

Teach -In No. 4 The Gospel of Matthew

In the last teach-in we completed our study of the Lord's Prayer and shared something of how Jesus taught us how to pray. In this session we shall look at Matthew 6 verses 19-24 and verses 25-34.

Matthew 6 v 19-24

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store 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 your heart will be also. "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if 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 then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

We are encouraged to invest ourselves in the things of the kingdom, when we pray thy Kingdom come this is what God expects us to seek after.

Matthew 6 v 19-21

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store 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 your heart will be also.

We are required to work towards the treasures of the Kingdom rather than the contrasting treasures of this world. We must put our will behind His word. But what are these treasures of the Kingdom? They are grown out of the root of a heart that is hungry and thirsty for righteousness. The fruits of a spirit led life are listed in Galatians.

Galatians 5 v 22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Isaiah 55 expresses a similar encouragement.

Isaiah 55 v 1-3

"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David.

Here is an invitation, freely offered, some wise advice about how we spend our money, how we should listen, what we should eat and what we should indulge in.

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Matthew 6 v 22-24

"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if 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 then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Verse 22 speaks of the eye being the lamp of the body, and that it should be sharp. We need to be clear sighted before we walk, lest we fall into a ditch. What we have in focus needs to be clearly a Godly treasure. The eye speaks of our heart, of our understanding and of our aims and our intentions. Am I focused on Kingdom ways, or am I more ambitious for the things of this world? I can answer this question by examining where I find my greatest disappointments! The loss of my job, being passed over in promotion, in the Church, not being recognised, falling out with relatives and friends, all these things can show me who matters the most to me in my life.

This part of chapter 6 concludes by telling us about the impossibility of serving two masters effectively, we cannot serve God and mammon, that is, earthly riches.

Matthew 6 v 25-34

"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The final part of this chapter deals with the whole question of anxiety and its twin brother, fear. The first thing to say about these two subjects is that they are both sinful pastimes! We can say that if we have received the Holy Spirit, we should not be anxious or fearful about anything, yet many of us have to be delivered from their fears.

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2 Timothy 1 v 7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

Proverb 10 v 24

What the wicked fears will come upon him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted.

Proverbs 29 v 25

The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.

What we really believe in our hearts, what we are convinced of, will determine whether we live in peace or turmoil; Jesus wants to establish our lives upon the rock, not sinking sand. Choose this day who you will believe and trust in, your circumstances can lead you into confusion, or, into a false sense of security. If your situation is bad you may ask *why has God allowed this to happen?* And, if your circumstances are good you may decide that God is blessing you, therefore you don't need to ask Him about anything. This way of thinking may lead us to treat God like an aspirin, not a person who wants to be involved in every aspect of our lives. The cure for all ailments is to know the love of God on a daily basis.

The blood flows through our veins, pumped from the physical heart it provides us with the means to live healthy and vigorous lives. This blood flow can be blocked through hardening of the arteries, too much nicotine, drugs and alcohol maybe. This is a medically proven fact of which we are all aware. The Christian life is also subject to blockages; sin of all kinds can be a blockage to the flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The sin that comes out of this passage of Scripture is that of anxiety and fear, the nicotine and the alcohol of our spiritual lives. In simplest terms, we have to recognise our need of a renewed mind. Our old ways of thinking and understanding have to change. Paul speaks very clearly about this in Romans.

Romans 12 v 1-3

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Here Paul urges those in Rome to present themselves to God as an act of worship, then he gives some very specific and important instructions, reminding them *And do not be conformed to this world...*

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Anxiety disturbs each one of us from time to time and not only affects our bodies, but also our attitudes and actions. Anxiety and fear causes us to freeze, even panic in an irrational way. For example if you were to try to save a person drowning they may well grab hold of you and you could find yourself in difficulty as well. We need to recognise this and deal with it wisely.

Ephesians 4 v 21 -25

...if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

We are instructed in this scripture to put on something new; inferring that first there is something to take off. We are also to put to one side dishonesty and live in the truth of the word of God.

2 Timothy 3 v 5

...holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these.

Living in anxiety and fear denies the power of God.

2 Timothy 1 v 6-7

For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

What are we to do then? There is a principle here that we can easily miss, to have a renewed mind is to have a change of mind, to be renewed in the spirit of our mind is to have a changed attitude and a different lifestyle, this is called repentance!

Acts 3 v 19-20

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you...

It would be good to spend some time dealing with areas of anxiety and fear, the purpose of all ministries is to set us free from all bondages. Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all other things will be given to you. Praise the Lord!

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