

No Worries—Seeking the Kingdom of God

Thomas Robinson, *Seeing Life Through Jesus' Eyes 1*, January. 1, 2012

Matthew 6:24-35

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters (Lords). Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both **God** and money (Mammon).

²⁵ **Therefore** I tell you, **do not worry about your life** [*psyche*, soul], what you will **eat** or **drink**; or about your body [*soma*], what you will **wear**. Is not life [*psyche*, the soul] more important (something more) than food, and the body more important than clothes?

²⁶ **Look** at the **birds** of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet **your heavenly Father feeds them**. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour (cubit) to your life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even **Solomon** in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how **God clothes the grass of the field**, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, **will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith?**

³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and **your heavenly Father knows that you need them**.

³³ **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness**, and all these things will be given (added) to you as well.

³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Matthew 6:9-10

⁹ Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
¹⁰ Your **kingdom** come,
your **will** be done,
on **earth** as it is in **heaven**.”

The Quest of a New Year

Jesus calls us to live in the present moment. The past is gone, unchangeable. The future is yet to be created with God. The future is created by choices made in the present. Jesus calls us to a fundamental orientation of life: “*Seek first God’s rule/kingdom, God’s righteousness/ justice.*” Why do this? Life oriented to reality. God is God, not me or you. Why seek? God limits himself. His greatness turns our concepts on their head. God is not obvious. He gives us freedom by limiting his own overwhelming control. We creatures can ignore God. We often prefer other gods. We live in a world with many gods on the market: money, sex, power, technology, science, celebrity, family, ethnic groups, religions, philosophies, art, war, etc. What people live for. What gives meaning.

What's the problem? *"No one can serve two masters/lords."* It's like realizing that the sun is in the center of the solar system. If you think Earth or Mars is center, everything is distorted. Jesus sets the basic case: God and Mammon. We live in the world capital of Mammon. Mammon is an attractive god. Pragmatic, real. Visible (not hidden). Powerful. Equipped with full theology (economics), daily rites, vast temples, priests. Able to save and destroy. The only problem is that money is not God. We know that even as we worship it. Money is a very useful tool, a good servant, but as god, it is a destructive delusion.

Don't Worry about Your Life!

What can Jesus possibly mean? Irresponsible! Hakuna Matata! (No worries/ responsibilities/ rules). Jesus is talking to ordinary people with lots of worries, responsibilities.

Worries are not a sin. They're our weak spot, our vulnerable opening to Mammon's sales pitch: "You're worried about basic stuff: food, clothing. Rightly so! And I can help you. I'll provide for you, save you, give you peace. I'm your true, practical god! Live for me!"

Jesus says the worries as worries (not realistic needs) come from not looking clearly and deeply enough at life/reality. We don't see life as a gift but a product manufactured by our mighty Mammon. We've got to keep producing our god. We always "need" more.

No amount of Mammon is enough. No satisfaction. But we ultimately realize that we can't add one cubit where it really matters. We get reduced to the size of our god. We lose the "something more" that is the glory and beauty of life.

Jesus says that the reality of God is there in front of you. It's everywhere in all the beauty and delight of the world. We've often allowed God to be removed to a distant heaven with rare/past miraculous interventions. Jesus sees/knows God everywhere. So pervasive we can ignore him. Heaven is God's all-pervading realm touching everything that exists.

Open our eyes! See the world and life as Jesus sees. Reality! God provides everything.

Money does nothing. It's dead. You're alive. You're something more! You're God's.

What Kind of Life Does Jesus Want?

Is Jesus calling us to a more ascetic life? We often need a far simpler life, living below our means so that we can give generously to others. We create the worries that make us so vulnerable to false gods by living beyond our means. But Jesus is not here talking about asceticism/self-denial, especially not with the idea that material things are innately bad. Every pleasure there is was created by God for our enjoyment.

Jesus is challenging us to something harder – a new way of thinking about everything, a lens through which to see the whole world. Look! Notice! Seek! God is everywhere.

God does not want you ragged and hungry: *"Will he not much more clothe you?" "Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all." "All these things will be added to you."* But all the things are just things. If you make anything but God your god, it will reduce you ultimately to a thing. You are more. God delights in all the things he has made, but you are more. He wants a relationship of love and truth, faith and delight with you.

Seek His kingdom. Seek His justice. There you find God, yourself, and everything else.