law, it becomes the property of any finder.

Some treasures are found which were buried centuries ago. Coins are dug up which belong to dynasties long vanished. Where the coins are very old and have no exchange, they are reburied or melted secretly for jewelry.

[23 : 34] If a man happens to find a treasure in his neighbor's field, this is interesting. If he happens to find a treasure in his neighbor's field, I don't know what he's doing digging out in his neighbor's field.

But if he finds a treasure, he hastens to buy the field in order to get the possession of the treasure. In any case, if known, the treasure would be confiscated by the government and the finder, fined, or imprisoned.

While some men secretly bury their treasure, bury their money, others openly search for it. The treasure owner is always worried about his money, afraid lest someone discover it.

His thoughts, this is a conclusion, listen. His thoughts and his happiness are buried with his treasure.

That's what Jesus is telling them. Don't do that. Don't lay up your treasure on earth where it is subject to all these things. Rather, the obverse, lay up your treasure in heaven.

[24 : 39] Well, how do you get these coins to heaven? Of course, you don't get the coins to heaven. But you can utilize those coins in such a way that heaven takes note of what you did with it.

And the real treasure is the good that was realized from the generosity that you used in those coins. You are sending your money on ahead, if you will.

But it isn't money. It's what good you could do with the money while you were here. And this is the emphasis that he's placing upon it. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

That's a very stunning statement to think about. Where your treasure is, that's where your heart will be. In other words, whatever your treasure is, that is the identifying mark that is you.

What is it that you focus on most? What is it that you consider most important? Because where your treasure is, the things that you value most, that's where your heart really is.

[25 : 54] It's supposed to be upon the Lord and others, loved ones. Those are they upon whom we expend our effort and our time and our energy in ministry to them.

That's what we send on ahead. The lamp of the body is the eye. In other words, what lets in everything that you are able to see in the world around you is your eye.

And if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. That simply means your perspective is genuine. Your perspective is real.

You see things as they are. You have a focus on what is real and what matters. It's priorities again. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

In other words, if your eye is bad, that means you do not see reality as it is. You see through colored lenses that do not project to you a true representation of what is real.

[27 : 04] This is a jaded kind of vision. There are people who look and they see things other than what others see. They don't connect with reality. They don't have the same value system.

They have a different way of looking at everything. And what Christ is saying here is if you do not have the right way of looking and perceiving at things, then this is going to transfer, your vision is going to transfer to your interior person, where the spirit is, and it will be reflected in that.

And it is not a pretty thing. And we've got a lot of that that we have to deal with in humanity. No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. The two masters is something else that needs to be addressed here from a cultural, historical standpoint. And our author, George Lomza, addresses this.

And it put an entirely different perspective on it than what I thought. He says, there is nothing which is servant in the east. Now, culturally, this is where we've got to keep this.

[28 : 09] In the east. In their culture. There is nothing which a servant in the east hates worse than working for two brothers.

Now, where is this coming from? How did the brothers get in here anyway? Again, this is a delving into the culture, and let me go further, and he'll explain. He says, some servants prefer unemployment to the responsibility of working for two masters.

Now, he is going to go on and give a description of a typical household setting that existed in the time of our Lord, and it is radically different from anything that we know or would expect.

Unless, of course, you're in a situation with hard times and you have relatives moving in with you. There might be a connection there. Listen to this. In the east, family ties remain unbroken even after the death of father and mother.

Brothers, their wives and sisters, live in the same house. How do you like those apples? They work, eat together from the same dish, and their property is undivided.

[29 : 29] The brothers are generally at peace until disturbed by quarrels of their wives and children. Can you see this? You ladies can get a handle on this, can't you?

Like multiple women in one kitchen? Sparks are flying. The wives, when not working hard, usually indulge in gossip.

This often results in strained relations, which weaken the unity of the family. The brothers become bitter towards each other because they take sides with their wives and children.

Can't you see a conflict like this just foaming? And more often than not, it's in regard to petty things that don't amount to a hill of beans. But he's describing, our author here is describing a typical kind of setting.

Domestic troubles are often caused by discrimination in the distribution of food and clothing, as well as by jealousies and suspicions.

[30 : 31] Under such circumstances, the task of servants becomes confusing and difficult. What one wife orders, the other wife indignantly forbids. What one wife orders, the other wife indignantly forbids.

If any courtesy or preference is shown for one side of the family, the other side is angry. Experienced servants are aware of this. They know Eastern women living in the same house and under the same roof generally quarrel and are seldom at peace.

The servants study the situation and soon learn to know which side to love and which side to hate. And by the way, the word hate doesn't convey an accurate concept.

It does not mean what we call hate. The biblical love and hate kind of thing simply means a pleasure, being pleased at the one, being displeased at the other.

It means that you favor one over the other. And the word hate is used as an extreme anonym and it just doesn't fit. When Christ said that, used the word hate, if a man does not come to me and hates not his mother and father, he's not worthy of me.

[31 : 46] Well, he's not enjoining us to hate our parents, of course, but he is saying that it is a priority thing and that he had the first priority. And in these servant situations, many times these servants are also relatives or maybe a neighbor or maybe an orphan boy or girl in the neighborhood that the family just takes in.

They are not slaves. They are just servants. And they serve the family usually for room and board. And, you know, there was a lot of this that went on here in the United States during the Depression.

There were lots of people, lots of families that had multiple children, 8, 10, 12 children. Very difficult to feed that many mouths.

And by arrangement, these children could be dispatched to a neighbor or someone on the other side of town to work for them for their room and board.

And that went on a lot during the Depression. That was not unusual at all. So it has always been that way and had nothing to do with slavery. It was a servant kind of thing. Experienced servants are aware of this.

[32 : 53] They know Eastern women living in the same house and under the same roof generally quarrel and are seldom at peace. The servants study the situation and soon learn to know which side to love and which to hate.

They become attached to the brother whose wife is gentle and kind and from whom they expect better treatment. This is very important for a servant because women give them their portion of food.

Some servants side with the elder brother and his wife and hate the younger. Not hate again, but kind of ignore relatively. The more a servant loves one side of the family, the more he hates the other side.

Shrewd servants do their best to pretend they love both families. That's the servant who's working both sides of the street at the same time.

And, of course, they learn to do that. Just as a man cannot work and please two masters, even though they are brothers, so he cannot serve God and worldly riches and pleasures.

[33 : 53] He must either love God or love the world or deceive himself by pretending to love both. The Pharisees and priests were scrupulous about their religion and its sacred laws, but they were also lovers of gold, silver, animal sacrifices, and other revenues which they derived from people in the name of God.

They were, in reality, worshipping earthly things, and religion was only a camouflage. Temple treasures and prophets were more important and sacred to them than the worship of God.

And, in some respects, nothing has changed. So, no one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one.

Can you imagine being, and you see this sometimes in an employment situation, where maybe there are a couple of brothers who are in business together, or father and son who are in business together, and you have the underlings who are working as their employees.

They have to know who is in charge, because this person can give the underling an order to go so-and-so and do a job, and another one could countermand that order.

[35 : 06] Which one is he supposed to do? It puts the employee in a very difficult situation. He runs the risk of falling out with one or both of them, and he feels like he's walking on eggs.

Which one of these guys do I listen to? Your brother told me this, but you told me this. And this is human nature, and this is what Christ is dealing with. So, what he's saying is, bottom line is this.

Get your priorities straight and find out who it is you really love. Who is your master? And once you determine who is your master, you serve that one.

And you can only have one master. You cannot serve two masters. It's impossible to have this divided loyalty and function. So, make up your mind. Take your choice. For this reason, I say to you, do not be anxious for your life as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, or for your body as to what you shall put on.

Is not life more than food? And the body more than clothing? These were the big ticket items. In that day, everything, everything centered around putting food on the table for that day.

[36 : 21] And this was almost always a daily thing. These people never bought groceries for a week ahead. They didn't have pantries to store canned goods in. Everything was done on a daily basis.

And food on the table on a daily thing was the number one job. And the wife devoted herself to that. And the next thing was clothing for your back and then shelter.

And these things, that summed up everything. People today in this country, in this land of plenty, think they are deprived because they don't have this or that or the last trinket or this.

But the essentials are the things that really matter. And you know, if we were more content to focus on the material things that really matter and regard all of the rest of it for what it is, which is just stuff.

That's all it is. Stuff. Trinkets. Gadgets. The latest this. The latest that. If we would learn to do that, we would have so much more disposable income available.

[37 : 32] We would be able to save more. We would be able to have a stay-at-home mom raising the kids and a father going out into the workaday world and bringing home one paycheck.

And the family would get along very nicely. Thank you. Wouldn't be able to have all the trinkets and gadgets. Wouldn't be able to keep up with the Joneses.

All the rest of it. But the home would be such a much more happy place. Relationships would be attended to with more priority.

It would be a different world. It's all of the extra material things that is killing our family culture. Things that are nothing but add-on luxuries that we now consider to be necessities.

They aren't necessities at all. But we love them. We want them. We like them. We feel we have to have them because the people next door have them. Because how can I go to school without the latest this and that?

[38 : 41] And it's killing us. It's turning on us. And it's taking a toll on our families. This is what the God of materialism does. And by way of a principle, is this ever on track?

And you know something what all this says to? People never change. People today are the same. So, look at the birds of the air.

They do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. And yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And when I read this, I ask myself, I suppose I should ask Marie, why are we spending this money on bird food and putting this out there for this?

It says that God feeds the birds of the air. What are we doing? You know, some of this bird food gets to be expensive. You buy these big bags of it and put it out there. And then, to make matters worse, she wants to be selective on which birds come and feed.

And I told her, I said, honey, you just can't put out a sign that says, cardinals only. You know, those ugly old blackbirds and crows and sparrows and everything else, they just swoop in there and gobble up everything.

[39 : 55] Okay? And bless her heart, she wants to be selective as to which she wants the little chickadees to get their feed. And she wants the jungles to get their feed. And where's the woodpecker been, you know, and all these things.

And maybe we ought to just stop doing that because here it says that God takes care of them. But I guess we have a soft spot. And then she says, well, when it snows, they can't forage and they can't go.

Okay. Okay. So we get the bird food. And it is kind of neat to watch them out the kitchen window and see how they scurry around there and the times that they have. And then there's the squirrels.

Well, I won't go there. We'll move on. Which of you, by being anxious, can add a single cubit to his lifespan? In other words, anxiety gets you nowhere.

Being uptight. And that's a good principle, too. That's a translatable principle for any and every dispensation. It doesn't make any difference whether it's this or where we are today.

[40 : 59] Anxiety. What does it accomplish? We get so bent out of shape worrying about this and worrying about that.

And Christ is going to say, hey, don't borrow trouble from tomorrow. Each day has enough problems of its own. You don't have to borrow trouble from the future. If we can just nestle down in the grace and goodness of God and realize that he really is looking out for us and he will provide all our need.

He won't provide all our wants. But he'll provide all our need. Just relax and don't worry about these things that you have no control over.

If you have control over it and you've got a responsibility in that area, do it. Do the responsible thing. But for those areas for which you are not responsible and are beyond your ability to do anything about them, what do you do about those things?

You relax. You just relax and say, Father, this is beyond me. I just give this to you. You do with it whatever you please. It's yours anyway. And it provides a lot of internal peace and it's a lot better for your blood pressure.

[42 : 07] This passage, by the way, is not talking about as though there is something wrong with planning for the future. And I want to make that very clear because that's important.

You need to plan for the future. One of the greatest fears, there's that anxiety thing again, that people have when they reach their advancing years is, I don't want to outlive my money.

We see these programs all the time on television, these little commercial blurbs that come on. They want to sit down with you and give you some counseling and tell you how much money you're going to need to retire and live comfortably if you live to the age of 85 or 90 or 95.

And, of course, they all have something to sell you. That's part of the game. But isn't that a legitimate concern? I don't think we should just willy-nilly say, well, I'm just going to trust God and let him take care of it.

I'm not going to save any money. I don't need a savings account. God will provide. That's irresponsible. That's not spiritual. That's foolish.

[43 : 21] You need to make preparation. And the principle is given back in the Proverbs where the writer of Proverbs says, have you ever considered the ant? Hey, you sluggard, you lazy bum that won't get out and work.

Consider the ant. The ant goes out and secures food and stores it away for when the time comes that she can't do that.

And then she'll have something to eat when it's difficult to find food. So the idea of savings is a very legitimate one and a very prudent one.

And I might say it is one that the American public has pretty much completely lost sight of. Because we're not into savings. We are not a savings society. We are a spending society.

And I don't know if we succeeded in transferring that mentality to the government. Or if the government has transferred it to us.

[44 : 24] But you know something? It won't work for you. And it won't work for them either. And the only reason they think it is still working is because they can print money and you can't.

But the time is going to come when the chickens will come home to roost. We just can't do this on a perpetual basis.

The math is going to catch up with us. And it could very well be disastrous. So Christ is not demeaning the idea of saving.

It's not a lack of faith. I remember talking to somebody one time who said they were considering life insurance to make sure that their family would be well cared for if something happened to them.

I don't need that insurance. I don't need that. The Lord will take care of them. I said, well, do you have insurance on your house? Well, yes.

[45 : 27] Why? That's inconsistent. You shouldn't be paying out money for insurance premiums on your house. Just trust the Lord that he won't allow it to burn down. But that doesn't sound right, does it?

No. So you do the responsible thing. And you buy the insurance. And it doesn't mean that you have a lack of faith in God. It just means that God has given you a mind.

And you have some resources. And you are to dispense those resources in a prudent and responsible way. And you are to be adequately covered so that your family will not be in want in the event that something happens to you.

And none of us has any guarantee that something won't happen to us. You get hit by a Mack truck walking across the street tomorrow. There are no guarantees of tomorrow. So we do the responsible thing.

And we save. And I've encouraged people. I always talk to young marrieds about this and those who are to be married. And most of the young people who are contemplating marriage today are starting out like I did when I was married.

[46 : 39] I had virtually nothing. And boy, there are some things I'd like to do over again. And being more responsible for money and saving some money would be one of them.

And I tell people, you need to develop a savings plan. I know. I know the banks don't pay diddly squat on interest anymore. There's a half a percent or something like that.

But still, that's better than nothing. And if you get into a regimented habit of putting some money away so that you never see that money and that you don't miss it, and it doesn't have to be half your paycheck, just a few dollars a week, you would be surprised what that will do for you on down the road.

And he is not here denouncing the idea of savings, not in the least. But you know something? Against this backdrop, it would be different with the anticipation of that kingdom coming.

So, ladies, I want you to be well advised the next time you think about a shopping spree for a new wardrobe, think about those lilies. They do not toil nor do they spin.

[47 : 53] And some of the men out there want me to stay here and preach a while. Well, then again, we are living in a different day and a different time.

Verse 31, Do not be anxious then, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves? For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek.

And I can just read a little bit in the white spaces here. And I think what our Lord is saying is, These are things that really concern the Gentiles, the people who are not in tune with God, and I can well understand why they feel that way.

But, that's not you. You're not supposed to be like them. You're supposed to be different. That's the contrast that he's making here.

And he is chiding them for falling in with the same concerns and cares that the Gentiles have. But, don't you realize that you, as Jesus could address them, you are the chosen people of God.

[48 : 54] You think he's not going to care for you? The Gentiles don't believe that, but, well, they shouldn't believe it. But, you're not Gentiles. Here's your priority.

What you are to do is focus on, concentrate on, anticipate, prepare for, his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

In other words, if you care for the proper things, all of the incidentals will come along. So, focus on the things that really matter, and all of the other things will be there.

Consequently, don't be anxious for tomorrow. Don't be upset about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. This is a passage that is just rife with all kinds of, you know, principles and admonitions that are applicable across the dispensational groundwork.

It doesn't make any difference where you are. Now, we've got time for some Q&A;, and we will be glad to entertain any questions that you may have, either from this passage, preferably from this passage.

[50 : 03] But if you've got a leftover with the subject of forgiveness that you want to rehash, we'll be happy to address that as well. Anyone? Any comments or questions?

We've got Mike. All right, Roger.

And by the way, Roger, Roger and Roger, Roger and Roger, Neff and Phipps, thank you guys for the incredible job you did on the parking lot.

Pull into this parking lot on a winter day like this with snow pile high all around, and the parking lot looks like it's the month of June. Just really nice. Appreciate it, guys. What's your question?

Yeah. Thank you. Well, Roger and I were talking about old man's son helped us out a whole lot yesterday. It really helps on that black surface.

[51 : 01] To add to your thing about one paycheck and everything, I have read a commentary, it's been years ago now, that what really started ruining the family or declining it was when the man left the home, either the farm or the carpentry shop or the blacksmith.

The kids were there. They were learning the trade and any corrections that needed to be made and everything, and I have always thought that that does sound right, that when the man left for that job, industrialization or whatever you want to call it, I think the family started breaking up then myself.

That makes a lot of sense, and I think that is, at least in part, historically what has happened. And in addition to that, you know, there are lots of forces that change the course of a culture, and World War II was a big one because World War II brought into action Rosie the Riveter.

And that was out of necessity because the guys were off to war, and we had something like, I think it was like at one time as many as 10 million men and women under arms, Navy, Air Force, everything during World War II, and that necessitated women going into the workplace and working in the factories that were building planes and ships and all kinds of things, and if it hadn't been for them doing that, the outcome of that war might have been very different.

It was the huge industrialization and industrial might of the United States that was kicked into gear almost overnight that made a huge difference in that war.

[52 : 56] And all of these women got out there and were doing their thing and bringing home a paycheck, and she started getting used to that paycheck. And that's one of the things that paved the way to women working outside the home.

And I know that's a hotbed issue, and I don't want to wax eloquent on that, but I would just say that we would be a much, much happier country if our families were more solidified, if mom and dad were in the home together and the children were there with the advantage of two parents, preferably two parents of opposite sex, and raised in that kind of a culture, and dad going out into the workaday world and competing in the marketplace to bring home a paycheck, and mom taking care of the kids and raising the kids.

To me, that is traveling first class. And you know something? You may do without a whole lot of things that other people have, but you'll have the most important thing that so many other people do not have, that is a family solidarity and stability.

That's what this country really needs multiplied over. Other comments or questions? Up here, Loretta has it. Getting back to the family who are not wanting the gadgets and not wanting or keeping their kids with very simplified lives within the family, it's not feasible in this day and time because the kids go to school.

They see all the other kids doing all this and having all this, and so when they go back home, it does not vote for a very happy family life because the kids are unhappy.

[55 : 13] I'm sure that comes into play. And they demand to be like everybody else. I'm sure that that comes into play. The peer pressure is very real for kids.

And you know something? Kids aren't the only ones that have peer pressure. Right. Adults do too. Adults do too. And you'd be surprised how people can insist on having something because a guy two doors down has this, you know, and you've got to, it's kind of like one of the call it a rat race.

But if you have your priorities right, and I really feel very strongly about this. I think that this is the greatest threat to our nation today, is the disintegration of the family.

The breakup, the divorces, the single parent homes, almost always the mom, complications with the boyfriend that moves in, and those are almost always disastrous situations.

And you read about them all the time. It's just not supposed to be that way. And it is not a good thing for families. It's not a good thing for the country. What we need is more stability in our families.

[56 : 27] And you know something? This is the whole reason that I'm doing this little ditty thing, this Marriage on the Rock. And I do it for WEEC, and I've expanded the series to three-minute segments.

And what I'm trying to do is to reveal to a husband and wife what is required and what they are able to contribute to having a Marriage on the Rock.

And I've already got the first 80 programs recorded. They haven't been released yet, but those are the first three CDs. And they are designed to address a Christian couple who have a marriage where they love each other, no question about that, but the marriage leaves a lot to be desired.

Neither one is really as happy as they'd like to be in that marriage. What's wrong? And that's what we address in this new series, Marriage on the Rock. And I am convinced that so many do not know and do not take advantage of the spiritual principles that God has provided for every Christian couple that's married.

And all I'm trying to do is take them through this step by step and show them what can be done. Because let me tell you, I speak as a man from experience.

[57 : 59] Marriage is the best thing that God has provided for man in a fallen world.

A marriage that is well conducted is as close as you're going to get to heaven while you're still here on this earth. And the thing that really troubles me is that every single Christian couple could have that kind of a marriage.

They could have it. Because those relationships were provided for as part of what Christ accomplished on that cross.

And for a Christian marriage, not to have it is in part squandering the work that Christ accomplished on that cross. I'd go so far as to say a Christian couple absolutely has no business not having a fulfilled marriage.

They have no business not having a fulfilled marriage. Well, I'll stop there. I'll comment, but I can't follow that.

[59 : 15] Okay. Well, our time is gone anyway, so thank you for your kindness. And we did get the chapter finished. I'm excited about what comes up because it's in the very next verse, the next chapter.

And it is grossly, grossly misused and misunderstood. Judge not, lest you be judged. My, oh, my. That will issue up a whole lot of understanding that I think you'll appreciate.

Would you stand with me, please? Father, we are so grateful for this time to be together. And we trust that it has been beneficial to those who listen with open minds and open hearts.

We recognize that we fall far short of having all the answers that we would like to have. But we do believe that you provided us with the information to have adequate answers.

And we're really grateful for that. Thank you for your great, wonderful, loving heart that extends privileges and benefits to us that we often don't even know about. And sometimes when we know about them, we still don't take advantage of them.

[60 : 23] Forgive us for that. Thank you again for all that you've done for us. We recognize it comes through our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray in his name. Amen.