

THOUGHTS ON MATTHEW 6:25–30

Notes by Tim Hegg

25 – *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?*

- The opening phrase, “For this reason I say to you,” points back to the previous context, in which Yeshua teaches His disciples and us, that “storing up treasures” on the earth must not be the primary purpose of the believer’s life. Rather, making one’s top priority to honor God and bring Him glory in all aspects of one’s life must be that which characterizes the child of God.
- Having God’s glory as the primary motivation in all aspects of one’s life in no way diminishes the need to be responsible with the good things God has given us, which includes providing for the future, being careful with one’s resources, etc. But the primary emphasis of Yeshua’s teaching here is given in the next phrase.
- “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.”- The Greek word translated “to worry” is *μεριμνάω* (*merimnao*) which means “to be apprehensive, have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned” and is a key word in our context, found five more times (Matt. 6:25, 27-28, 31, 34). The KJV translation “take no thought” is misleading, for Yeshua requires His disciples, in this very context, “to consider” the issue at hand by noting how God provides even for the birds (v. 26) and how the flowers of the field prove His faithfulness (v. 28). The issue of one’s own needs and how they will be met is not, therefore, to be neglected or relegated to something unworthy of thought and planning, along with diligent action. Even the petition for daily food in the “Disciples Prayer” (Matt 6:11) indicates that considerations about one’s own needs is expected. Yet being sustained in the future is not to be something that brings anxiety to the believer, for we know that all we have, even that which has been gained by diligent work and careful planning, is still that which comes from the gracious hand of God.

Yeshua uses “food and clothing” as a common phrase to describe the essentials of life. Note 1Tim 6:8, “If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”

- *Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?* - The point Yeshua is making in this rhetorical question is that one's existence (the life [soul], the body) entails far more than food and clothing, as necessary as these are. If God is the very Giver of life (cf. Jn 5:21), then surely He is able to provide all things necessary to sustain life. If we are dominated by anxiety over how we will obtain the necessities for life, we will miss the very purpose of our lives in the process, that purpose being to live out our faith by trusting God, that He will sustain us in accordance with His sovereign and gracious will. In the previous context of our verse, Yeshua designates only two masters: "You cannot serve God and mammon." Serving God means living by faith; serving mammon means being overwhelmed by anxiety.

26 – *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?*

- Yeshua's illustration argues from the lesser to the greater. If God provides for the birds of the air which were not created in God's image and thus not given the privilege of ruling over the earth (Gen 1:28), how much more is He willing and able to provide for those who bear His image, and even giving greater mercies and attention to those who are children adopted into His family!

In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Yeshua Messiah, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. (Eph 1:4-6)

- As believers in Yeshua, we know that we were "bought" with an infinite price. Surely our heavenly Father will care for us even as He has promised.

For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1Cor 6:20)

27 – *And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?*

- Once again Yeshua uses the word *merimnao*, "to worry, to be anxious." When anxiety overcomes us, what must we do? We must confess that which we know is true, and to cling by faith to the promises of God, for all of His promises are "yes" and "amen" because of Who Yeshua is and what He has accom-

plished for all who are His.

For as many as are the promises of God, in Him [Yeshua] they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. (2Cor 1:20)

- The Scriptures teach us that God, Who is sovereign over all and brings about His will in the hosts of heaven and among the people of the earth (Dan 4:35), has ordained the days of our lives. Therefore, we can trust in His all-sustaining power to enable us to fulfill the life He has given us to live.

Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. (Ps 139:16)

28–30 – *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!*

- Once again the key word is “worry” or “to be anxious” (*merimnao*). In the same way that one should not fret about tomorrow’s food, so one should not be anxious over how one’s other basic life’s needs will be met. Clearly clothing is used in this context to indicate the primary necessities of life.
- In Yeshua’s analogy, the flower of the field is put forth as a symbol of enduring beauty maintained by the hand of God. Moreover, the beauty of the flower (regardless of whether the word means “lily” or some other kind of flower) exceeds that of Solomon’s raiments, which must have been lavish owing to his legendary wealth.
- Even more, the flower of the field enjoys a very short existence, being cut down in the harvest or wilting at the change of seasons. If God takes care to adorn such transitory figures, surely He will care for His chosen ones, purchased at the cost of His own Son’s saving work: His death, resurrection, ascension, and continual intercession for His own.
- *You of little faith!* – This phrase is actually one word in the Greek, *ὀλιγόπιστος*, *oligopistos* (*oligos*, “little, small” + *pistos*, “faith”) found also Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). Interestingly, every time *oligopistos* “one of little faith” is used in Matthew, it is addressed

to the disciples, so it does not mean “one who lacks faith” but one who, though he believes, is not willing to exercise faith to the extent that he should.

- It is true that the initial faith a person possesses in order to trust in God and His Messiah Yeshua for eternal salvation, is a gift from God and not something produced by the person himself. Paul is clear about this in Eph 2:8–9,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- The demonstrative “that” refers both to “grace” and “faith” meaning that the salvation and the faith by which it is obtained are both a gift from God and not something manufactured by the one who believes. Thus, Paul specifically states in Rom 4:5 that believing is not a work.

But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.... (Rom 4:5)

- Yet once the initial gift of faith is given, it remains the duty of the believer to manifest this true saving faith by more and more submitting to the work of the indwelling Spirit, and thus increasingly demonstrating one’s faith through a life of obedience to God and separated from “the world,” that is, from all that is contrary to the righteousness and holiness of God.
- So it is said of Abraham that he did not “become weak” in faith, but rather “grew strong in faith” (Rom 4:19–20). The believer, born from above through the gift of his initial faith, is given the ability and opportunity to more and more live out his faith by conforming his life to God’s righteous ways and thereby trusting God in all of life’s vicissitudes.
- It is the consistent attendance to the means of grace given to us by God that enables us to grow in faithfulness. These means of grace include: knowing Him through the Scriptures, being regularly in prayer, assembling together for mutual encouragement and edification, and thus seeking to honor Him in all of one’s life.

He is also head of the body, the *ekklesia*; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. (Col 1:18)