

Sermons on Matthew

Two Masters

Matthew 6:22-34

With Study Questions

*Pastor Paul Viggiano
Branch of Hope Church
2370 W. Carson Street, #100
Torrance, CA 90501
(310) 212-6999
pastorpaul@integrity.com
www.branchofhope.org
12/19/2004*

– **Two Masters**
– *Matthew 6:22-34*

- **The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.** ⁻²³⁻ **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!**

⁻²⁴⁻ **“ No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.**

- ⁻²⁵⁻ **“ Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, 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?** ⁻²⁶⁻ **Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?** ⁻²⁷⁻ **Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?**

⁻²⁸⁻ **“ So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;** ⁻²⁹⁻ **and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.** ⁻³⁰⁻ **Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

- ⁻³¹⁻ **“ Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘ What shall we eat?’ or ‘ What shall we drink?’ or ‘ What shall we wear?’** ⁻³²⁻ **For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.** ⁻³³⁻ **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.** -

⁻³⁴⁻ **Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:22-34)**

How Great is That Darkness!

I was in my teens driving through the Deep South with my dad. It was late, and we were in the middle of nowhere when my dad decided to show me just how dark things can get outside the limits of well-lit Los Angeles. For a brief second he turned off the lights. We couldn't see outside the car. We couldn't see inside the car. We couldn't see each other,

and had no idea where we were headed. Had he left the lights off for more than that moment, we'd have crashed for sure.

Jesus taught that the lamp¹ of the body is the eye—the governing organ in the body. The metaphor is a little tricky. Does this lamp provide light and direction for the path of our feet, or is it a lamp of introspection—examining, and guiding, our own hearts? I'd have to say *both*, since one is dependent upon the other.

Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. ²⁶ Ponder the path of your __feet, and let all your ways be established. ²⁷ Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil. (Proverbs 4:25-27)

If the eye, as the governing organ, is good, then our whole body (and I take this to mean our whole life) will be full of light. If the eye is bad then my life is like my dad's darkened car. It is only a matter of time before the darkness prevails and I find that my directionless life has been snuffed out.

What Does Jesus Mean by A "Good" Eye?

By "good" (*haplous*) Jesus means without ulterior motive. The KJV translates the word "single"; there is no mixed allegiance. In short, the good eye can see in the car, it can see the road, it can see the map, and it is unambiguous regarding the car's destination.

Conversely, the darkness² which proceeds from the bad eye is the same root word to describe a tent, which is designed to cover and leaves its inhabitants in darkness. Jesus is emphatic, '**. . .how great is that darkness!**' when one seeks to govern his life with no illumination. It would be pretty hard to drive a car with a tent over it.

Interesting that Jesus says, "**If therefore the light that is in you is darkness. . .**" How can light be darkness? There is much darkness that poses as light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Many are those who consider themselves enlightened, yet remain in darkness. Matthew Henry poetically conveys,

The hypocrite is like the waterman that looks one way and rows another; the true Christian like the traveler that has his

¹ Lamp (*lychnos*), small vessel holding olive oil and adj. wick, used for lighting the dark.

² Dark *skoteinos* The group of *skot*-words is derived from a root *ska*—, meaning to cover. The same root is to be found in *ske_ne_*, a tent.

journey's end in his eye. The hypocrite soars like the kite, with his eye upon the prey below, which he is ready to come down to when he has a fair opportunity; the true Christian soars like the lark, higher and higher, forgetting the things that are beneath.³

Two Very Different Masters!

Jesus will now speak of the masters which govern the eye. But He first sets forth a maxim. **"No one can serve two masters. . ."** Here we have a grave either/or proposition. Seeking to serve two masters is like having two strings on one bow or two bullets in one chamber—an implosion is imminent.

Individuals, marriages, households, churches, or nations who are conflicted or ambivalent about who their master is will eventually come to ruin; a **". . .house divided against itself will not stand."** (Matthew 12:25) If a husband has one view of the ultimate authority (possibly himself) and the wife has another view of the ultimate authority (possibly herself), they will eventually find they have irreconcilable differences. This principle applies to individuals, and to the masses.

And when one master begins to dominate, the other master is hated and despised. You cannot serve God and mammon. 'Mammon' is a word which represents worldly riches and provisions. So, at least according to Jesus, your two options for a master are the Creator or the creation (Romans 1:25). We should all seek to be pretty clear about who our ultimate master actually is—heaven and hell hang in the balance!

Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You __who dwell in the heavens. ²Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* to the hand of their masters, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes *look* to the Lord our God, until He has mercy on us. (Psalm 123:1, 2)

_Do not love the world or the things in the world. __If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

³Henry, M. (1996, c1991). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume* (Mt 6:19). Peabody: Hendrickson.

And it stands to reason that if one's ultimate master is the creation rather than the Creator—since the creation is neither loving, gracious, nor merciful—one's life will be fraught with anxiety. My clothes don't care if I wear them and my food doesn't care if I eat it. Nobody is looking out for me! My own preservation, therefore, must consume me. Mammon is an indifferent master. **"Is not life more than food. . .?"** Jesus asks. **"Our life is a greater blessing than our livelihood,"**⁴ writes Matthew Henry, but those who serve mammon must ever concern themselves with their livelihood as life passes them by.

Multiple times, Jesus gives one of my favorite admonitions in the Bible: "Do not worry. . ." Of course this is easier said than done.

What is the Basis of My Worry-Free Existence?

The basis of my worry-free existence is not ignoring my needs, but recognizing that my God is the provider of my needs. Jesus uses the examples of birds that don't sow or reap or gather into barns—yet God feeds them. He gives the examples of lilies that don't toil or spin—yet God clothes them more beautifully than King Solomon. This, of course, is not an argument against sowing or reaping or gathering; many animals do these types of things. To toil and spin are noble attributes:

She stretches out her hands to the distaff⁵, and her hand holds the spindle. (Proverbs 31:19)

The point is not whether we should labor, save, gather, or prepare for the future. The point is that most animals don't have anxiety attacks regarding where their next meal is coming because God provides. And Jesus' argument proceeds from the lesser to the greater. We are more valuable than birds and grass. It is somewhat gentle, but an admonition nonetheless, when Jesus says **". . .if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"**

This is not to say that there haven't been times in history where Christians have gone without. It is to say that a man's worries cannot

⁴Henry, M. (1996, c1991). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume* (Mt 6:25). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁵ A stick the holds wool or fabric.

“ . . . add one cubit⁶ to his stature.” In general God provides for His people. There is not a living person who cannot attest to this. But let us not lose the point: if your peace of mind is wrapped up in the things you own, then they own you and they are cold-hearted masters.

We all need to buy food and clothes. We all need to consider homes, cars, furnishing, doctor's bills, etc. But when we find ourselves encompassed with anxiety over the labors of livelihood rather than the joy of life, we violate yet another loving injunction: **“ _Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘ _What shall we eat? ’ or ‘ _What shall we drink? ’ or ‘ _What shall we wear? ’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek.”** In other words, if we toss and turn over our possessions, we are no different than the world. God knows our needs and tells us not to worry.

So What Should We Pursue?

How, then, do I fill all my worry time?

-But __seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

I think we should take this general statement regarding the pursuit of God's kingdom and righteousness to mean all that Jesus has, and will, teach regarding His kingdom. First and foremost, it is a kingdom of those who have no righteousness of their own (Romans 10:3). Citizens of Christ's kingdom are effectually called (Romans 8:30) and adopted (Romans 8:16) by the King. The righteousness they have is imputed (freely credited) to them by Christ's atoning sacrifice.

- . . . just as David also _describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:
⁷“_Blessed __are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; ⁸“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.” (Romans 4:6-8)

But it is not a stagnant righteousness. The righteousness which justifies (pardons the sinner before God) also sanctifies (brings the sinner more and more into the conformity of Christ). Up to this point in Jesus' sermon, this includes:

⁶ Cubit may be metaphorical for a longer life.

The mournful recognition of our impoverished spirit; meekness; hunger for righteousness; mercy; purity of heart; and a peacemaking disposition. It includes good works that make Christians the salt and light of the earth to the glory of their Father in heaven. It includes an acknowledgment and pursuit of obedience to the Law of God and a righteousness that is not merely outward but from the heart.

Pursuing Christ's kingdom and righteousness means not doing your deeds to be seen by men and praying and fasting with sincerity of heart. It means treasuring up treasures in heaven, rather than earth where moth and rust can destroy.

When God's kingdom and righteousness are pursued, it yields great blessings. When this kingdom is pursued, God promises that He will give us all the things that consume us with anxiety. The pursuit of this kingdom, this righteousness, this God leaves no room, nor basis, for worry. There, Jesus teaches,

**Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.
(Matthew 6:34)**

Questions for Study

1. How is the lamp of the body the eye (page 3)?
2. What makes the eye good (pages 3, 4)?
3. Why can't we serve two masters (page 4)?
4. What happens when mammon is your master (page 5)?

5. What is the basis of my worry-free existence (pages 5, 6)?
6. What does it mean to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness (pages 6, 7)?