

# Seek God's Rule and Righteousness

Thomas Robinson, January 2, 2011

## Matthew 6:19-34

<sup>19</sup> “Do not lay (treasure) up for yourselves **treasures on earth**, where moth and rust (eating) destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup> but lay (treasure) **up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

<sup>22</sup> “The eye is the **lamp of the body**. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be **full of light**, <sup>23</sup> but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be **full of darkness**. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

<sup>24</sup> “No one can serve **two masters** (lords), for either he will **hate** the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and **despise** the other. **You cannot serve God and money** (Mammon).

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious** about your **life** (*psyche*, soul), what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your **body**, what you will put on. Is not **life** more than food, and the **body** more than **clothing**? <sup>26</sup> **Look at the birds of the air**: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your **heavenly Father feeds them**. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?**

<sup>28</sup> “And why are you **anxious about clothing**? Consider the **lilies of the field**, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even **Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these**. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the **grass of the field**, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not **much more clothe you**, O you of little faith?

<sup>31</sup> “Therefore **do not be anxious**, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles (nations) seek after all these things, and your **heavenly Father knows that you need them all**.

<sup>33</sup> “But **seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you**.

<sup>34</sup> “Therefore **do not be anxious about tomorrow**, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

## Clear Purpose and Vision for a New Year

A decade gone! A New Year! We begin in the Sermon on the Mount listening to Jesus.

Mt 6:33—where to begin, how to go forward. Seek first God's kingdom/rule—a quest to get life right from the top down (not bottom up). All the right / justice / faithfulness that God is, that he calls us to, that God gives to us from himself. The center.

Jesus is not giving advice on how to improve the problems of your life – self-help. Get out of debt. Lose weight. Save money. Exercise more. Read good books. Travel. All fine. But deeply deceptive if we think they secure our life/soul/body. We / our things become gods.

## Listening to the Language of Life

Jesus is calling us into a life-transforming vision of reality/truth of God. As it permeates our life, it shows up in ways of thinking and acting that seem strange – bad advice.

Vision requires an eye that sees clearly, lets in real light not deception/dark (6:22-23).

It has to be realistic: All our worry can't secure life. We really are vulnerable (6:27).

That's the way God created human life. Anyone that tells you different is lying to you.

The language of Treasure – if I have it, life is good, secure, complete. If not, anxiety reigns. We spend life/time/energy/creativity to acquire/accumulate/protect it. Money, power, family, influence, self-expression, pleasure, revenge, etc. Treasure in relation to God: Seeking God's rule and righteousness. Open to God's Spirit. Living God's love. Loving others.

The language of Master/Lord. I don't want any master. Not an option. We choose, we serve some master. It defines us. "Mammon" is a personification for all stuff that is not God. God alone is the true creator/Lord. Any other focus of life is delusion. Choice is real.

## "Don't Worry – Be Happy" and Existential Angst

How can Jesus command us not to be anxious/worried. We don't want to worry but we do.

Anxiety permeates our society from everyday conversation to advertising to philosophy.

We want control but feel that things are not in our control. We want to rule, but job, health, relationships, children, aging, politics, economy, violence, all are sources of fear.

My anxiety drives me to want/need more and more control. Never satisfied, never enough.

We were created to rule as God's servants, but we wanted rule without God: Lost rule.

Jesus knows how deep this is for us. Jesus is not talking to wealthy people but farmers and craftsmen, women who spin and weave. People working hard in the struggles of life.

Jesus doesn't say don't plant, don't weave. But don't trust them to secure your life.

Don't deny the fears, deal with them. Look, consider, learn. Change your thinking/vision.

God is real. He is everywhere. We can see and learn. God provides for birds – his providence sustains life. He gives physical life for this body and eternal life. A gift I receive. When I release the illusion of control, know my vulnerability that is always present in this world, trust God who gives me his life and secures all that truly lasts, anxiety dissolves.

Learn from lilies. God's way is fulfilling needs with abundance and beauty. Not for competition but for the joy of living. God knows our needs. God loves us. We learn to trust him. Jesus sets the vision and priorities for living freely, boldly, a life of beauty and joy. God! Seek first His rule in your life and the rightness he gives. All else will be given.