



# The Narrow Way

#5

*- The Sermon on the Mount -*

From the Pulpit Ministry of Christ E Free Church of Saegertown

June-July 2020



# “The Narrow Way”

## Part 5



The Sermon on the Mount, taken from the words of Jesus

Matthew chapters 5-7

"Enter by the narrow gate..."

Matthew 7:13a

## Table of Contents

- ❖ Treasures of the Kingdom, p.5
- ❖ The World's First Christmas, p15
- ❖ Faith Questions for a Favorable Future, p.21
- ❖ The Problem with Anxiety, p.27
- ❖ The Prescription for Anxiety, p.33
- ❖ The Prescription for Anxiety, pt2, p.35
- ❖ The Prescription for Anxiety, pt3, p.43
- ❖ Priority #1, p.52
- ❖ Usurping the Authority of God, p .61
- ❖ Speaking Words of Life and Death, p.69
- ❖ Speak Words of Life and Death, pt.2, p.77
- ❖ ABCs, p.91
- ❖ LifeLine Resources: Free Downloadable Resources, p.93

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: “The Narrow Way”

Dec. 13 2020

**Sermon Title:** “Treasures in Heaven” , **Pt.2**

**TEXT:** Mat.6:19-24f

**MATTHEW:** ‘Thy Kingdom Come”

**Theme :** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness”

*In ch.6, Jesus begins by addressing The Practice of our Righteousness.  
Or the Living out of our faith, and its effect upon the world around us.*

## **INTRODUCTION: 12/13/20**

### **READ Mat. 6:19-24**

If we believe there is a God, then we must consider, “What does God expect of us?” And if there is life after death, we must likewise wonder, “How can we prepare for that afterlife?” How we live in this present life and our motives for living, will affect what we will experience in the life to come. What are our greatest desires and motives now? What will our life after death be like and what will be our treasures in heaven?

### **LIFE’S MASTERS**

(6:24

\* In the Sermon on the Mount, it seems that “treasures” and “rewards” are synonymous. I’d encourage you to read chapter 6 and see for yourself.

**Mat 6:24** (24) "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

**Ex. 20:3**) You shall have no other gods before me.”

The term “Master” here is our NT word for “lord”. It can refer to a cultural address similar to our “sir”. It is often used to refer to one in place of authority over another person. It can refer to a master or owner of a slave.

Generically, in this context it is alluding to a source of compelling influence or motivation upon another person’s life. But in this Correction in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus deals with a more specific use of the word.

## 2 Masters”

### (i.) Love one hate the other (v.24a)

(v.24a) "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other

Interestingly the word Jesus uses here for “love” is the word for God’s Agape love. It is unconditional love and devotion. The idea seems to be that we can love others or some other master other than God, with the same unconditional, supreme love that should be reserve for God and God alone. Any false god or false master is of our own making; and they are those that receive from us, “worship”, love or devotion that is deserving only of God.

### (ii.) Devoted to one or despise the other (v.24b)

(v.24b) "or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other....

A false god or false Master is that which opposes our greatest desire being God Himself. It is that which competes in our minds and hearts for His supremacy in our lives. A false master is perhaps, that which we ascribe God-like attributes to or worth or even worship. Each person has a throne for your life and the occupancy level for that throne is 1.

### **We cannot Serve God and Wealth (v24c)**

(24) "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

**You cannot serve God and money.**

\* “Serve’ is to be bound to; owned by; fully ruled or even enslaved by. So here, very clearly, Jesus is warning us that money can become for us, as “master” and it competes for that single spot of dominance and influence in our lives.

### (iii.) Fully Devoted (v.24b)

**Jas 4:8** ESV Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you **double-minded**.

James warns us of having Split or divided affections, thinking that we can have 2 masters on the same throne.

**\*\* In world missions** this has always been a challenge. When a group of people were reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ for the very first time and the church began to grow; there was often the tendency of their new found faith in Jesus being “added” to their existing beliefs and objects of worship. There was syncretism and spiritism.

Jesus was added to other idols. He was added to ancestor worship. He was added to ancient tribal religious customs. He was added into the pre-existing array of other false gods, like the god of the sun, the god of fertility, the spirit of the eagle, or water or the god of agriculture, etc. etc. etc.

While at the Aeropagus in Athens, Luke mentions that Paul addressed the “Unknown god”, of the culture there. Many gods and one unknown or mentioned just in case they had accidentally left one out, so as not to offend it.

There is the tendency for us today to do the same thing. We can make Jesus a category or we can assign Him a compartment of our life to rule, but we tend to decide what, when, how long and how intrusive He can be in our lives. For many reached in missions, and seems prevalent today; Jesus is not immediately their sole focus of faith, but he is added as one more category or compartment of an already complicated and demanding assortment of gods or objects of worship in our lives and practices.

### **(ii.) God “and” Wealth / God “of” wealth**

**v.24) “You can’t serve both God and wealth”.** Yet some would say; “Oh yes I can!” I can keep Jesus as a very important part of my life. “Part” as being a category of life; a category or a segment or a minimal permissible area of jurisdiction or compartment. I have a compartment, a time and a place for Jesus; Morning devotions; evening prayer; times of crisis or in church. God is in a compartment or perhaps more practically speaking, we have God caged and we let him out at certain times or at certain places.

**“You can’t serve both God and wealth”.**

Or we might put it “God ***OF*** wealth.”. Wealth is not merely money, but the treasure of the heart; riches upon which we might trust in and find hope, peace and satisfaction in possessing. God and wealth – Scripture specifically refers to it as God and Mammon. Mammon was a cultural reference to money. But it also has its origin in the Syrian deity “Mamona”, which was thought to be the god of riches or wealth.

Jesus was likely using that familiar reference to send a message that it is not money or even wealth that is the danger, but the love of money or the worship of wealth. Mark Twain once stated: “The ***Lack*** of money is the root of all evil.” Obviously that was one of his play on words that made him so famous.

When Paul wrote to young Timothy, he warned him...

**1Ti 6:10-11** KJV (10) For the ***love*** of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (11) But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

The issue was not necessarily the lack of money or that money itself was the root of all evil, but rather and specifically the Love of money is the root of all evil. Being covetous toward wealth, or the idolatry of money. The Lord of Wealth is a false god.

We think we can juggle 2 masters. We think this warning doesn't refer to me. Remember, Jesus was not addressing merely pagan unbeliever, but He was addressing a variety of “followers” with very diverse levels of faith. And that would sort of trickle down to us today.

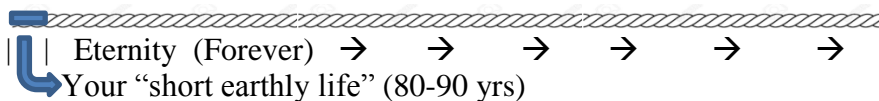
**Pro 4:23** ESV Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Patrick Morley of, Man in the Mirror Ministries states: “There is the sense that wherever we are right now, whatever you are experiencing- we are partially responsible for what happens next.” In other words, we can responsibly guard our hearts and our intake, interests and attractions, or we can be irresponsible and fail to guard our heart, and in so doing,

may result in tainting the well of life or poisoning all the motives of our heart.

So Again: For Life after death – how can we prepare for it?

## LifeLine (rope)



Its about protecting what we allow inside our minds, and thoughts; our hearts and desires. It’s about focusing more of our earthly time preparing for the forever life to come.

**Rom 6:16** ESV (16) Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

So the warning of having 2 masters or lords is appropriate for us today as we focus on Advent.

### *Jesus as Lord and Master.*

**Luk 2:8-11** ESV (8) And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (9) And an angel of the **Lord** appeared to them, and the glory of the **Lord** shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. (10) And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. (11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the **Lord**.

“**Lord**”: Who is the angels referring to? The **Lord** God Almighty of heaven. 3 times “lord” is mentioned and each time it refers to the Lord God Almighty of Heaven. So when the angels refer to “Christ the **Lord** ...” it is stating that is Jesus, the Savior that was born, is God the Son, The **Lord** God Almighty of heaven and all of creation. He is the One who is supremely worthy to solely occupy the throne of our lives, unaccompanied, and uncontested by anyone or anything else.

Jesus as Lord. And if we make Jesus our Greatest Treasure while on earth, He will be our greatest reward when we get to heaven.

### **So What will be our rewards in heaven?**

**(1) Crown** 1Cor.9:25) –

**1Cor. 9:25-27 MKJV** And everyone who strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Then those truly that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. (26) So then I run, not as if I were uncertain. And so I fight, not as one who beats the air. (27) But I buffet my body, and lead it captive, lest proclaiming to others I myself might be rejected.

“**Crown**” is probably not something we actually wear on our heads – but a non-descript reference to a reward for faithfulness that only in heaven, will be fully revealed.

**(2) White Robes** (Rev.7:13-14)

**Rev 7:14 MKJV** And I said to him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes, and have whitened them in the blood of the Lamb.

White robes will be robes in righteousness we receive in heaven for trusting in Jesus Christ and who lost their lives in the face of great persecution because of the “word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”

**(3) Opportunities to co-reign** with Christ (Rev.20:6) -

**Rev 20:6 MKJV** Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. The second death has no authority over these, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years.

We aren’t told all that this will mean, other than we will be entrusted with certain assignments or responsibilities in the life to come that we will carry out in the name of, and under the authority of our Lord Jesus.

**(4) Pleasures forever more** (Ps.16:11) –

**Psa 16:7-11 MKJV** I will bless Jehovah, who has given me wisdom; my heart also instructs me in the nights. (8) I have set Jehovah always before Me; because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved. (9) Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices; My flesh also shall rest in hope; (10) For You will not leave My soul in hell; You will not

allow Your Holy One to see corruption. (11) You will make Me know the way of life; in Your presence is fullness of joys. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

We must be careful not to ascribe what we know as earthly joys or necessarily human pleasures here, but that which is beyond knowing in this life. The greatest joy and pleasure will be that God Himself will be there as our chief Source of joy and greatest eternal pleasure .

**\*\* I believe the specific** and detailed descriptions of our eternal rewards are not clearly revealed because if they were the rewards themselves could become our motive and our pursuits. Rewards are a by-product of a life of motives and actions that are pure considered before God.

**(5) God's Home** - Heaven itself is our reward (John 14:1-4; Rev.21-22)

We will share God's home. Jesus told His disciples He was going to prepare a place for us, so that where He is, we too will be there with him. We can read Rev. chapters 21 & 22 to get some idea of what that eternal dwelling place will be like. Yet even then, our human ability to grasp that heaven reality will be limited.

**(6) God Himself** will be our greatest reward. (Gen.15:1)

**Gen 15:1 MKJV** After these things the Word of Jehovah came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, **I am** your shield and your exceeding great reward.

The Lord God Almighty of heaven will be our greatest reward. This is Good News of Great Joy for All People who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

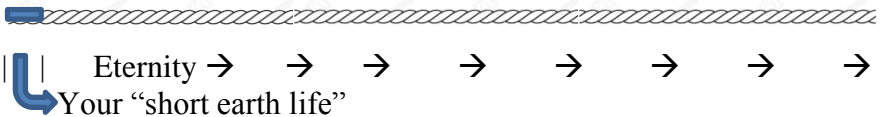
Peter assures us that our rewards are "Kept secure for us in Heaven"

**1Pe 1:3-5 ESV** (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, **kept in heaven** for you, (5) who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

What Jesus as Savior and Lord holds in store for us who fully trust in Him!! Our faith and devotion and our obedience and submission to His will in this life, be richly rewarded in the life to come.

**There is a God and there is Life after death. Doesn't it make sense to do what we can in this life, to prepare the life eternal?**

### LifeLine (rope)



Paul writes of our rewards to be given in the life to come.

**2Co 5:9-11** ESV (9) So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. (10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (11) Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

I wanted to include some additional references to Rewards in Scripture.

**OT REWARD** - = wages (H4904) refers to God's good favor.

2 Sam.22:21 – **“Reward”** – earthly reward; protection from enemies.

Is.40:10 (H7939) **“Reward”** is being with God.

**NT REWARD:**

Mat.5:12 (G3408) – fruit of our endeavors.

6:1, 6:6 – (G0591) – to pay; to give away recompense,

Col.2:18 (G2603) – Deprive; umpire against.

Rev.20:12 (G2919)– “Judge” or select; approve; rule over.

Judged according to works, all works are a testimony against us, condemning us to our sentence of eternal separation from God.

2Cor.5:10 – “Judgment seat” Bema – Elevated site; deeds, whether “good or evil”. (Rev.20:12,13)

**Imagine:** Going to visit a family members over the holidays. And when you arrive, they are like: “Nice to see you. Now what did you bring me?” And you realize, it was not you they were glad to see, but the gifts they expected you to present.

God Himself will be are greatest reward.

**\*\* Rewards:** Some rewards in heaven and I think perhaps some of the greatest rewards in heaven – will be totally unexpected, from our own personal perspective. What we tend to value as treasures, God does not necessarily value as treasures. What God may plan to give as a reward, may not be what we had in mind. So I believe our greatest rewards in heaven will not be things we may have been expecting.

Some of our greatest rewards may come from a kind and encouraging word you spoke to someone that you thought was pretty much in passing, but the effect it made on the other person was so monumental that it can only be fully realized once it is revealed in heaven’s reward ceremony.

Our greatest rewards or treasures in heaven will not be how much money we made or how expensive the thing that we were able to purchase and flaunt while on earth; but perhaps how many people you were able to help direct to Jesus Christ in this life; how many people you shared words of hope with that helped them get through one more of life’s struggle; or how many people you helped over life’s hump in the name of Jesus; using the filthy lucre of our earthly life for the purpose of helping some hurting, and weak people, in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Heaven’s greatest rewards may not be distributed to those who built massive companies, lucrative retirement accounts or equally massive reputations for themselves; but is reserved for those who gave a drink of water to a thirsty beggar or who held and consoled a crying child; Those who visited the sick and the imprisoned and gave of their time and resources to help those who really couldn’t help themselves.

## THE NARROW WAY

Those who helped the helpless; Did favors for those who are unable of repaying the favors. Doing things that help others and advance God's Kingdom and never being noticed for doing it. Supporting the weak, ministering peace to the troubled and reassuring those who need assurance and hope in the name of Jesus.

Jesus taught that things pursued and accomplished for the cause of Jesus should be for us, the greatest of treasures and rewards.

**Mat 13:44-46** ESV (13) "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.  
(45) "**Again**, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Our heavenly rewards cannot be fully grasped, until on that great day when we stand before the Lord and receive our eternal rewards – only then can the fullness of joy and appreciation of what He has laid up for us, will be fully revealed. And how glorious it will be.

**1Cor 2:9** MKJV But as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard," nor has it entered into the heart of man, "the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

Christian: How amazing it is, that the Greatest Reward awaiting us in heaven is our Greatest Treasure while here on earth. Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us – the Lord God Almighty of heaven is present and available to us at any moment in this life. And He deserves 1<sup>st</sup> place and single occupancy on our life's throne.

This is the glory of Advent; At this moment, God is with us.

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

Dec.20, 2020

**SERMON:** "THE WORLD'S FIRST CHRISTMAS"

**TEXT:** MAT.6:25FF

**MATTHEW:** 'Thy Kingdom Come'

**Theme :** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness"

*So Jesus begins by addressing The Practice of our Righteousness. Or the Living out of our faith.*

- \*Do Not lay up for yourselves Treasures on Earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. (6:19)

**READ:** Rev.19:11-16 / Phil. 2:6-11

## **INTRODUCTION:**

With the Corona Virus, many are anxious about contracting the virus, about wearing the masks, about the Government regulations and shut-downs, China's part in it, vaccinations, the economy small businesses, churches not able to meet.... Whew. We have plenty to be anxious over. All of this threatens to mask what means most at this time; that is, "What does Advent mean to You?"

Anxiety means to worry over that which is uncertain; to be troubled over life issues.

Today we look at "The World's first Christmas". The birth of Jesus was such a monumental, world changing event, yet at the time, apart from the family, the shepherds and the rest of the world was mostly unaware of Christ's birth in Bethlehem. Yet from that hand full of people, the good news of the Son of God and King of the Jews went far and wide. Even as a baby, the people who found Jesus were quick to spread the Good News of Great Joy for All People.

The world still needs the Good News today, because we all need the Great joy that the Good news brings.

## **A WORLD OF ANXIETY**

(Mat.6:25)

\* We have so much to be anxious about. We need a little good news. Yet even in Jesus day, people were well aware of anxiety.

**Mat 6:25-30** ESV (25) "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (27) And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? (28) And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

This "life" is about life in the Kingdom of Heaven, and Christmas is all about the birth of the King of that kingdom.

## **The First Advent**

\* Jesus was born into a world of anxiety and anguish. Emotional. Mental. Political. Governmental. Religious. That problem describes every culture of mankind that has ever existed. And for Jesus, it was no different.

**THE FIRST ADVENT:** The Son of God was born into a world of imperfections and anxiety, a world of anxiety over their own broken humanity. Corrupt and Oppressive Government. Social Injustice and Prejudices. Economy Instability and Hopelessness. Religious Lawlessness and Hypocrisy (Mat.23;28). Cultural Idolatry and Depravity. He was born into a world of darkness in need of the Light of life.

Sounds like a great time for some very good news. People - devout Jews – were anxious about the birth of the Messiah.

Following the last message from God in Malachi, God was silent for 400 yrs. The last message in the Old Testament Jewish Scriptures was the praise of the coming Messiah of God and His messenger.

**Mal 3:1** ESV "Behold, I send my Messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold,

he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

[cp.4:2-5]

Hope? Joy? Peace? Messiah? God Himself?

\* First we see Simeon was an anxious character. They waited 400 years with no further word awaiting the fulfillment from the Lord. Why no word? No more promise of God, no more reminders. Why no further reassurance from God's promised Son of Righteousness?

You know if God says something it is so, whether He repeats Himself or not.

**Luk 2:25-26** ESV (25) Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. (26) And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

(1) He was righteous. He wasn't perfect, but was trusting and Living for God.

(2) He was Devout. After 400 years, He was one person, who was still trusting God's word and looking for the Messiah. He was determined and faith filled. He was carefully holding on to the hope of the age old Scriptures.

(3) HE was waiting. This indicates he was believing and longing for the Messiah. He was personally ready and assured. He was focused and was filled with a heightened sense of anticipation.

\* \* We also see Anna: fasting and daily seeking

**Luk 2:36-37** ESV (36) And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, (37) and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.

(1) She remained in the temple, which was the physical place of worship. The temple was the sanctuary of God.

(2) She was worshiping with fasting, not to please herself, but to sacrifice food to seek and meditate on God.

(3) She fasted and prayed night and day. Not an hour or prayer, nor even a day of prayer, but she had a lifestyle of prayer and seeking God and His promises.

This description of Anna, depict her as a consistent, unwavering elderly lady who was fully devoted to and fully assured that this baby was the promise Messiah.

\* \* \* Then we see the **Wise Men** – researching, planning, believing, travelling, discovering,

**Mat 2:1-2** ESV (1) Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, (2) saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

(1) They radically sought our Jesus.

(2) They were seeking, Asking and searching for Jesus, desiring to know and to see the Messiah.

(3) They were “businessmen”, spiritual businessmen. Their religion was serious. They meant business. Perhaps they were more spiritual minded than the religious leaders of their day.

Christmas is about Anticipation – anticipation of the promised Messiah.

**ILL)** I can remember as a child, watching a TV commercial for Heinz Ketchup. A mother had her son a hamburger and French fries on a plate. The Mom held the ketchup bottle at about a 45 degree angle and the little boy was smiling with heightened attention, as he watched and waited for the ketchup to make its way down the neck of the bottle and out onto his French fries. And in the background Carly Simon was singing; 🎵 “Anticipation, its makin me late – Its keeping me waiting” 🎵

The Wise men, Anna and Simeon were those who knew the promises and were waiting with great anticipation for the arrival of Messiah and the fulfillment of those promises.

## The Second Advent

With Christ’s first Advent, was the promise of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent or the return of Christ in the last days. As it was with the first Advent,

Scripture promises that at *the* **SECOND ADVENT** of Christ, it will be in a time and into a world full of imperfections and anxiety. A time and place of Fallen and Broken Humanity. Corrupt and Oppressive Government. Social Injustice and Prejudice. Economy Instability and Hopelessness. Religious Lawlessness and Hypocrisy(Mat.23:28). Cultural Idolatry and Depravity.

Every Generation has had its share of trials that have caused them to think, “the Lord’s return must be near”. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent will be much like the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent only much, much worse. It will be the time of the man of Lawlessness being revealed; when God’s clock is winding down and his calendar is turning its final page.

At this time, Christ Himself will not come as a baby, but as a valiant and victorious king; great and glorious. [**READ.** Rev. 19:11-16.]

## THE RESPONSE TO CHRISTMAS / ADVENT

\* Christmas is the message of God’s incarnation as the Son of God taking on human flesh and being born as a baby.

**Php 2:5-11** ESV (5) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, (6) who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (9) Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It was Good News of Great Joy for all people. In our world full of self – we tend to emphasize or supersize ourselves. We present ourselves and experiences as bigger than life. Jesus minimized Himself. He humbled himself and emptied himself. He lowered Himself, deferred to others – other’s interests, other’s needs, other’s pain and grief. He addressed sin from a loving perspective.

The most dangerous thing about Christmas is becoming so familiar with it, or distracted by it, that we don't really focus on the person of Jesus and why He did what He did.

**CONCLUSION:**

Let Christmas remind us of the Baby. Let Christmas remind us of Christ's purpose, death and resurrection. Let Christmas cause us to continuously look ahead for His great and glorious return; not knowing the day or the hour.

But certain and assured that He is coming... Be trusting Jesus Christ as Savior, living for Him as our Lord, telling others about Him until he arrives and we are caught up with Him.

What does Advent mean to You?

Where are the Simeon, the Annas, and the Wise Men of our day? Perhaps some are right here among us or may be developing right here.

The message and ministry of Christmas is still needed and welcomed among many.

(1) Angel Tree gathering – many were very appreciative for our outreach for the holidays with their loved ones incarcerated.

(2) The shut-ins we were caroling to, were thankful that we thought of them and were so appreciative of the message of Christ's birth from their own church family.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent – as we await the return of our Lord Jesus, Let us be the Simeon, the Annas, and the Wise Men, who longingly anticipate our Lord's return and look to share our assurance of Christ with those around us.

**TEXT:** MAT.6:25FF

**MATTHEW:** 'Thy Kingdom Come'

**Theme :** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness"

*So Jesus begins by addressing The Practice of our Righteousness. Or the Living out of our faith.*

- \*Do Not lay up for yourselves Treasures on Earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. (6:19)
- You cannot serve God and Wealth (6:24)

READ

**Mat 6:25-30** ESV (25)"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?** (27) **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?** (28) And **why are you anxious about clothing?** Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, **will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

**Php 4:6-7** ESV do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (7) And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**1Pe 5:6-7** ESV Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, (7) casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. [Ps. 55:22]

What a great focus for our end of the year Message.

This morning we focus on a bit of a sub-series in the Sermon on the Mount. This will be focused on "Faith Questions for a Favorable Future". These will be taken from the questions that Jesus asks in this

passage. Today we will look at “The Problem with Anxiety”. Lord Willing next week we will consider “The Prescription for Anxiety”. And our last in this series will be “The Promise through Anxiety”.

I never cease to be amazed how these lessons from the Sermon on the Mount are so relevant for us today and so applicable. It is as though Jesus was standing here with us today and presenting His Sermon on the Mount in the year 2020.

Lets start with a few questions of our own. (1) This year, what has worried you the most? (2) What was the outcome of the things that you worried most about? (3) How did worrying about that affect your life as a whole? How did it affect your mental and emotional health? How did your worrying affect your closest relationships?

Anxiety is a little like body odor. You may think you don’t have any body odor, but those around you know... *you do*. And we may think we don’t really suffer from anxiety, when sometimes those closest to us know.... *we do*. We may think our anxiety doesn’t affect anyone else, because we keep it in our head, but that most often, is not the case. Anxiety is like body odor, in that you often don’t detect, but others do.

## THE PROBLEM WITH ANXIETY (6:25)

\* The Problem with Anxiety is that it is a thief. It steals our hope, our encouragement, our peace, our joy, and can even erode our faith over time.

**Mat 6:25-30** ESV (25)"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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?

One thing we need to be made aware of, if we didn’t already know it, is that Anxiety is a thief. He can steal all that God wants to bring into our lives, if we allow him to.

\* \* Secondly, Anxiety never works alone. Once anxiety gains access

into your life, he is immediately on the phone to call in his backup; saying “Hey. I’m in. Gather all the boys and come on in. The front door is wide open.”

So, (1) Anxiety is a thief. (2) No one is exempt from his work. And (3) Anxiety never works alone. He always brings back-up.

## What is Anxiety?

Here is our working definition.

**(i.) Anxiety defined:** The inability to set aside a worry over an upcoming event or uncertain outcome; anxiety is excessive concern over what might or could occur in the future. Anxiety is not based on reality, but on apparent possibilities. Do you notice all the “ifs” in our definition?

**(ii.) Synonyms for Anxiety:** Unceasing stress; Increasing worry. Growing apprehension. Deep consternation; Sounds like an abdominal problem doesn’t it. It can certainly lead to that. And all these things are thieves that rob us of many of our valuables; like our hope, our encouragement, peace, joy, and can even shake or erode our faith.

**(iii.) Antonyms for Anxiety:** Confidence; certainty; peace, hope, security; assurance. These are things the devil wants to steal, kill and destroy and he often begins and gains access into our inner world, through anxiety.

## Close Associates of Anxiety

\* When anxiety enters into a life, he has many close associates and connections that he can call in for back-up.

**(i.) Anxiety has been known** to keep close company with *despair*.

**Eze 4:16 MKJV** And He said to me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem. And they shall eat bread by weight, and with *anxiety*. And they shall drink water by measure, and in *despair*.

Anxiety often works together with despair which is basically a sense of hopelessness.

**(ii.)** Another close associate of anxiety is called *Fear*.

**Isa 35:4** ESV Say to those who have an *anxious* heart, "Be strong; *fear* not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God..."

Anxiety thinks the worst and fosters fear. Remember anxiety is not based on reality, but on apparent possibilities. And when we entertain those kinds of house guests, then they open the door and welcome Fear into the house.

This fear is intense and refers to terror. Anxiety, fear, hopelessness, depression, pessimism and on it goes. And oh how all these associates can cloud the mind, confuse our thinking and becomes like a *smoke screen* that makes us think the worst, when in fact there may well be no real dangers.

**ILL)** As a kid, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July we used to “acquire” smoke bombs. Now smoke bombs didn’t explode or catch fire, they just spewed out smoke. Harmless right? We would get these smoke bombs and would ride our bikes around, find a parking lot with a bunch of cars and we’d like a smoke bomb, toss it under a parked car, then ride to an observation point and just wait for the action to start. People discovering the smoke and thinking their car was on fire. It was mayhem.

Or we’d throw a lit smoke bomb into a store’s garbage dumpster and wait for the hysteria that followed. We would light a smoke bomb and then just watch the mayhem, havoc, bedlam, the sheer panic, pandemonium and hysteria that took place. Nothing was really going on, but the smoke confused people and caused them to think the very worse was taking place. We had a great time.

Anxiety does exactly that; it has a jolly time causing a mental smoke screen and causes us to think the very worst, about the apparent possibilities, of our circumstances.

### **A Faith Question for a Favorable Future**

\* Are we seeing how our mental and emotional health can so easily become to destabilized?

**Mat 6:25b** ESV (25)"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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?***

It seems Jesus is referring to the contrast between our temporary, earthly human life, and our eternal, heavenly spiritual life that we have through faith in Jesus Christ.

**#1 Faith Question: “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”(v25b)**

Before we go any further; how would you answer Faith Question #1? Yes or no? I take the reference to “life” here as not being merely our earthly life, but our eternal spiritual heavenly life. Isn’t your eternal life in Christ more than food and the spiritual life more than clothing? I think Jesus is stating that food and clothing are representative of all the things in our temporary, physical earthly life that we worry about, that causes us anxiety; things that robs us of our hope, peace, joy, strength, encouragement, purpose, and perhaps even erodes our faith.

This “LIFE” is our eternal existence, as opposed to anything earthly we may want or think we need or deserve.

So what are some things that can cause us consternation, worry or anxiety? Certainly Covid has. Certainly the elections have. Surely the violence in our larger cities over racism have caused us consternation. Our family problems, discomforts, personal preferences and unrealized expectations can cause such consternation and excessive worry, building to anxiety, then opening the door to despair. .

***Is not Life more than Covid? Is not Life more than*** more than the ***Elections? Is not Life more than*** [fill in the blank here] with that which you worry about the most.

If you have a Problem with Anxiety and are plagued with worry, I’d urge you to consider these “Faith Questions for a Favorable Future” and “***The Prescription for Anxiety***” next week.

**CONCLUSION:**

There is good anxiety that can affect us when we are outside the family of God. Good anxiety is the worry or unresolved concern for those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior. Without Jesus Christ, they are restricted from God's blessings, His help, and answers to our prayers and more.

If we are without Christ, then we are outside of his help. When we trust in Jesus, He doesn't simply send help or give us his blessings, but he *Brings* them. When we trust in Christ we don't merely receive His salvation, but we receive Jesus Christ Himself.

---

"But to all who did **receive** him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God..." -John 1:12 (ESV)

---

And when we receive Jesus Christ by faith, we receive all He has to bring into our lives; in terms of help, blessings, hope, peace, joy, patience, endurance, encouragement, love, forgiveness and much, much more.

On the other hand, if we reject Jesus Christ, we reject all He has for us and all we need from Him for a victorious life, and particularly for victory over anxiety and all his associates that he brings with him.

If you haven't – believe in the Lord Jesus Christ today, and be forgiven for your sins, experience salvation for your eternal soul and receive the home in heaven which He has prepared for you.

This is the first and most important step in dealing with anxiety and his associates.

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

January 3, 2021

**SERIES:** "FAITH QUESTIONS FOR A FAVORABLE FUTURE "

**SERMON:** "THE ***PRESCRIPTION*** FOR ANXIETY", **REMEDY #1** **TEXT:** MAT.6:25FF

**MATTHEW:** 'Thy Kingdom Come'

**Theme :** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness"

*So Jesus begins by addressing The Practice of our Righteousness. Or the Living out of our faith.*

\* READ

**Mat 6:25-30** ESV (25)"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?** (27) **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?** (28) And **why are you anxious about clothing?** Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, **will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

I never cease to be amazed with how our series of studying through the Sermon on the Mount which was presented 2,000 years ago - is so relevant to life in USA today - for this New Year. I want to begin by acknowledging that some people who are overly anxious; there are certain times when physical doctors and some form of medication may be needed.

So as we enter into this New Year together, we must do so trusting fully in God's faithfulness in every area of life. We trust God for food and clothing, but not merely for those earthly things but also for providing for us and keeping us in all areas, in all our concerns - in order to keep the thief of anxiety and his cohorts at bay.

2021 must be for the church, a time of determined resolve for the body of Christ to trust God's faithfulness in areas of health, in areas of politics and elections, Governmental corruption and oppression, even trusting God for the leadership in other nations.

## **REVIEW:**

Last Sunday we began our focus on a bit of a sub-series in the Sermon on the Mount. This will be focused on "**Faith Questions for a Favorable Future**". These will be taken from the questions that Jesus asks in this passage. Last week we looked at **"The Problem with Anxiety"** (6:25)

**First:** The Problem with Anxiety is that it is a thief. It steals our hope, our encouragement, our peace, our joy, and can even erode our faith over time.

**And Secondly:** Anxiety never works alone. Once anxiety gains access into your life, he immediately calls in his associates for back-up.

And our "First Faith Question for a Favorable Future" was

**#1 Faith Question:** **"Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"**(v25b) Our answer was intended to be: **"Yes Lord! By All Means!"** My Christian life is far more [valuable] than food, and drink and clothing.

## **THE PRESCRIPTION FOR ANXIETY** (6:26-29)

\* God Offers a Divine Remedy for Worry.

**Mat 6:25-30** ESV (25) "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. **1Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?** (26) Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **2Are you not of more value than they?**

One problem with Anxiety is that he is a dirty, rotten, low down, no good thief. The Greater Problem with Anxiety is that he doesn't work alone. Once he infiltrates a life, he calls in his back-up and together they

steal, loot, and pillage an entire life of hope, peace, joy and purpose.

So what can be done to begin to *remedy* anxiety over the overwhelming concerns of this life? Thankfully Jesus does not merely identify our problem; He shares His Prescription that can bring His Remedy to work in our lives.

When we have problems, we want quick fixes right? We want a pill to take to alleviate our unpleasant symptoms. Or we look for a switch to flip, to immediately switch off our troubles. But JESUS doesn't take us in that direction. Anxiety doesn't just appear in our lives all at once, but rather it tends to seep in, build up, gather steam and increase little by little, yet more and more - like a pressure cooker.

And just as anxiety doesn't come in all at once but over time, getting victory over anxiety is also not a quick fix but a process and allowing Christ's prescription for anxiety to be applied to our lives for anxiety to be dealt with more effectively.

### **Remedy #1: "Look" (6:26)**

\* What we must NOT do, is allow ourselves to respond: "Oh is that all?" We may be expecting something a little more substantial from Jesus; maybe we would prefer something even more miraculous, after all ..isn't that what Jesus does?

Notice in in John chapter 9, Jesus met a man blind from birth. Jesus spit on the ground and mixed it into mud which he applied to the blind man's eyes. *Then...*

<p><b>John 9:7</b> and said to him, "<b>Go, wash in the pool of Siloam</b>"... So he went and washed and came back seeing.</p>
--

It seems the power of God, working together with the obedience of the blind man came together and a miracle did occur and the man received sight.

In 2 Kings, a ruler named Namaan had leprosy. He called for "the man of God", Elisha the prophet who was known for some pretty amazing and miraculous feats. *Then...*

**2Ki 5:10** ESV ...Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean."

Elisha didn't even go to the man, but instead sent his own servant with his message. At first Namaan was upset and thought, "why go wash in the Jordan? Are there no rivers closer to home I could go wash in?" He was even expecting a more sensational or miraculous act or word from Elisha. Yet, eventually Namaan did as Elisha prescribed and the power of God, together with the obedience of the person in need and indeed a miracle did occur; and he was healed of the leprosy.

In both instances, the remedy was not instantaneous, and there was something the person had to do in order to receive the blessing they were looking for. I would venture to say that anyone whom God has ever instructed to do some thing, with the promise that they'd receive a blessing, and they did it – I'd venture to say none of them would say they regretted it or that it was a waste of time.

Are you filled with worry, anxiety, fear, darkness, confusion, dread --- Take the prescription of Jesus and "*LOOK*". OK then, what are we to be looking at?

**(i.) Look at the birds of the air: -**

**Mat 6: (26)** **Look** at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

**LOOK** --at the birds. Observe their activities. Take note of what they are **not** doing.

**Q:** What are they **not** doing? They are **not** sowing or reaping. Yet they are eating. How do the birds make it?

They are not frantically finding morsels and then building barns to store up as many morsels as possible, for their future needs; yet day by day; day after day - their needs are being met; over and over and over again their needs are faithfully met.

**Psa 84:3** ESV Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.

Observe and Pay attention here to what Jesus is teaching us in Mat. 6:26. What is taking place here in nature? Why are the birds not sowing, reaping, fretting, storing up or worrying? Because – they don't know enough to worry. I guess sometimes "ignorance *is* bliss". They don't know enough to be anxious. They are only doing what they can do and that is to rely on the faithfulness of their Creator.

They peck around on the ground and find seeds, worms, insects, and other bird food. Are they aware of the Creator providing all this? NO. And yet they are to be our lesson. What is happening to the birds, is intended to be Literal, Physical, Verifiable evidence of God's General, gracious faithfulness towards all His creation. It is God's job to provide for all He has made.

But wait. God is too busy keeping our solar system in order, and helping starving people in India. How is it that feeding the birds are in His job description? Nothing is too small or too insignificant at task for God. IN fact I would say, that to think that actually diminishes His deity in our minds.

**Heb 1:3** ESV He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and **he upholds the universe by the word of his power**. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

**Col 1:17** ESV And he is before all things, and in him **all things hold together**.

So how is it that feeding birds is in His job description? As Creator of heaven and earth, it just comes with the territory. What He creates, He keeps. What He brings into existence, He sustains; from the smallest of atoms, to the largest of galaxies, to the messes of our human lives. He is present, active and personally involved in causing all things to work out for our good and His glory.

So Remedy #1 is for us to look at the birds of the air. (Mat.6:26)

**Mat 6: (26) Look** at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

So we **LOOK** at the birds. We **OBSERVE** that they don't worry yet they have all that they need. **We LEARN that:** This example of nature, teaches us of God's faithfulness over all He has created; specifically regarding provision for our daily bread, our basic needs and dealing with all the issues of life. And if God is faithful to His Non-Human creations, surely we can trust Him for our own human needs.

**#1 Faith Question: "Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"(v25b)**

Answer this and our worries will begin to fade and our anxieties will begin to melt. IT is a crucial Faith Question to answer for a Favorable Future. It is not a quick fix or a switch to flip, but it is a prescription with a promise for a more favorable future.

Which brings us to "Faith Question #2 for a Favorable Future".

**Faith Question #2: "Are not YOU more important than they are?"(v.26)** And I encourage you to under line, highlight or somehow emphasize these questions in your Bible so the next time you turn here, these Faith Questions will jump out and get your attention.

And the intended answer? **Yes Lord. Without a doubt we are far more valuable than the birds.**

Notice that question number #2 is based on question number #1.

Faith Question #1 was a foundational Question. Question #2 is a lesson learned from Question #1.

***Are not you*** – oh anxious human, more valuable than the birds? ***Are not you*** – or worrying single parent, more valuable than the birds? ***Are not you*** - or fretting student far more valuable than the birds of the air who experience the faithfulness of God each and every day. ***Are not you*** experiencing the same general gracious faithfulness of God in your own life, day, after day, after day?

**Mat 10:29-31 KJV** (29) Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. (30) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (31) Fear not therefore, you are of greater value than many sparrows.

[ Lk.12:6-9 “hairs on your head are numbered”

Are not you, with the anxieties you are carrying into 2021, not more important and more valuable than the birds of the air? We must each answer this and express this aloud. And let this be our prayer as we enter into this new year, that God, will remedy my anxious spirit and worrisome attitude; that I may again, be filled with His peace, joy, hope, purpose and motivation for serving Jesus Christ again.

### **CONCLUSION:**

So as we enter into this New Year together, we must do so trusting fully in God's faithfulness in every area of life. We trust God for food and clothing, but not merely for those earthly things but also for providing for us and keeping us in all areas, in all our concerns - in order to keep the thief of anxiety and his cohorts at bay.

2021 must be for the church, a time of determined resolve for the body of Christ to trust God's faithfulness in areas of health, in areas of politics and elections, Governmental corruption and oppression, even trusting God for the leadership in other nations

For me personally, my greatest point of anxiety has been the elections. Secondarily are my concerns over the newly elected leaders and the paths they have promised to take our nation. But primarily my greatest anxiety is from the citizens of our great nation, have chosen these leaders to take us in this direction. This is presently my greatest anxiety, amazement and grief.

So I ask you for your prayers for me in this new year for dealing with my own anxieties and focusing on God's faithfulness in this New Year.

Our family is presently quarantined, as we may have been exposed to CoVid. We will know in a few days after the test results come in. But for now we are quarantine and certainly will be more time to look at the birds and reflect on God's faithfulness and what then birds are NOT doing,

One thing we can be sure of: 2021 will be another Great year with God!

I am also including a special link for a special video of how God provided for a special bird in distress. This is not a re-enactment, but is a trust story. These are not actors. Just so happens this was able to get caught on film. I hope this brings a smile to your face.

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

January 10, 2021

**SERIES:** "FAITH QUESTIONS FOR A FAVORABLE FUTURE "

**SERMON:** "THE ***PRESCRIPTION*** FOR ANXIETY", **REMEDY #2** **TEXT:** MAT.6:25FF

**MATTHEW:** 'Thy Kingdom Come'

**Theme :** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness"

*So Jesus begins by addressing The Practice of our Righteousness. Or the Living out of our faith.*

\* READ

**Mat 6:25-30** ESV (25)"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?** (27) **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?** (28) And **why are you anxious about clothing?** Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, **will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

## INTRODUCTION:

Of all the things Jesus could have addressed in the Sermon on the Mount, Anxiety might not be what we would have expected.

It's time to take a journey through the Hundred Acre Woods with our favorite bear, Winnie the Pooh.

A tongue-in-cheek report by the Canadian Medical Association sparked a widely-shared theory that each Winnie the Pooh character symbolizes a certain mental disorder. The theory has been around since at least 2000, when the BBC released an article [here](#). The following is a run-down of each disorder that the characters supposedly have.

- **Winnie the Pooh:** *Impulsive eating disorder*. His near-obsession with honey indicates an eating disorder and his habit of repetitive counting shows evidence of obsessive compulsive disorder, or OCD.

- **Piglet:** *Generalized anxiety disorder*. Piglet is in a perpetual state of worry and can often be heard saying "Oh, dear." He has also developed an ear twitch, common in overly anxious individuals.
- **Eeyore:** *Depressive disorder*. He always has a bleak outlook on life, and never feels any positive emotions like happiness and excitement.
- **Rabbit:** *Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)*. Rabbit is very orderly and obsessive, mostly with regard to his garden.
- **Owl:** *Dyslexia and narcissistic personality disorder*. While he is exceptionally bright, it is frequently shown that Owl has trouble reading. An example would be in *Pooh's Grand Adventure* when he mistakes the word school for "skull." Owl is also theorized to have narcissism, an inflated sense of self-importance, due to his belief that he is wiser than all the others.
- **Tigger:** *Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder*. Tigger is always seen bouncing and can never stay in one place for a long period of time.
- **Kanga:** *Social anxiety disorder*. She is very overprotective of her son, and she would never let her son make his own decisions because of her overprotectiveness.
- **Roo:** *Autism spectrum disorder*. He lacks awareness of danger and has a strange attachment to sitting in his mother's pouch.
- **Christopher Robin:** *Schizophrenia*. It is believed that all of the talking animal characters above are manifested depending on Christopher's mood.

---

Anxiety is not necessarily a mental disorder, but it can certainly become a thief of hope, peace, joy and Christian motivation in ministry. And don't we know we are living in anxious times!

## READ

<b>Mat 6:25-30</b> ESV (25)"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?** (27) **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?** (28) And **why are you anxious about clothing?** Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, **will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

## **IN REVIEW:**

Last week we looked at:

### **THE PRESCRIPTION FOR FOR ANXIETY**

***Remedy #1: Look at the birds of the air (6:26)***

**Mat 6:** (26) **Look** at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

**LOOK** --at the birds. Observe their activities. Take note of what they are **not** doing.

**Q:** What are they **not** doing? They are **not** sowing or reaping. Yet they are eating. How do the birds make it?

They are not frantically finding morsels and then building barns to store up as many morsels as possible, for their future needs; yet day by day; day after day - their needs are being met; over and over and over again their needs are faithfully met by the general, gracious faithfulness of God.

Which brought us to "Faith Question #2 for a Favorable Future".

**Faith Question #2: "Are not YOU more important than they are?"**(v.26) And the intended answer? **Yes Lord. Without a doubt we are far more valuable than the birds.**

Our Assignment was to stock our bird-feeders and make a disciplined practice of watching the birds feed, as they enjoy the faithfulness of God; and are reminded that we, are more valuable than they are.

So I'm hoping that many of you did some focused bird watching this week and specifically pondered God's faithfulness in your life.

**Remedy#1:** Look to the birds & be reminded of God's faithfulness.

This Brings us to **Faith Question #3 for a Favorable Future** and this question is another Foundational Question.

**Mat.6:28) And why are you anxious about clothing?** Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

**#3 Faith Question: "And why are you anxious about clothing?" (v28**

I have to acknowledge that Anxiety can arise out of genuine positive care and concern for the safety of others or for the state of our nation. I believe Anxiety is most generally not a mental disorder, but of simple genuine concern over situations or people that are important to us.

So while our worries are based on apparent possibilities, God's faithfulness is based on Truth, Promise, personal Experience. God has faithfully brought us this far. He has proven Himself faithful in the past, therefore we are obligated to trust Him for our present and the future.

We may understand that our concern for food may be a concern about our basic human necessities. While our focus for today, may or may not be an issue of need, but rather an issue of preference.

**"Why are you Anxious...?"** Again the word for Anxious refers to being **distracted**. Remember Anxiety is a smoke screen. It is worry about that which is uncertain; we are uncertain of the good that will take place so we worry; but we are equally uncertain about anything bad occurring as well. We just tend to focus more on the possibility of the very worst taking place.

We have already learned that Anxiety is worry which is not based on reality, but on apparent possibilities. Its like a smoke bomb that causes an awful lot of confusion and mental mayhem. Anxiety is a smoke screen that distracts us from reality and causes us to focus on the worrisome "*what ifs*" and the apparent possibilities in our minds. Don't

let worry distract you from reality.

### **#3 Faith Question: “And why are you anxious about clothing?” (v28**

As we consider this question, I think of “Need or Style”? Are we hoping to be Keeping up with others? Are we Discontent with Gods present provision or Dissatisfied with God’s faithfulness and your blessedness?

While we may be concerned about being UnFed, most of us aren’t concerned with being Un-Clothed, as we are with being Un-stylish; or not what *kind* or *style* of clothing are we covered with. Fads, Styles, fashion are all the temporary, passing things of this world.

When someone says, “I don’t have a thing to wear”, they aren’t referring to being UnClothed, only that they can’t make up their mind what they should put on for the day.

I think it would be a great practical joke to sneak into your teenager’s room and empty their closet of all their clothes and replace them with clothes out of the 70s. Then they’d wake up, take one look at in their closed and then be filled with anxiety over their clothing.

Most of us are never concerned about being UnClothed, but only about being UnStylish. This is sort of getting down to the source of our problem, not so much an issue of need, but of preference. But when it comes to *needs*, if we acknowledge that God is faithful toward all of creation, we realize we can trust Him for our own future and needs.

And I think we could probably replace the word clothing with a variety of other options. We might replace clothing with our vehicle, our house, our job, maybe even your spouse. How we often think that simply getting a new style, color, make or model or different personality type is all it would take to satisfy our preferences and relieve us of our anxiety. But not so.

This Faith Question #3 is intended to get us thinking about whether our anxiety is based on need or preference. Either way, Jesus gives us Remedy #2 to another prescription for the problem of Anxiety.

### **Remedy #2: Consider... (6:28**

**Mat.6:28) And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider** the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

*Look to the birds of the air. Now ....*

**(ii.) Consider the lilies of the fields:**

Anxiety can be life altering, vision blurring or ministry paralyzing. Do you think flowers complain about the color they are, or are they discontent with the scent they have been given? Consider what the lilies of the field don't do. Do they work long, hard, hours at the spinning wheel to make their clothing? NO.

As God provides food for the birds, likewise He faithfully clothes the lilies of the fields with beautiful appearance, or clothing. Also, it occurred to me that these are not Lillies of "the Lilll Garden", but Lillies of the *field*; Indicating these would not be flowers in some garden who is planted and cared for by a "gardener". These are wildflowers, that are randomly growing along the countryside, owing their existence, life, color and aroma to God alone.

**(v.28) Consider: Think** about something very carefully. **Examine** it. **Learn** from it. Focus on the Facts of Reality. Study on the Truth of God's faithful provision for every need.

Read Lamentations 3:14-24.

**Lam 3:21-23** ESV But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: (22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Stop. Think. Reflect. Engage. Learn. Experience peace, joy hope and assurance from God's unending, abundant storehouse of provisions.

So: **Why are you anxious about what you will wear?** Is it something you need or something you want or prefer? And if God provides for all these, will he not provide for you also? **Answer: Yes. Lord.**

This came to my mind this week. Why are we anxious about what we wear? Or Why are we so easily distracted by the smoke screen of

clothing style? Anxiety is a thief and a distraction.

Distracted from what? What do you think, these anxieties or distractions of food and clothing, distract us from?

I think, while food and clothing are basic necessities - yet we often allow our anxiety over those necessities, to distract us, from more important things; to side-track us and effectively keep us focused on ourselves, rather than on the Kingdom work God has for us to be doing.

**Look** – pay attention to the birds: Be reminded again of God’s general gracious faithfulness to us who trust in Him. Are not you not more important than they.

**Consider** – study and pay attention. Learn from the wildflowers. Are you concerns needs or wants?

And here Jesus presents us with our 4<sup>th</sup> ***Faith Question for a Favorable Future.***

**Mat 6:28-30** (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, **shall he not much more clothe you,** O you of little faith?

**Faith Question #4: “If God so clothes the grass of the field,** which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, **shall he not much more clothe you,** O you of little faith.”

Answer? What is the answer intended to be? Answer it out loud for us?  
**“Oh Yes! Of Course He will much more clothe me.”**

Of Course He will much more provide for you. Of course HE will much more come to my rescue. Of course HE will much more show himself faithful in our situations. Of Course He will also provide Much More than we ask or even deserve.

**\*\***So I’m wondering how many of us – if we were diagnosed with Covid-19... would be tested and evaluated – and when given a prescription for your CoVid to be remedied in order to help you return to health; I’m wondering how many would look at the Doctor’s prescription, then lay it aside and disregard it completely? Maybe

thinking to yourself... “Ah, I’ll be alright without it.”

Probably ***no one*** would do that.

But I’m also wondering how many of us, suffering from any level of increasing stress and anxiety – and these are anxious rich times right? So I’m wondering how many took advantage of our assignment and Jesus’ prescription of purposefully watching the birds this week, in order be reminded of the faithfulness of God. And as a result, how many experienced some relief to their worry and fretting and a restoration of God’s peace, joy, patience, hope, mental stability, faith development and even some renewed motivation for church ministry?

Applying Jesus’ remedy for Anxiety could be of utmost importance for the church in these days of rapidly increasing anxiety.

A third remedy for Anxiety, though not directly referred to in this passage, must be prayer. This is a remedy so often affirmed, but may often be minimized. We will pick up here next week.

**MATTHEW:** ‘Thy Kingdom Come”

**Jan.17, 2020**

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: “The Narrow Way”

**SUB-SERIES:** “FAITH QUESTIONS FOR A FAVORABLE FUTURE”

**SERMON:** “THE *PRESCRIPTION* FOR ANXIETY”, **REMEDY #3** **TEXT:** MAT.6:25

**Theme:** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness”

*So Jesus begins by addressing 3 groups.*

REVIEW:

I. THE **PROBLEM** WITH ANXIETY.

II. THE **PRESCRIPTION** FOR ANXIETY

Remedy #1: Look at the birds; Remedy #2: Consider the lilies

III. THE **PROMISE** THROUGH ANXIETY.

**FAITH QUESTIONS FOR A FAVORABLE FUTURE:**

#1) Is not Life more than food and the body more than Clothing?

#2) Are not you more important than they are?

#3) And Why are you anxious about clothing?

#4) If God so clothes the grass of the field...Shall he not much more clothe you?

**INTRODUCTION:**

In our section today, Jesus addresses the anxiety rich times in which we live.

READ

**Mat 6:25-30** ESV (25)"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. **Are you not of more value than they?** (27) **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?** (28) And **why are you anxious about clothing?** Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, **will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

## INTRO

My own personal motto for this new year is: “**2021: Another Great Year with God**”. Be reminded that the Sermon on the Mount is all about our Christian journey along “The Narrow Way” or the Troubled path. We spent the entire year of 2020 focusing on being citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven and preparing to live our lives in the context of greater and growing persecution, against our King Jesus and our faith in Him.

Who would have ever dreamed that time of persecution would begin in 2021. I only pray that as a church, we have taken Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount to heart and have been diligent to learn and apply His lessons for personal survival and how to thrive in 2021 and beyond.

So we have learned that anxiety can cause us to live a defeated Christian life. It can cause us to live a very self-absorbed life. It can cause us to live a very worry-filled life. Anxiety can also cause us to live a faith-less life, by being paralyzed in areas of motivation for ministry for Jesus Christ.

As Rev. Beam mentioned last week, “I am not willing to allow Anxiety to have any place in my life, any longer.”

**\*\***So I’m wondering how many of us – if we were diagnosed with Covid-19... would be tested and evaluated – and when the Doctor gives you a prescription for your CoVid to be remedied in order to help you return to health; I’m wondering how many would look at the Doctor’s prescription, then push it aside and disregard it completely? Maybe thinking to yourself... “Ah, I’ll be alright without it.”

Probably ***no one*** would do that. Hopefully no one would do that.

I hope you have applied **Remedy #1** where Jesus prescribed for us: “Look at the birds of the air...” and notice the example of Gods’ faithfulness. **Remedy #2**: “Consider the Lilies of the field...” and take note of how God clothes them. Both are intended to be examples to us in reassuring us of Gods’ faithfulness, at every level of human life and

existence, so that as we focus on those remedies, the thief of anxiety would begin to be dispelled from our lives.

### **REMEDY #3: Prayer & Its Promise** (6:30 [Phil.4:6-7])

While Jesus doesn't directly refer to prayer, it is essential in each and every problem we encounter. In this passage, the apostle Paul, seems to almost quote the words of Jesus.

**Php 4:6-7** ESV (6) do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Do not be anxious about ANYTHING. Now some may stop right here and think, “well Jesus obviously didn't mean “everything” because the things I am anxious over, are very important things that I can't keep from worrying about.” Jesus speaks in very all-inclusive words here. He clearly says to each of us – to the people who were sitting with him on the Mount and to those of us who are sitting and reading this today and every believing Christian who has ever suffered and been flooded with anxiety in the history of the church, He urges us to not be anxious about *Anything*.

But in EVERYTHING... there's another all-inclusive word for us. In everything and in every situation, we are to pray to Him.

#### **(i.) By prayer and** Supplication / Petition

Prayer seems to be a sort of generic word that refers to prayer as a broader category which may refer to any kind of communion or communication with God and the believing Christian. While supplication and petition have to do with specific requests or issues of concern that we might bring before the Lord, as circumstances which cause us anxiety.

I believe the important thing about prayer is our focus and communication with God. The specific words we use are not so important. The outline we may use to take us through prayer, are reminders for us to pray for very important people and problems. But the outline itself isn't the most important thing. Even our theology in prayer,

isn't the most important thing. We can pray to God, and trust Him to hear our prayers and consider our circumstances, and then He will sift through all things, with His perfect love, wisdom, power and eternal purposes – and do what is in our own best interest and for His greater glory.

I am glad we don't have to have a Bible degree in order to pray for another person's salvation. I am also thankful we don't need a medical degree to pray effectively for another person's healing. Imagine if we did we had to know all the medical terminology and inner body parts, so we could pray more accurately and get the prayer results we were hoping for. But we don't need that because God knows and HE knows best and His answers are always best.

I love the Psalmists words here.

**Psalm 62:8** Trust in the LORD at all times, O people; ***pour out your heart*** before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

The invitation is to tell God what you need, how you feel and why. Vent. Pour out your heart to Him. Express your anxiety to Him. Confess the fear, worry and turbulence you have been experiencing. We can trust Him fully. He is our refuge and hiding place of Supernatural strength, in the face of all our weaknesses.

And don't forget the other important component in prayer.

**(ii.) thanks giving -**

**Php 4:6** ESV (6) do not be *anxious* about anything, but in everything by *prayer* and *supplication* with **THANKSGIVING** let your requests be made known to God

Why is Thanks Giving so important? Thankfulness is one way of expressing confidence in God, while facing anxiety in our circumstances. ThanksGiving prior to God answering our prayers, seems to communicate our assurance in God, His wisdom, His care and His promise to help, even before God answers that prayer. This indicates we are not only thankful to God for who He is, but we are also thankful for how He *will* move in our situation; even if how he answers is not what

we were hoping for.

“A Thankless heart toward God may indicate a fading faith in God.”

**Rom 1:21-22 KJV** Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, *neither were thankful*; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

Therefore, we must not forget to be thankful for Gods’ historic, faithfulness and promises in our past. Be thankful for how He is going to help and provide and rescue and resolve the present issues of life – and how he will demonstrate His faithfulness in our present and future trials.

Then Paul goes on to share that this prayer comes with a promise.

**Php 4:7 ESV** And the *peace of God*, which surpasses all understanding, *will guard your hearts and your minds* in Christ Jesus.

As we apply this remedy of prayer, the promise for us is that Prayer, Petition and Thanksgiving will result in the peace of God returning to our lives. The peace of God which our enemy anxiety has looted, ravaged and pillaged from our lives, will begin to be restored and replenished.

#### **Remedy #4: Humble yourself (6:28)**

\* Another great passage on prayer from Peter comes to my mind in this context.

**1Pe 5:6-7** (6) *Humble yourselves*, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may lift you up, (7) *casting all your anxieties on him*, because he cares for you.

**(i.) Humble yourself:** this refers the attitude through which we view ourselves and our situation, and reflects our inner perspective on self and our situation. As people of faith, we should be people who stress – less. We should worry – less. We should not allow Anxiety to steal our joy, our peace, our encouragement, out hope or even a fraction of our faith.

**(ii.) Casting:** Confess your anxiety to God. Remember God’s

faithfulness in your past. Holding nothing back, but opening yourself up, disclosing the most secret of thoughts and even the darkest of motives. This involves prayer in which we “Give it all Up. Lay it all Down. And Let it all Go.” For there, it is in God’s hands. The problem is surrendered as much as possible and the transfer of responsibility is now in God’s hands (where it always was all along anyway), and we begin to rest in His faithfulness and receive His promised peace.

And the promise from this prayer..

**1Pe 5:6-7** (6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time **he may lift you up**, (7) casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

God will lift us up, Give us peace, replenish what the enemy has stolen. And we will begin to feel mentally, emotionally and spiritual stabilized. So we go back to verse 27, for Faith question #5.

**Mat.6:27 ) And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?**

**#5 Faith Question: (v..27) “...And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”**

The idea here is that anxiety or worry doesn’t accomplish anything worthwhile. In fact it has no positive effects at all, other than perhaps that it drives us desperately and hopelessly to God for help. Anxiety can be all-consuming. But the peace of God can become all the more all-consuming and restorative.

So, as we look at the last lesson on Anxiety from Jesus, we must be aware of the **context** of Jesus’ address on Anxiety. Of all the things Jesus could have addressed in the Sermon on the Mount, it is the topic of Anxiety that he spends 9 verses, warning us about it.

Take note of how Jesus begins his address on Anxiety.

**Mat.6:25** "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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?"

I found myself reading it this week, and just realized that Jesus was making an important connection here. A connection between what and what?

**Therefore** – «... that ye may not serve mammon, but have unshaken confidence in God, I say unto you;” - Adam Clarke

**Therefore:** “And if you serve God, you need be careful for nothing. Therefore take not thought - That is, be not anxiously careful. Beware of worldly cares; for these are as inconsistent with the true service of God as worldly desires. Is not the life more than meat? - And if God give the greater gift, will he deny the smaller?” –Jonathan Wesley

“**Therefore**”. I noticed that Jesus begins this warning with “Therefore”. **Therefore** is an introductory word. When **Therefore** is used, it is intended to cause us to stop, re-read what immediately preceded this, and consider what the connection may be. “**Therefore**” introduces the concept of Anxiety, but connects anxiety back with the previous teaching. And what do you think immediately precedes v.25? Verse 24.

I found myself reading it this week, and just realized that Jesus was making an important connection here. A connection between what and what? “**Therefore**” introduces the concept of Anxiety, but connects anxiety back with the previous teaching. And what do you think immediately precedes v.25? Verse 24.

Jesus is teaching on the Treasures of this world and the Treasures of Heaven.

**Mat 6:24-25** ESV (24) "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

(25) "**Therefore** I tell you, do not be anxious 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?"

We might be tempted to think; “Anxiety” is kind of a light weight problem, compared to pride, or lust, or idolatry, or murder, etc.

**Therefore**, I tell you, do not allow Anxiety to take up residence in your

life. Address it. Deal with it. Don't enable it, because it is a thief. He and his associates will steal, loot and pillage some very valuable stuff.

For those who desire to truly serve our Lord Jesus; Anxiety is a colossal stumbling block; it is a deterrent for Kingdom work and ministry. It is a thief of effective ministry for Christ. If allowed to take up residence with his other Associates, Anxiety can become that which strips us of our effective ministry, our Holy Spirit motivation, calling and purpose. Because anxiety colors every area of our life and thinking.

In Matthew chapter 13 Jesus teaches about the seed of the Word of God and the soil of the human heart. He speaks of the seed that fell on the thorns.

**Mat 13:7** ESV Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.

Seed fell among the thorns and the thorns were allowed to remain there; and as the thorns grew up and began to mature, they began to choke out the good seed that was sown.

Then Jesus gives the interpretation of the parable of the Sower and specifically what the thorns represent.

**Mat 13:22** ESV As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

The cares of the world – same word for “anxiety”. So the cares of the world, which is the Anxiety of (Mat.6:25); and the deceitfulness of riches, which is the Master of Mammon (Mat.6:24); together these 2 things do what? They can render the servant of Christ “unfruitful” in Christian service.

(1) The Problems with Anxiety. (2) The Prescriptions for Anxiety. Now... (3) The Promise through Anxiety that prayer can replenish what the enemy has stolen from us.

## **CONCLUSION:**

(1) Remember to allow anxiety to be addressed and dispelled as we remember the King of the Kingdom of Heaven is also our eternal Loving Heavenly Father.

\* I'd like to encourage you to read back through the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew chapter 5-7. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes reference to the Kingdom of Heaven 7 times, but he references our Loving Heavenly Father, at least 15 times. Read the Sermon on the Mount again and take note of these references to our Loving Heavenly Father that Jesus makes..

Matthew 5:16, 45, 48 / 6:1,4,6,8,9,14,15,18,26,32 / 7:11,21

**(2) Allow Anxiety to be dispelled** by reading through the Sermon on the Mount. Even the Beattitudes in chapter 5 are designed to dispel anxiety and nurture reassurance that the King of the Kingdom of heaven, our Loving Heavenly Father, is faithful to help, sustain, provide, protect us, safe and secure from all alarms.

**MATTHEW:** 'Thy Kingdom Come'

Jan.24, 2020

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

Jan.24, 2020

**SUB-SERIES:** "FAITH QUESTIONS FOR A FAVORABLE FUTURE"

**SERMON:** "Priority #1"

**TEXT:** MAT.6:31-34

**Theme:** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness":

## INTRODUCTION:

Anytime we embark on a journey, we have to keep in mind our destination. And once we have our destination, we have to consider how to get to that destination.

We may think, "my destination may be the church". So we know that in order to get to our destination, the church; (1) We have to get out of bed, (2) We have to get dressed. (3) We may need to eat breakfast. (4) We will need to get into the car and take a certain route to our destination.

Now a large portion of that is somewhat automatic. But it still has to begin with (1) I'm going to my destination, the church. (2) And that will determine the rest of our decision making for the morning.

For Christians today, we must remember that our destination is the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore our focus must be on seeking God's path and good will along this journey on the "Narrow Way".

And if the Devil can't keep us from arriving at our intended destination, then he will certainly make our lives as miserable and our personal ministry as ineffective as he can.

## READING

**Mat 6:31-34** ESV *Therefore* do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (33) ***But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*** (34) "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

## **ANXIETY: ITS SUMMARY AND CONTEXT .(v.31**

\* With a final warning, Jesus also provides a final remedy for the anxieties that tend to distract us, distress us and ministerially derail us.

**Mat 6:31-32** ESV ***Therefore*** do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

So, as Jesus ends this lesson on Anxiety, we must be aware of the **context** of Jesus' address on Anxiety.

v.31) ***Therefore do not be anxious...***

v.34) ***Therefore do not be anxious...***

v.25) ***Therefore do not be anxious...***

### **Let's consider the Context of Anxiety (v31, 35, 25**

I found myself reading it this week, and just realized that Jesus was making an important connection here. A connection between followers of Jesus Christ, who suffer from anxiety and are hindered in there service to Him.

**Therefore:** “And if you serve God, you need be careful for nothing. Therefore take not thought - That is, be not anxiously careful. Beware of worldly cares; for these are as inconsistent with the true service of God as worldly desires. Is not the life more than meat? - And if God give the greater gift, will he deny the smaller?” –Jonathan Wesley

**v.25 -- (i.) “Therefore”.** I noticed that Jesus begins this warning with “Therefore”. ***Therefore*** is an introductory word. When ***Therefore*** is used, it is intended to cause us to stop, re-read what immediately preceded this, and consider what the connection may be.

“***Therefore***” introduces the concept of Anxiety, but connects anxiety back with the previous teaching. And what do you think immediately precedes v.25? Verse 24.

Prior to v.25, Jesus is teaching on the Treasures of this world and the Treasures of Heaven.

**Mat 6:24-25** ESV (24) "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

(25) "**Therefore** I tell you, do not be anxious about your life,

We might be tempted to think; "Anxiety" is kind of a light weight problem, compared to pride, or lust, or idolatry, or murder, etc.

**"Therefore**, I tell you, do not allow Anxiety to take up residence in your life. Address it. Deal with it. Don't enable it.

**(ii.) The power of Anxiety** - For those who desire to truly serve our Lord Jesus; Anxiety is a colossal stumbling block; it is a deterrent for Kingdom work and ministry. If allowed to take up residence with his other Associates, Anxiety can become that which strips us of our effective ministry, our Holy Spirit motivation, calling and purpose. Because anxiety colors every area of our life and thinking.

In Matthew chapter 13 where Jesus teaches about the seed of the Word of God and the soil of the human heart; He speaks of the seed that fell on the thorny ground.

**Mat 13:7** ESV Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.

Seed fell among the thorns and the thorns were allowed to remain there; and as the thorns grew up and began to mature, they began to choke out the good seed that was sown. From a gardening perspective, it makes perfect sense.

Then Jesus gives the interpretation of the parable of the Sower and specifically what the *thorns* represent.

**Mat 13:22** ESV As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

The cares of the world – same word for "anxiety". So the cares of the world, which is the Anxiety of (Mat.6:25); and the deceitfulness of riches, which is the Master of Mammon (Mat.6:24); together these 2 things do what? They can commandeer our attention and affections and

as a result, can render the servant of Jesus Christ “unfruitful” in Christian service.

The focus is secondarily on our worries, anxieties and cares. But the Primary focus is it’s negative effect on our service for Jesus Christ.

(1) The Problems with Anxiety. (2) The Prescriptions for Anxiety.

(3) The Promises through anxiety, are all addressed, not only to bring us emotional and mental relief, but to also break the bondage of earthly cares and concerns which can keep us so distracted , so self-focused and so paralyzed and so stymied in the areas of ministry for our Lord Jesus – that we are never able to get up, look up and say, ”Lord, Here am I , Use Me.”.

### **The Gentiles Seek.. (v32a**

\* While these things are things everyone needs, it is stated as being more of life priorities and purpose.

**Mat 6:31-34** ESV (31) Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things,

“Gentiles” – pagan unbelievers and without God as their Loving Heavenly Father.

“Seek” = desires, self –focused activities and pursuits of those who are unbelievers. They have no other goals. They have no other purpose or meaning in life.

This is the practice, the focus, the life and the pursuits of unbelievers. Earthly things. Temporary endeavors, with little lasting impact or influence. All they know is the NOW, so all they focus on is the NOW. Jesus says, “your life is more than food”, “you purpose for existence is more than clothing.” You are not like the pagans. You should not be so earthly focused, and self-motivated as they are.

**People may say:** “Well you don’t know my problems. You have not idea of my circumstances. I have lots of troubles. I have lots of concerns. Life just isn’t going right for me right now. I’m too over whelmed at the moment.”

That is exactly right. Anxiety can be all-consuming. Worry can be Ministrially paralyzing. Despair can be fully disparaging. Family problems – financial struggles - Social challenges - the Stresses of school - Hopelessness can be the greatest darkness any of us can experience.

And so the reasoning goes – as we attempt to express why we allow our troubles to distract us or keep us from trusting, following and serving Jesus Christ with all our hearts and lives. This may be the biggest problem in the church of Jesus in America today; too much anxiety and too many distractions for that which God has called the church to do. But Jesus is certainly aware of all of this – and notice what he responds next...

### **Your Father knows... (v32b)**

**Mat 6:32** ESV (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, **and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.** (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and **his** righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (34) "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

### **"Your Father knows your needs..."**

**Mat 6:7-8** ESV (7) "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. (8) Do not be like them, for **your Father knows** what you need before you ask him.

In Prayer, **your father knows** your needs.

And now in v.32, in the midst of anxiety, **your father know your needs.**

**"Your Father knows"**. All your concerns. All your prayer requests. All your problems. All your reasons. All you worries. All your anxiety. All your fears. All your depression. All your troubles. All your needs. Your family, your finances, your relationships, your medical situation, your future, your school, your career, --- all of it. All of it- Jesus gives us the words – the greatest of all words of hope – all the thoughts statements of reassurance – All that is so Anxiety destroying, Peace

Restoring – All we may need to know; if we are interested – Jesus makes it clear to us. The only thing that really matters is that.... **Your Father Knows!** **Your Father Knows.** Say it with me. “**Your Father knows.**” We just recited it. Do we really believe it?

**Theologically** – He is All knowing. **Experientially** – He is All providing, protecting and fully aware and on the alert for us in the midst of trials. **Our Father Knows!** Not just information, but what God knows, God addresses. If we allow these thorns of worry to continue growing, it can render us unfruitful, and ineffective in our service for Christ.

## **OUR GREATEST GOAL IS FOR OUR GREATEST GOOD (6:33**

\* Are you glad, God looks out for our good? He is interested in our overall well-being. So he offers one final remedy for our anxiety.

**Mat 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

*We are urged to..*

### **IIA Seek First.. (v33a)**

For the gentiles seek after all these things, *but as for you... do this; Seek First* the kingdom of God. Friends, Our lives will never be made right until God is First and our very top Priority in everything. Until the church of Jesus Christ is fully surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ – These issues of our lives will never be worked out and made right. I believe God has no intention of giving us the desires of our hearts, when He and His will are not the greatest desire of our heart.

This is the invitation of Jesus – to any and all people; regardless of what your trouble, Seek Jesus and His will for you. To those plagued with anxiety, Seek Jesus and His will for you. For our political leaders, we should be praying they would seek Jesus and His will.

For the crowds who are curious about Jesus and what it means to trust in Him, seek Jesus and His will. No matter what our situation, what our trouble, what our level of faith or lack of faith – Seek Jesus and His will

for you. Stand there trusting Jesus, following Him, seeking His purpose and will for you and see where He will take you.

**(i.) \* God First** – Our highest Priority and Greatest Goal

**Mat 6:33** But seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness,

It's not that most Christians don't seek God's will and direction and good pleasure and His Kingdom plan, but it's not our top priority. It seems more often like what we do if we have enough time, or if it already aligns with what we are already doing, then of course we will. But the fact is, if we put Jesus and His kingdom first, things in our lives – plans, goals, relationships, even our purpose will certainly change, and many don't want that.

**(ii.) \* God's kingdom** – Lordship

**Mat 6:10** KJV Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Seeking God's kingdom is not hoping that He works things out in the end. It is giving Him control as Lord over our lives, and plans now. Jesus taught us to pray that His kingdom would be of utmost importance and Top priority in our lives. We pray the prayer, but maybe aren't counting on Jesus really, literally answering it.

**(iii.) \* God's Plan**, will and purpose

**Mat 26:39** KJV And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Jesus not only instructed us to pray this way, but He, as the Son of God, modeled it for us as well. When He was faced with the cross and all that would entail, He prayed that He would Not, experience it, then prayed ultimately, yet now my will but your will be done.

*We are urged to..*

**IIB. Seek His perfect Righteousness (v33b)**

**Mat 5:6** KJV Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after ***righteousness***: for they shall be filled.

**Mat 5:10 KJV** Blessed are they which are persecuted for ***righteousness***' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**Mat 5:20 ESV** For I tell you, unless your ***righteousness*** exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

**Mat 6:1 ESV** "Beware of practicing your ***righteousness*** before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Thy Kingdom Come! Our greatest goal is for our greatest good. And that would be for our will to be perfectly aligned with the will of God.

## GOD'S PROMISE AND PROVISION

\* His righteousness is perfect righteousness. His will is a perfect will. His purpose for you is a perfect purpose and His plan is a perfect plan.

**Mat 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and ***all these things will be added to you.***

All our earthly needs will be given. All the peace we have been lacking will be supplied, beyond our own understanding. God's ways are such good ways, not only for us as individuals, but as a family, as a church, as a community and yes, even for our nation.

## CONCLUSION:

**Mat 6:34 KJV** Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

\* Do Not Be Anxious

\* Tomorrow will be anxious for itself

\* Sufficient for its own troubles

Oh Lord, our church family has so many challenges. There are so many medical problems and financial challenges. We experience personal

*THE NARROW WAY*

stress that at times is overwhelming. Our church family have many worries with much stress at work.

May each one of us seek you above all other things and may many experience the power and joy of living and serving You until you return.

**MATTHEW:** 'Thy Kingdom Come'

Jan. 31, 2020

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

**SERMON:** "Usurping the Authority of God"

**TEXT:** MAT.7:1-6

**Theme:** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness"

REVIEW:

----- Warning -----

**Mat 6:1** ESV "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

----- Remedy -----

**Mat 6:33** ESV But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

This is Jesus' parenthetic warning and Admonition in ch. 6.

**INTRODUCTION:**

IN 1983 David Copperfield preformed the greatest magic trick in history. He made the statue of liberty disappear on live TV and in front of a live audience. Anyone else remember that? Not only was it the greatest trick in history, it was also the oldest trick in the book. It was slight-of-hand on a much larger scale. It was the concept of directing someone's attention in one direction, which distracts them from watching what is going on in the other direction.

For many, criticizing others or judging others I like that. It is their way of directing the attention of some, in the other direction or toward other people and their faults, so as to draw attention away from their faults or shortcomings and hopefully cause themselves to be viewed better than they really are in the eyes of those around them.

To put it more succinctly; Judging others is an attitude of considering others worse than ourselves and/or considering ourselves better than others.

**Mat 7:1-6**<sup>ESV</sup> (1) "Judge not, that you be not judged. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. (3) Why do you see the speck that is in

your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (6) "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

## USURPING GOD'S AUTHORITY

(7:1-2

\* This begins by addressing our own inner attitude toward others and toward ourselves or how we perceive others and how we perceive ourselves.

**Mat 7:1-6<sup>ESV</sup>** (1) "Judge not, that you be not judged. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

Oh the challenge of addressing gossip, slander, judgmentalism and a critical spirit in those who spread things about others in the church. And unfortunately, Church is a well-watered garden for criticism of others. But it starts with our attitude and how I view myself will determine how I view others.

### To Judge others (6:1

\* To judge is to determine right or wrong, good or evil; to condemn as guilty or exonerate; to bind or free; The word here, refers to sentencing someone. And interestingly, when we practice judging or condemning others, we are actually condemning ourselves.

**Rom 2:1-3** <sup>ESV</sup> Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. (2) We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. (3) Do you suppose, O man--you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself--that you will escape the judgment of God?

When someone is tried for a crime in a court of law, there is (1) the witness, who presents the evidence; "This is what I saw". (2) Then there

is the jury who declares the guilt or innocence of the person charged, based on evidence and the testimony of the witness.. “We find him, Guilty.” Then there is the judge, who pronounces the sentence, for the guilt declared by the jury, whose declaration is based on the testimony of the witness. You are hereby sentenced to 10 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine”.

So when we judge others without adequate cause or information, we form opinions and make statements regarding a person’s attitude, actions or motives; or their appearance, performance or practices, and determine something about who they are, and we act as witness, jury and judge in our conclusions. And this is sin and what’s more, it is often a very wrong judgment..

This is not in reference to forming opinions, as we all cannot keep from that. But coming to hasty and often times, harsh conclusions or accusations against another person; Expressing our inner thoughts of others to them or worse publically behind their back. As a result, we may influence others to think or view others – and even judge that person as we have. We act as witness, jury and Judge and that is usurping the authority of God and it takes on responsibilities that only He is qualified to carry out.

Someone once wrote: “Never receive criticism from anyone you would not seek advice from.” I think that is a very good principle to adopt. If we ask the advice of someone, it indicates our trust in that person and the value we place in their perception on things. If we wouldn’t ask or trust advice from the person, then we probably should not accept any condemnation from them.

**Criticism**: judging. Starting with our attitude toward another person, leads to negative thoughts that come out as gossip or slander, without necessary evidence for rendering conclusion nor declaring guilt.

It is interesting in Scripture that even when we tell something about another person which is accurate and true, it is still gossip and

slandrous when it is not done in a spirit of love, for the purpose of edification, in a statement of admiration.

A critical or judgmental spirit can speak the truth, and still be a gossip. Needless information about others, that is not intended to build up is idle chatter and Godless slander which is intended to make someone look bad in order to feel better about our own short comings.

**Remember:** Gossip, slander a critical spirit or judgmentalism is not wrong because of its content. It is wrong and a sin because of its Intent.

One commentary put it this way:

What Jesus is getting at, is that we are not to be eager to spy out our neighbor's faults, for that is not worthy, not Christian, not fulfilling the law of God. The more vigilant we are over him, the more careless we are of ourselves. The less we spare his faults, the more tender we grow of our own. The men who are most censorious are just the very men who are themselves the least faultless and the most indulgent to their own cherished sins. (SBN)

**Please take note:** Jesus is not instructing us to turn a blind eye to sin or to condone sin in any way. Because what is being described here in the Sermon on the Mount is not sin. HE is not addressing how we are dealing with sin. Lord willing, we will deal with that next week.

What he is addressing is Christians being adamant and critical and judgmental towards other Christians regarding issues that pertain to Christian faith, convictions or practice - that is not clearly condoned or condemned in Gods' Holy Word. He is not dealing with sin or doctrine or disobedience. He is dealing with my personal faith practices which may not align with yours and therefore results in one of us or both being overly critical, or condemning of the other person's position or beliefs.

The Apostle Paul deals with this multiple times in his letter to the church in Rome.

**Rom 14:1-4** ESV (1) As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

So this is clearly not about sin or righteousness, but about personal opinions or practices. In those contexts we are to be gracious in dealing with disagreements in Christian lifestyle and practices. One person wears a pair of overalls to church, while the other sits on their judgment seat and looks down on them, or worse, speaks out concerning the person's attire. The Bible says very little if anything about how to dress when at church. Those are merely things we have been taught, are our personal preferences and pass on to others, yet have no Biblical foundation.

**Rom 14:1-4 ESV** (1) As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. **(2) One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.** **(3) Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.**

While these may be issues pertaining to our religious practices, it is not dealing with sin. This would be like the person in a 3 piece suit judging the man who wore overalls to church. And then the man who wore overalls condemning the man who wore a 3 piece suit. Both would be guilty; not of sinning by what they wear, but by sinning in how they judge the other.

The man in the 3 piece suit judge s harshly the man who wore a pair of overalls to church. And the man in overalls condemns the man in a 3 piece suit for being so all high and mighty. So that in this conflict of personal preferences or practices, each has sinned by becoming the witness, the jury and the judge and are guilty of “**Usurping the Authority of God**”, who alone, has the ability to judge and judge rightly.

Judging others involves thinking better of ourselves, and thinking worse of someone else, due to our own preferences that are Non-Biblical, though they may be based in our religious beliefs. Those things that are border line – God will take care of those things. They are not issues for us to take up and declare guilty

**Rom 14:20-21** ESV (20) **Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. (21) It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.**

It has been stated that those who criticize others most, are the very ones who are themselves, the most guilty of the same vice. Again, these are not doctrinal or moral issues, but issues of personal conviction or preference. Pork or beef. Meat or Vegetarian. Wine or total abstinence.

Also, this is not meaning you change your whole lifestyle for every person who has different personal convictions about religious practices. But it is more so, what you do in the presence of those who have different beliefs. When you are around a Christian that feels it is wrong to eat pork, then you don't eat bacon or ham in their presence, because our relationship are of the greater importance. When you are around a person who drinks wine and feels free to do so, we don't make a big deal out of it or rebuke them for it in their presence – or behind their back either for that matter.

And all this begins as an attitude that is in our mind or hearts. It can be how we typically view others, or infrequently – nevertheless it is against the Royal Law of the Love of Christ.

It can also stem from how we view ourselves. When we highlight the apparent shortcomings of others, it may be a prideful attempt to hide our own faults; which is intended to make ourselves look better than we really are.

This is one of the most important exhortations in the whole of this excellent sermon [on the mount]. By a secret and criminal disposition of nature, man endeavors to elevate himself above others, and, to do it more effectually, depresses them. His jealous and envious heart wishes that there may be no good quality found but in himself, that he alone may be esteemed. Such is the state of every unconverted man; and it is from this criminal disposition, that evil surmises, rash judgments,

precipitate decisions, and all other unjust procedures against our neighbor, flow.

-Adam Clark

Rather scathing; yet rather true.

I guess what I take away from this message from Jesus is: (1) Jesus desires we be full of grace when dealing with those with whom we disagree on religious issues. Again, I say “religious” issues and not “Biblical” issues because many things we disagree on are not Biblical, but religious in nature; like wearing overalls or 3 piece suit to church. It is religious, but not Biblical.

So being gracious would allow us to refrain from always seeing the flaws of others. It should minimize our speaking critically and disrespectfully toward others. Being full of Grace would tend to cause us to be more loving and caring rather than harboring insulting, thoughts, and expressing them to our brothers and sisters in Christ. The other thing I personally take away from this is: (2) Jesus wants us to be humble and realistic in our view of ourselves and that we are no better than others who view these things differently. When our perception of ourselves is better than we really are, then our perception of others will be less than they really are.

Being judgmental is a nasty trait. It keeps us from seeing the good in others and the value that God has placed upon them as His own creation, but also the value that others bring into our lives. If we can only see them more realistically.

### **We will be treated or judged as we treat or judge others (7:2**

\* If we are quick to judge and criticize others, we will experience the same.

**Mat 7:1-6<sup>ESV</sup> (1) "Judge not, that you be not judged. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.**

If we are quick to judge and criticize others, we will experience the same. If we are gracious, merciful and loving in our views and interpretation of others, then we will be treated likewise. And isn't that

what we would prefer?

I think that criticism often has the reverse effect, though people who are critical never realize it. Those who criticize others, tend to push away those around them. While feeling that their criticism of others is acceptable, it quite often pushes others away and may cause you to be more caution around them and mind your “Ps” and “Qs”, suspecting that they may also be talking about you behind your back as well.

If we recall; Jesus spoke similarly of our forgiving one another.

**Mat 6:14-15 KJV** For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: (15) But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

In order to address this, Jesus give us another remedy, which we will learn about next week.

### **CONCLUSION:**

So becoming the witness, jury and Judge usurps the authority of God and can be sin, as it often is manifested by criticism and condemnation.

I want to ask us today: Have you ever been talking about someone critically, judgmentally, harshly and suddenly you feel a bit of Holy Spirit conviction for that? And if you have, have you repented from that and confessed it to God as sin? It is easy for any of us to be overtaken by this sin. Yet it is crucial to remain sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit Who may need to convict anyone of us for our own sin of judgmentalism.

**MATTHEW:** 'Thy Kingdom Come'

Feb.7, 2020

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

**SERMON:** "Speaking Words of Death or Life"

**TEXT:** MAT.7:1-6

**Theme:** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness"

REVIEW:

**Mat 7:1-6<sup>ESV</sup>** (1) "Judge not, that you be not judged. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. **(3) Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?**

## INTRODUCTION:

Judging others involves looking down on others, who don't have the same religious preferences or personal convictions about practices that are not presented in Scripture or that are not as black and white, as a person might perceive. This would be like the person in a 3 piece suit judging the man who wore overalls to church. And then the man who wore overalls condemning the man who wore a 3 piece suit. Both would be guilty; not of sinning by what they wear, but by sinning by how they judge the other for what they were wearing.

Both are guilty of "**Usurping the Authority of God**", who alone, has the ability to judge and judge rightly.

\* Take heed how you practice your faith in public (6:1,6,16), or how we live out our Christian beliefs.

*Scripture encourages us, when appropriate, to practice...*

## OVERLOOKING THE FAULTS OF OTHERS (7:3,4

\* We are not told to overlook sin, but to overlook faults.

**Rom 14:1-2 ESV** As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. (2) One person believes he may eat **anything**, while the weak person eats only **vegetables**.

This is not recommending we change our Christian lifestyle to please others, but when our religious practices offends another brother or sister

in the Lord; and when it is not a clear sin, then we should attempt to refrain from that particular practice when in the company of the one who believes differently and may be offended by our practice.

**Rom 14:21-22** ESV It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. (22) The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.

Eating meat or vegetables; eating beef or pork; drinking wine or not – these are things that Scripture does not clearly address, therefore we should consider how our religious practices may affect others. Some view pork as still an unclean animal and should not be eaten by Christians. Some believe the New Testament teaches that pork is acceptable for NT believers. Some religious practices hold that it is a sin to drink wine or any alcoholic beverage, while others certainly believe we should not get drunk (Eph. 5:18), but that the Scriptures do not teach us to abstain from “hard” drinks.

**Rom 14:3** ESV Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

I graduated with a friend from Bible College, and her parents flew in from Germany for her graduation. We took this girl and her parents out to eat at a nice but casual restaurant in Chicago. Before we went in, I asked my friend from Germany: “This restaurant serves alcoholic beverages. Will your parents be offended?” She replied, “I think they will be OK with it.” Well by the end of the meal we had 3 empty beer pitchers on the table. Turns out beer in Germany is a very cultural drink and not frowned on, even in Christian circles. It was a cultural difference that what we were accustomed to, but it did not violate any law of Scripture. They didn’t offend us, so we didn’t offend them.

\* I tend to think that God has allowed some things to go unscripted or to remain somewhat “grey areas” in our practicing of our religious practices, not to cause us trouble, but to allow opportunities to disagree on some of these issues and to develop and practice much grace and

**forbearance** toward another brother or sister who holds different Biblical convictions or religious preferences.

So there is no positive reason for being critical of others. Even if it is true, there is typically no good reason to make our critical, judgmental thoughts public.

The fact that I think I can spot the faults of others, doesn't make me the person who is more spiritually advanced in the faith!

**Pro 19:11** ESV Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is to a man's glory to overlook a fault.

I think the greater person is not the one who can spot and point out the faults of others. Rather the one who can overlook and refrain from reacting to the faults of others, in a critical or condemning manner, may be the greater person here.

### **Criticizing others (6:3)**

\* So the issue is criticizing others, when we may do some of the same things or worse.

**Rom 2:1-3** ESV (1) Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, **the judge**, practice the very same things. (2) We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. (3) Do you suppose, O man--you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself--that you will escape the judgment of God?

Rather than criticizing our own lifestyle and religious practices, we often resort to criticizing others.

**Q:** Can you imagine if we all acted that way? If people criticized me, then I criticized them right back? That's how wars begin. Most people who criticize others, will not stand to be criticized themselves.

**Mat 7:3-4**<sup>ESV</sup> (3) Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?

This is Hyperbole or exaggerated speech. No one really had a log sticking out of their eye. But the point is that one person's faults were noticed and addressed by a critically spirited individual whose own issues and faults were just as obvious if not more so.

**QUESTION:** So Jesus asked questions about Anxiety for us to answer and work through our worries and consider His remedies. Here is another one of those questions, that if we consider it and answer it honestly, may just reveal more negative areas of our own character than we are identifying in the lives, appearance, or activities of others.

So our bottom line principle is this:

---

**“We should not be so interested in criticizing others,  
but rather be more concerned in building up others.”**

---

Scripture teaches that “death and life are in the power of the tongue”.

**Question #1:** Perhaps one question should be more in the lines of: “What could I say or do that would build that person up and speak Words of life to them, rather than speaking words death and tearing them down.”

One is insulting and tearing down. One is strengthening and encouraging. One is focusing on the faults of others, while overlooking our own faults. The other is considering others better than ourselves and simply allowing God to be the Witness, Jury and Judge of others.

**Question #2:** “How might we speak so that our words lead others from death to life?” We are told that when people criticize others it is an attempt to attain a dominant position over another person; It is a verbal power move to gain control, manipulate, demean, or to break one down. While some may consider that kind of power move appropriate, the fact is, the church is weak when criticism is active. Christians are in a destructive mode when this kind of strategy is being implemented.

But where our attitudes are in check, when our tongues are under control and when our spirit is under the submission of the Holy Spirit; then, there is a stronger and more effective, life building church.

## **Promoting self**

**Rom 2:1** ESV (1) Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another **you condemn yourself**, ... **because you, the judge, practice the very same things.**

This is somewhat like the skunk calling the cat “stinky”. Or the Pot calling the kettle “black”.

**Rom 2:1-3** ESV. (2) We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. (3) **Do you suppose, O man--you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself--that you will escape the judgment of God?**

So how we will treat others will determine how we get treated by God.

**Mat 7:1-2** ESV "Judge not, *that you be not judged*. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use *it will be measured to you*.

So the person who criticizes another person, for doing the same thing they themselves are guilty of doing, is actually condemning themselves and will be judged by God. These are actually guilty of the greater sin.

When criticism is active, the church is weak, because we are more concerned with getting others to align themselves with my personal preferences, than we are concerned with aligning our life with God's preferences.

*With the question which leads to personal evaluation, Jesus offers...*

## **THE REMEDY FOR BEING JUDGMENTAL (7:5,6)**

\* Much like how he dealt with Anxiety, Jesus asks us a probing question, then offers a Remedy for our sin of judgmentalism.

**Mat 7:5-6**<sup>ESV</sup> (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (6) "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

## **The Hypocrite (6:5)**

\* “You Hypocrite”- Now that is something any of us, never want to hear Jesus say to us! The hypocrite criticizes others, while not taking their

own faults into consideration. So Jesus states that when we may judgmentally think of someone, before we critically speak about them or to them, we seek the Holy Spirit to reveal to us whether we may be guilty of the same thing.

Being critical of others doesn't teach them anything, other than Christians can be pretty heartless, petty, harsh and oblivious to our own flaws, faults and failures. Critical people are not doing God a favor. Judgmental people are not doing anything that would change another person's behavior, appearance, performance or motives.

Criticism is easy. It is what our sinful flesh does well. But building others up – acting in a manner that really brings about positive spiritual input, which helps others see their shortcomings and by the working of the Holy Spirit through us and causes them to want to change or improve themselves - can come from encouraging words from about anyone. We have the opportunity to speak words of Death or Life. Words of Death are easy for us, because it comes from our natural, fleshly inner nature.

Judging others, pointing out their imperfections that we may not like – and informing them of our own personal displeasure toward them, rarely changes anyone. But Words of life and building up, coming from the Spirit of God, inspiring us on-the-spot with the words that are needed to build up and foster life change, comes from outside us.

### Jesus' remedy for judgmentalism

<b>Mat 7:5<sup>ESV</sup></b> (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye
---

\* Go look in the mirror; the mirror or God's word. Seek God to search your own heart and life. Allow His Word as you read, and study and do your devotions – to inform, point out, convict, direct, and guide us in viewing others differently, ourselves differently and living differently.

Whenever we feel compelled to notice and point out the flaws of others, allow God's Holy Word and His Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts and follow His lead on what to do next. Jesus implies we need to stop calling

attention to the inadequacies of others, and He instructs us quite clearly to first, take the log out of our own eye (6:5a). That is always the most appropriate plan of action. And once we do that, notice what will happen. Then and only then, will you be able to see clearly enough to help the other person with their troubles.

Our own faults can keep us from seeing the other person's issues more clearly. In fact our own sin can cause us to see the other person, our own faults and other things around us from a very skewed perspective. We are not only unable to help, we are unqualified to point out other's faults.

Once we deal with our own "log" or faults, it just may lead us to come to the conclusion that "I really have no business criticizing others. I have no authority to take on God's job of 'witness, jury and Judge' toward this other person." What a difference this remedy can make in our lives and in the life of our church.

Anytime we find ourselves tearing down others; if we are truly believers; there may be a time when the Holy Spirit briefly convicts us of that sin. At that moment it is up to us to allow that conviction to cause us to stop the critical talk; repent, and confess that sin to God and seek His forgiveness.

### **CONCLUSION:** Things to think about.

***Here are some suggestions on how to  
remove the "log" out of my own eye.***

(1) When we begin to think judgmentally or critically about others and you sense a momentary conviction or sense of guilt or uneasiness as you are pointing out the faults of others.. **STOP!** That may be the work of the Holy Spirit of God, checking your spirit of criticism. IT may be God's Spirit attempting to redirect your thoughts of criticism toward your own heart.

Stop and Ask the Holy Spirit: "Lord, do I do that?" or "Am I like that?" "What are You trying to tell me?" How might You want me to change.

(2) **Think:** Is there an area of my own life that I need to clear up,

before pointing out the faults of someone else?”

(3) **Look**: Look into the mirror of God’s word to see ourselves as God sees us and allow Him to direct us in how we may need to change.

(4) **Repent**: Oh God I repent from this sin of speaking words of death and being judgmental or critical of others, and specifically in tearing down toward *this* person.

(5) **Resolve**! I will seek the will of the Lord and I will resolve to speak in a manner that will speak Words of life and build this person up in their faith.

**MATTHEW:** 'Thy Kingdom Come'

Feb.14, 2020

**SERIES:** SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

**SERMON:** "Speaking Words of Death or Life"

**TEXT:** MAT.7:1-6

**Theme:** The Test of our Purity, in the Practice of our Righteousness"

**FEB.14, :** "Leading The Dead back to Life"

**TEXT:** MAT.7:1-6

## **INTRODUCTION**

I believe this is a lesson that many of us may not want to hear. Today we are not focusing on simply being critical toward others due to differences in our religious practices and preferences, or appearances or personalities.

Today we begin by focusing on being 2 faced, egotistical, HypoCrites.

**Mat 7:5-6** ESV (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (6) **"Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."**

What Jesus is not referring to when he mentions "hypocrite". (1) HE is NOT rebuking us for being imperfect. He knows our fault, flaws and failures, weaknesses, tendencies, temptations and sins. He doesn't rebuke us anymore, than we would rebuke an injured or diseased person for being in the hospital. They are there to heal the get better.

(2) Jesus IS acknowledging the presence of broken healing people of every kind and at every level, within his church. Some are healing more quickly than others. Some have deeper wounds and more severe afflictions that are more challenging than others.

When people say there are hypocrites in the church, they may or may not be speaking accurately. It may indicate that most people aren't really clear on what the church really is. Are there imperfect, broken, recovering people in the church? Absolutely, but that doesn't make them a hypocrite.

(3) Are there people in the church who do not recognize their own flaws and faults and who spend too much time identifying the faults and flaws

of others – thinking themselves to be better and more spiritual than the others? Evidently there are. And that is the focus of Jesus' rebuke here.

*We begin with facing...*

## THE DANGER OF PRETENDING TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

\* The Danger of Pretending to Live the Christian Life, is that it doesn't take long for others around us to figure it out; **that we are pretending**. I'll tell you, the unbelieving world out there can spot a hypocrite. And what a negative impact it can make on the life of an unbeliever.

**Summary:** (v.5) Jesus addresses those who are critics of others, but don't critique themselves. He refers to them as HypoCrites- one who is **acting** or **pretending**. In the theatre everyone knows the actor is pretending to be someone he is not, and that is acceptable and even expected. But in the Christian faith, when someone pretends to be something or someone they are not, that is unacceptable.

The HypoCrite pretends to be something he or she isn't and in so doing, criticizes others, without taking note of their own faults or flaws. Jesus instructs the hypocrite to first, take the log out of their own eye or deal with their own imperfections, then they will be able to see clearly to address the imperfections in others.

*Motive is everything.*

**Mat 7:6** ESV "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

7:1 – Do Not judge or you will be judged. How we judge others is how we will be judged. With the measure we measure out to others; it will be measured to us. And as Jesus used exaggerated speech with the speck and the log, he does so here, referencing the dogs and the swine.

Perhaps you have heard as I have; that this was often quoted in the context of someone who was not perceived to be worth your time and effort to minister to. I read it just this week in a well-known Christian Bible commentary.

Perhaps someone was perceived to be “too far gone”, or “too hopelessly disinterested in spiritual things”; just too pagan to be reached, maybe due to their lifestyle or adamant beliefs that were so different than your own.

Once commentary says this is in reference to attempting to share the holy things, such as communion and baptism with unbeliever that mock and jeer at the holy things of the faith. Another commentary states this is in a reference to the false religious leaders that was previously referred to in chapter 5. And it seems most take it to refer to sharing the precious jewels of the gospel or kingdom thoughts from God’s word to those who discount and reject Biblical truths.

As a result we were told, “don’t give to the dogs that which is holy”; as though sharing the gospel or engaging in discipleship ministry with someone who wasn’t showing signs of genuine “conversion”, was being irreverent and even irresponsible with the Word of God. That’s how most commentary writers interpret this verse.

Or that working, praying, loving and attempting to disciples the Last, the Least and the Lowest of that degree - was “casting your pearls before the swine” and implied you were not exercising “good discretion”. \*\*”Not exercising good discretion”. That was in another commentary I read this week on this.

The sentiment was that you are wasting your ministry time and efforts on people who are only going to reject what you have to offer”; Or something to that effect. This train of thought is contrary to all that Gospel ministry, disciple making ministry seeks to accomplish. And it opposes the very calling and purpose of what the church is to be about. As Christians, we are called to reach the “dogs” and we are called to pursue the “swine”, and none of us have the authority to every say or think, “that person is too tough, too hardened, too far gone” to waste our time and ministry resources on. And sometimes we may not be able to distinguish between a wondering sheep or a sinful dog or a filthy swine. And we all know right? --That for the Jew, there was nothing more

unclean, or vulgar or pagan or detestable, than swine.

So we must **not** separate v.6, from v.5. In fact I'd say v.6 is a continuation of v.5. And who is Jesus addressing? **The HypoCrites.**

Verse 5 is from Jesus perspective. While v.6 is from the sinning hypocrite's perspective.

**\*\*v.5) So Hypocrite**, while in your present state – with the log in your own eye and being totally unaware of your own faults and flaws; do not attempt to point out the problems of others with lesser issues than your own.

**v.6) And HypoCrite...** Do not bother sharing your holy Truth with the dogs, or waste your precious valuable Pearls of wisdom and religious efforts with the Swine. How do you support your view of this passage?

I take v.5) as being from Jesus' perspective and v.6) being from the perspective of the hypocrite who Jesus is rebuking. Its almost like Jesus has gotten in the head of the hypocrite and the references to the “**dogs**” and “**swine**” are actually from the sinning Christian HypoCrite's point of view.

“Because **HypoCrite**; if we do, they are liable to turn on us and treat us as we have treated them. And they will turn and begin pointing out our own faults and flaws and may just rip us hypocrites to shreds; rejecting everything you have attempted to sell them; not because they are “too far gone”; not because “God's Word is just not powerful enough” – but because of your, my – our judging, hypocritical behavior toward them, for what each of us are guilty of.

\* Please never allow anyone to misuse that passage of Scripture around you ever again. Never allow Satan to convince you through someone's ideas, that there are some people who are just a waste of time; they are just too entrenched in their sinful belief's and practices; they are just too far gone or too great a pagan to be worth fooling with.

That perspective is straight from the pit of hell itself. Jesus redeemed prostitutes whose life was spent selling themselves to satisfy the

perverse interests of others. He redeemed people who were so tormented by indwelling demons of Satan that their bodies were twisted and the activities were nothing less than self-destructive. He loved, reached and died for the most hated of all of society's low lives – tax collectors like Matthew and Zacchaeus; even the corrupt Religious leaders like Nicodemus.

And may I say, if there were any there, who were too far gone to be worth redeeming; then this church building would sit empty on this beautiful Lord's day, because **none of us here today** are any better or higher, or holier than the very Least, the very Last, the Lowest and the very Lowest and worst of all the depraved dogs and unclean swine that Jesus hung on the cross and shed His blood for.

It is blasphemous to imply there are any who are too far gone, too consumed in sin, that God's holy Word and His Holy Spirit nor all-Sufficient grace can't or won't reach. This is a danger in pretending to live the Christian life. No one is too far gone or too hard for God to reach!

Today we will also look at another aspect of this, that I felt, was important to include here, even though Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount didn't speak about it. That is what happens when another Christian falls into sin and we are close enough to the person and the situation to get involved. What do we do? How should we handle it?

When someone has actually fallen into sin, and we are in the place to address it, we must realize...

## THE GOAL OF ADDRESSING SIN IN OTHERS

Anytime anyone of us, ever feel moved to address another person who may have slipped into sin we must do so with the utmost caution, humility, and reverence and personal inventory. WE must move and minister with the fullness of God's love, as though HE himself were ministering through us.

**This type of situation should always be addressed with a sense of deep grief, anger and disgust.**

\* This is certainly an opportunity for pride and condemnation to enter into our hearts as we look at the state of the fallen brother or sister. And our grief should be at the sin and not a disgust toward the person.

**Heaven's Gate: 1997:** I recall one day Dr Joseph Stowell, President of MBI, was scheduled to address a congregation of pastors from across the country. And I recall that there was a horrible sickening sin that had taken place within religious circles in America that week. A religious leader had influenced 39 people under his care to drink a poisonous solution, thinking they would die and be transported into a heavenly spaceship. It was a deeply grievous and deceptive sin.

And as Dr Stowell approached the podium, - He stood there looking out at the pastors, with both hands on the podium – and for a few seconds, it seemed he was at a loss of words, almost as if he'd forgotten what he was going to speak on. And then he spoke; and as he spoke every person in the room instantly knew what he was referring to. He addressed this sin that had made national headlines and he said..

**"If ever we had a distaste for the enemy, it must be now!"** Every person there knew what he was referring to, and almost as if it were choreographed, a unified groan rose up from the congregation of men, over the grievous and detestable workings of Satan in this horrible religious event.

I believe that in order to be capable and qualified to be used of God to address sin in another person's life we must first be;

**(1) Repulsed by sin in my life and in theirs.**

<p><b>Joh 10:10 ESV</b> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.</p>
--

The thief desires no good thing for us and he will spare no amount of effort to wreck what God wants to accomplish.

*We must also be....*

**(2) Sickened and Disgusted** with the enemy himself for the deceit,

destruction and bondage he has brought into the life of this particular person whom I care about. Not low lives. Not “dogs or “swine”, but Satan as a Liar, Tempter, Deceiver, Thief, Murder and Destroyer.

In the Bible, when Satan or his demon inhabited a person, they were often twisted and crippled; they might live among the dead people or even go about naked, mutilating themselves and even throwing the person possessed, into the fire. It was sickening and disgusting how Satan was affecting their lives.

**(3) We must also be so deeply grieved and even angered** with the destruction, sin and death that has been introduced into the life of this person that we can only think... “If ever I had a distaste for the enemy, it is now!” Jesus certainly grieved over the sin of an entire city.

**And when he drew** near and saw the city, he wept over it,  
**"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,** the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! (38) See, your house is left to you desolate. (Lk.19:41, Mat.23:37)

Sin had so over taken the blessed city of Jerusalem and so condemned it to future judgment; Jesus wept with grief and anger. Jesus wept with compassion over the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so low, so lost and so deceived and bound in sin that they were like a shepherd with no one to shepherd them.

*“If we have not wept over our mission field  
as Jesus wept over Jerusalem,  
then perhaps we have not loved the lost  
as Jesus has loved.”*

If we are not grieved with compassion, over a sinful brother or sister’s situation, we might possibly consider keeping our thoughts to ourselves, until the Holy Spirit gets ahold of our own lives and begins to change and break our hearts for the person.

**(4) We must not think we minister on behalf of God, if we are not**

**motivated by compassion for those who are erring.**

Not Pride. Not Judgmental toward the erring brother or sister. Jesus tells a parable to help us grasp this needed quality.

**Luk 15:4-7** ESV "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? (5) And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. (6) And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' (7) Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

**(i.) There will always be wandering sheep.**

This is an unfortunate principle of ministry. It may be someone we know and even care about. It may be a close friend or relative. It may one day even be one of us. How would we want another Christian to treat us in that situation?

**(ii.) There must be someone to bring them back**

Pursuing an erring sheep or sinning Christian may be time consuming and inconvenient for us. It may be frustrating because those caught up in sin can become so blinded by it, that they don't see the bad things they are doing, but may view you as a bad person for getting involved. Nevertheless when someone is erring, there must be someone willing to attempt to go bring them back on track.

**(iii.) Assurance of a task worth pursuing**

It is Biblical, Christ-like and is in the person's best interest. Those who pursue the wandering Christian must know of the end result when a straying person is brought back into right relationship with the Lord. Luke. 15 describes the joy of the seeking shepherd, and all of heaven when one sinner repents and is restored.

**(iv.) Leading a person from Death to Life**

**Jas 5:20** ESV (19) My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, (20) let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

James describes the process of bring one erring person back in line with the Christian life, as “*Leading the Dead back to Life.*” There are not many achievements in a servant of Christ’s life more treasured than when this is experienced. By lovingly, compassionately and cautiously being led by the Holy Spirit, we can be involved in this most joyful and holy spiritual activity of helping others turn away from sin and turn back to following Christ.

### **The Goals of addressing Sin in others**

\* RESTORATION! Not judging. Not condemnation. Not tearing them down; not lifting up ourselves. But Restoration is the goal of addressing sin in the lives of others.

**Gal 6:1-3** KJV (1) Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (2) Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. (3) For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

The goal is not to make things worse for them. The Goal is not to inform the rest of the church about them. Gossip and Slander is a serious sin to God. The goal is not even for us to point out their sin or to pat ourselves on the back for being able to identify their sin, so as to commend ourselves before others.

The goal of addressing sin should always be first and foremost, RESTORATION! For the lost sheep, the shepherd must care enough to pursue the sheep until he finds it, picks it up and brings it home.

For a drowning person, the lifeguard has to care enough to risk his or her own life to jump into the water, and bring the drowning person out of the water.

#### **(i.) restored in their relationship with God**

With humility and Meekness; being reminded that we too could find ourselves drifting into sin.

**1Cor. 10:12** ESV Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

**(ii.) Restored in their relationship with the church**

Church family relationships are often relationships that are wounded and deeply grieved over others in the church family who have strayed.

**(iii.) Restored in their relationship with ministry.**

There aren't many things that would disqualify a person from ever ministering again. Any sin, could disqualify any of us from presently continuing as we have been, as though nothing had happened.

Most likely a break from ministry would be in order. Perhaps time of humble accountability with other Christian leaders. A time of proving one's sincerity in repentance and evidence that restoration is actually taking place.

The only sin I can think of , that would be worse than the sin that causes a minister to be dismissed from office, is the sin that would refuse accountability and the necessary process of restoration with accountability.

In the last few years, we have had our fill of ministers who fell into sin, were dismissed from their position, only to try and pick up ministering somewhere else; rejecting the restoration process; rejecting the mandate to undergo a Biblical restoration process; rejecting accountability, because they have a TV ministry or radio ministry or book signing, Touring, speaking engagements, etc. Some have even sued the very people who attempted to hold them to some measure of accountability, but they would have nothing to do with it.

Restoration must be characterized by genuine repentance for the sin that was committed. The process of Restoration is a 2 way street.

**(iv.) Restored in their relationship with the one who was offended.**

*We must realize...*

**1) There are wandering Christians** who have not lost their salvation, but have lost their way along the Narrow Way. They are in need of restoration., by those who are “spiritual” and non-judgmental, if there are any.

**(2) Bless the spiritual person who** deals Biblically with the erring Christian. This is never an easy task and unfortunately it quite often simply does not work out as we had hoped. So it is a very stressful process and those who engage in this kind of restoration ministry are themselves in need of uplifting encouragement.

**(3) May help the person escape God’s punishment** for their sinful pattern .

**2Tim. 2:25** ESV (25) correcting his opponents with *gentleness*. **God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth**

## **Goals of Restoration brother to brother**

\* Sometimes a sin can be one person against another. Jesus describes how we can work through the process of being reconciled to one another and restored.

### **Reconcillation**

#### **(i.) One on One**

**Mat 18:15** ESV (15) "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

When someone sins against you, the goal is reconciliation. In Mat.18, Jesus gives us plan for making right the offenses that divide us and keep us divided. If they are not receptive to step one, then go to step 2.

#### **(ii.) One on One with a witness**

**Mat 18:16** (16) But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

This is for the purpose of a neutral third party to attempt to objectively

weigh both sides and all the contributing factors and help the two to be reconciled. If they are not receptive to step 2, then go to step 3.

### **(iii.) One on One with the church**

**Mat 18:17** ESV (17) If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church...

This is a next-to-the-last measure of two who simply cannot or will not agree or be reconciled. At this point, the entire church is brought together to be a sort of church “courtroom” to be a reconciling influence in the conflict.

Sharing the issue to the church provides opportunity for both sides to be heard, for the whole church to hear the whole story and as it seems, are open to give input and evaluation.

### **(iv.) Separation from fellowship and the body**

This is the final and last step in the process of a very difficult sin against two people who will not be reconciled.

**Mat 18:17** ESV (17) If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church... **And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.**

This is a bit like shunning, but the purpose is for a person to be starkly aware of their sin and unwillingness to forgive, work things out and be reconciled according to the will of God.

This should be a grueling, gut-wrenching, grievous, sickening process for all involved. But it should be a highly joyful process when it works as Scripture intends it.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Remember: our goal is not to spread the news to the rest of the church. “those who are spiritual” are not those who identify every fault in others. But those who are genuinely spiritually mature in the faith, are those who can be led by the Holy Spirit, to control their tongue, respond out of love for the brother and sister who has fallen into sin, and desires to bring this erring Christian to restoration – to God and to the church.

When our goal is restoration, and our process is loving compassion, then we have the opportunity to make a profound impact in one person's life, but also in the life of the church and in the kingdom of heaven.

**Extra Scriptures on Restoring a sinning Christian.**

**2Tim. 2:24-26** ESV (24) And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but *kind to everyone*, able to **teach, patiently** enduring evil, (25) correcting his opponents with *gentleness*. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, (26) and *they may come to their senses* and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

**Jas 4:10-12** ESV (10) Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. (11) Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. (12) There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. ***But who are you to judge*** your neighbor?

---

“...Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” -Lk. 15:7

# ***Don't close this booklet yet***

*without considering this all important question.*

---

## **Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?**

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; --  
*Rom 3:23*

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness  
can only come from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten  
Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but  
have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins  
and sent Him to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus  
Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still  
sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord  
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he  
gave the right to become children of God,  
- John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are  
truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins and  
citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

## The ABCs

**A** - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

**B** - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

**C** - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as your LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

**Prayer:** Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

**Connect** with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

**Commit** yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

**Heb 10:24-25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

**Act 2:41-42** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:  
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,  
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, [www.christefca.org](http://www.christefca.org)

---

*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...*  
*your highest calling,*  
*your greatest purpose,*  
*your soul's source and joy,*  
*and your all-consuming passion.*

---

*May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.*

*-- Downloadable free resources at: [www.christefca.org](http://www.christefca.org) --*

---

Christ E Free Church, 19682 Hill Rd., PO Box 619 Saegertown Pa 16433  
[www.ChristEFCA.org](http://www.ChristEFCA.org) (814) 763-2934 [ChristEFree@gmail.com](mailto:ChristEFree@gmail.com)



## **THE NARROW WAY**

**Other Free Booklets downloadable at [www.ChristEFCA.org](http://www.ChristEFCA.org)**

---

1 PETER, (5Vols): *Suffering in Sojourning / The Church God Always Wanted*  
A NEW CREATION: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*  
ADVENT: *The Submission of Christ*  
ADVENT 2018: *Why Was Jesus Born? J.E.S.U.S.*  
AMERICA ADRIFT: *A Culture in Crisis and the Challenges Before the Church*  
BALANCING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: (2VOL) *Growing together in the Basics*  
CHALLENGES OF FAITH FROM CHARACTERS IN THE BIBLE: *Life Struggles of Real People in the Bible*  
CHRIST'S COMING KINGDOM: *What Will Be Will Be*  
CHRISTIANITY AND THE LAW: *The Value of the OT Law in the life of a Present Day Christian*  
ADVENT STORY BOOK: *Children's Story and coloring book for Christmas*  
CPR Evangelism: *Helping others Step from Death to Life*  
DRAWING NEARER: *Purposeful Steps Toward The Next Level of Spiritual Growth*  
DISCIPLING A COMMUNITY: *Your life is like a stone in the water: What Affect will You Have?*  
EASTER STORY BOOK: *Children's Story and Coloring book for Holy Week*  
ETERNITY: *What Will It Really Be Like?*  
EVIDENCE OF GOD IN COUNTRY: *Proof through our documents, monuments and edifices*  
FACING THE FLAWS OF OUR INNER WORLD: (2Vol) *Starving the Old, Nurturing the New*  
GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: *A Match Made in Heaven*  
GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE FAMILY: *The Intelligent Divine Design*  
GROWING THROUGH GRIEF: *When Pain Won't End and Hope Seems Lost*  
HOLY WEEK 2011: *Questions About Christ and His Resurrection?*  
HOLY WEEK 2012: *Questions about Life and Death? How Dead Will we Really Be?*  
HOLY WEEK 2016: *Events Surrounding the Passion Week*  
HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD! *Knowing and Growing in Experiencing God*  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ALMIGHTY: *Life Transforming Prayer & Communion*  
IN THE SHADOW OF THE SHEPHERD: *Sheep Becoming Like the Servant Shepherd*  
INTERESTS AND INQUIRIES: *Curious Cultural Concerns for The Future*  
JAMES (4Vol): *Faith That Makes A Difference*  
IS THERE A GOD? *Christian Tract, Asking Questions.*  
JUDE: (2Vol) *STANDING FIRM, When the Rest of the World is Falling Away.*  
KISS: *Kingdom Impact Saturation Strategy*  
KINGDOM VISION: *Seeing the World and God's Kingdom as God does*  
LIFEGROUP INFO: *Christian recovery or re-entry format & Bible discussion*  
LIFE MATTERS: *What It Means for Others To See Jesus In You*  
MAKING LIFE WORK (2Vol): *Discovering Your God Focused Purpose in Living*  
MALACHI: *God's Book of Secrets*  
MISSIONS INTRO: *DIRTY DISCIPLESHIP: Preparing the Soil / Heart, for the Seed / Word.*  
MISSIONS 2016: *THE MINISTRY OF JONAH and God's Heart for the Nations.*  
MISSIONS 2017: *IN YOUR GOING - Some Supernatural Elements in the Early Church*  
MISSIONS AT HOME: *"YOUR LIFE IS LIKE..." The Challenge to Disciple A Community*  
MISSIONS: *100 Years: So Where Are We Now?*  
MORE THAN CONQUERORS: *Shaking Off the Shackles of Defeated Christianity*  
OLIVET DISCOURSE: (3Vol) *The Greatest Hope for the Worst of Times*  
PHILIPPIANS: (4VOL) *The Proper Joy-Filled Christian Perspective*  
PRAYERS OF DESPERATION: *Prayer God Answers But No One Wants To Pray*  
RUTH: *Our Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD.*  
SECRETS AND SHADOWS: *Finding Your Source in the Most High*  
SERMON ON THE MOUNT: (5vols) *The Narrow Way of true Christ followers*  
SURVIVING THE STORMS OF THE SOUL: *The Presence of God in Times of Trouble*  
THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL (2VOLS): *...Good News, of Great Joy, for All Peoples*  
THE HOLY SPIRIT: *The Friend You Need To Get To Know*  
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: *Seeing and Living the Kingdom of Heaven*  
THE 12 DISCIPLES: (2VOL) *Our Spiritual Ancestors – Their Faith and Failures*  
THE WONDER OF IT ALL: *The End Times of Trials, from Mark 13*  
TRAGEDIES OF LIFE: *Things God Allows & Blessings from Heaven's Perspective*  
WATER BAPTISM (& INFANT DEDICATION): *First Step of Believer's Obedience or Disobedience*  
WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER (2VOL): *Handbook & Guide for PreMarriage Consideration*







---

*May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.*

*-- Downloadable free resources at: [www.christefca.org](http://www.christefca.org) --*

---

Christ E Free Church, 19682 Hill Rd., PO Box 619 Saegertown Pa 16433

[www.ChristEFCA.org](http://www.ChristEFCA.org) (814) 763-2934 [ChristEFree@gmail.com](mailto:ChristEFree@gmail.com)