

Christ's Warning Against The Service Of Mammon And Against Worldly Cares.

Text: Matt 6:24-34

1) The Service Of Mammon In General

Suggested Hymns:

2) Worldly Cares In Particular

373, 393, 389, 293, 364

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 6:24–34, 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. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Our divine Lord has deemed it necessary to warn His faithful followers in our Gospel against the service of mammon, and against earthly cares.

For although the children of God, the true Christians, are heavenly minded, we still have not reached heaven in this life. Although we are not of the world, yet we are still in the world. Although we are governed by the Holy Spirit of God, yet our own sinful flesh clings to us.

We know that in us, that is, in our flesh, *nothing good dwells* as we read in Romans 7:18. Who can abolish those distressing thoughts, those fears about the future, those unstable feelings, those wishes and desires for gain, for a great amount of money, and property, and earthly possessions that arise in the heart?

Even the best of Christians are assailed by such thoughts and desires, and before you can rid yourself of them, you would have to be made rid of your own flesh.

However, let no Christian underrate the danger of these thoughts and desires of the flesh. Many a Christian who, by the grace of God, has managed to escape all other dangers to his immortal soul and withstood all the temptations with which he was beset, finally was taken captive by means of this snare and delusion and lost his soul through the service of mammon and through earthly cares.

It is, therefore, a timely and most necessary warning which our dear Lord instills in our Gospel.

Let us consider, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, *Christ's Warning Against The Service Of Mammon And Against Worldly Cares*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Christ's Warning Against The Service Of Mammon In General

Christ says, "*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.*" Here we must first answer the question, "*What is mammon?*" and then see what is meant by servicing mammon.

What is mammon? Mammon is a Syriac word which signifies gain. But not every kind of gain is mammon. Mammon, properly, is that part of your gain,

that part of your money and property, which is in excess of what you use for the support of body and life.

The wealth of the rich man, the money which has been hoarded or laid aside for some unforeseen event and which is not at the present time being used, is mammon. This mammon we should not serve, that is, we are not to look upon such money or goods as the true means to enhance our prosperity, to promote our welfare, to avert calamities, and to ensure happiness.

Note well, Christ does not say, it is wrong to have more than you actually need for the support of body and life.

On another occasion He said to His disciples, *“make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon;”*¹ and if they were to make to themselves friends of, or by the means of mammon, they must possess that mammon of unrighteousness.

There is a great difference between having a thing, and serving that thing which you have. You may have mammon; you may possess wealth. You are not required to throw away your surplus, when God has blessed the work of your hands.

But you are not to serve mammon. You are not to put your trust in money and goods. You should not worship the dollar, not make of it a god whom you adore, of whom you expect help in the day of distress, and with whom you are loath to part for fear that with it may depart your happiness.

And why does Christ warn us against the service of mammon? Why should we scrupulously guard against that service and keep our hands clean of it? Because such service is incompatible with the service of the true God.

Christ says, *“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.”* This is a general maxim which holds good in all cases. While two masters go together, a servant may follow them both. But let these two masters part, and you will see to whom of the two, the servant belongs.

He cannot follow them both and cling to both. He must forsake either the one or the other. And so it is with the service of God and mammon. They are

two masters that never stand shoulder to shoulder and work together harmoniously.

They are strictly opposed to each other, and the love of the one excludes the love of the other. Christ says, "***You cannot serve God and mammon.***" He does not say, "*You must not, or, you should not serve both.*" He flatly expresses the impossibility of this double service and says, "***You cannot.***" It is simply an impossible thing.

And if you are a servant of mammon, if it is money and riches that you are craving for, hankering after, chasing for; if the accumulation of wealth is the one great ideal of your life; if it is the dollar from which you expect help and deliverance, health and happiness to come to your home and to keep you from tribulation and misery: then you have turned the service which you owe to the true God and Father in heaven over to another, to a different god, to mammon. You have then severed your connection with the true God and have become an idolater.

O how watchful Christians should be against the evil desires of their hearts and against the tendency, latent in us all, to attribute to mammon what is to be expected from God alone, and to confer upon mammon the love, honour, and esteem which are due to God in heaven.

For, as said before, Christians also are tempted and assailed by evil thoughts and emotions which arise in their sinful hearts. But to Christians is given the power also to oppose and resist these emotions and to follow in the footsteps of their divine Lord, who, when Satan took Him up onto an exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, saying, "***All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me,***"² repulsed the ruler of this world, and said to him, "***Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.***"

2. Christ's Warning Against Worldly Cares In Particular.

The Lord, however, warns us not only against the service of mammon in general, but against worldly cares also in particular. Let us consider this second warning.

What are worldly cares? Not all the cares which we may have in this world are worldly cares. There are cares which are not only lawful, but even urged upon us. Does not Jesus prescribe upon us the care for our souls, saying in our Gospel, “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”?

Does not St. Paul say in his first epistle to Timothy, “*If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever*”?³ Is not every Christian, then, commanded to care and look out for the salvation of his own soul and for the spreading of God’s kingdom? and every father, to provide for his family and to procure for those who are dependent on him the necessities of life? Are these not cares which we have in this world?

No; worldly cares are cares of a different nature. Jesus says, “*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?*”

And again He says, “³¹ *Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’*”

See, then, these are the worldly cares against which we are warned, the disquieting, tormenting cares for the necessities of life that worry us and rob us of our sleep, disturb our peace, and picture before us a gloomy future.

These cares are the distrusting, unbelieving thoughts that merely look upon the shops that are available and in sight for the support of body and life, and do not take into consideration that there is a God who governs all, whose supplies are unlimited, and who has faithfully promised to provide in some way for His children.

All that is required of you is to be diligent in your calling, to try and make a living by lawful means, to be prudent in proportioning your expenses to what you have, to pray for your daily bread. But take no thought, be not troubled, do not fret and worry about the future. Flee these worldly cares, dispel them, and banish them from your mind.

And why does Christ warn us against worldly cares? Because they are sinful, heathenish, ineffectual, unnecessary, and hurtful.

They are sinful. They are a species of the service of mammon. For if you are worried so much and troubled about the food and clothing which you must have, in whom do you put your trust? In God? No; in the food and clothing, in mammon.

You fear that you might have to suffer want, and you do not trust in the Lord that He will procure for you what you need. It is for this reason that Christ says, ***“after all these things the Gentiles seek.”***

The Gentiles, the unbelievers, who do not know the living God, trouble their minds about the things of this world and are filled with care and anxiety, because they are without God in the world and do not understand His providence. These worldly cares are heathenish.

And they are ineffectual. Christ says, ***“²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?”*** In other words, *What will a man of low stature, a small man, gain by perplexing himself, and beating his brain, and continually taking thought how he might be a cubit, a few feet, taller? Will all this worrying make him a single inch taller? Will it not be altogether ineffectual?* Behold, just as ineffectual are all worldly cares. You will not gain by them, the thing for which you crave.

They are unnecessary also. How unnecessary these worldly cares are, Jesus shows by the example of the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field. ***“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?***

... 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.***

There is certainly no need whatever for these troublesome cares, when we see how plentifully God provides for such creatures as the birds in the air, and how beautifully He dresses the lilies of the field. And where does the necessity for these cares come in, when we consider the gracious promises of God?

Here Jesus compares the lesser to the greater. If God provides for the needs of the birds of the air, who don't even sow or reap or store up food in barns, will He not provide for your needs? You have the advantage over the birds of being

able to sow and reap and store up the fruits of the field in barns. You also have the advantage of being far more valuable in God's sight. He created you with an immortal soul. Can you imagine that God will be less concerned about you than about the birds?

God promises and says, ³³ ***But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*** How dare we doubt whether God will make good what He says and supply us with all the food and clothing we need, if we set our affection on things above and seek His kingdom?

Jesus warns us against worldly cares, lastly, because they are hurtful to us. He says, "³⁴ ***Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.***" Jesus is concerned not only with our spiritual, but also with our bodily welfare. He would like to see us free from cares and troubles in this life.

In other words, *Why do you want to make yourselves miserable by anticipating troubles? Why load down your soul with the cares and fears that belong to another day? Why be your own tormentor and make your passage through this world more dark and unpleasant than it needs to be by the apprehension of imaginary troubles, which perhaps, after all, may never come?*

And even if they do come, is it not bad enough to have to bear them when they are here? Why worry beforehand and make life more burdensome than it already is?

No; away with these cares! Trust in God, who had His beloved Son Jesus Christ die for your sins. Believe in His word and promise that He will not leave you nor forsake you. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Luke 16:9

² Matthew 4:9

³ 1 Timothy 5:8