

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

E. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles and Teaching on the Mount

10. Teaching on the Mount, Part IX:

Loving God Means Living As a Person He Loves Supremely

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #076

Base Text: MT 6.25-34 (Parallel Text: None)

²⁵ *“Therefore I command you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you add a single hour to your life by worrying about it?*

²⁸ *“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you--you of little faith?*

³¹ *“So I command you to stop worrying, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But I command you to constantly seek first to surrender yourselves to his reign in you, and his righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On a Mountain in Galilee
Timeline	May, 31 AD (Month Sixteen)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	E. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles and “Teaching on the Mount”
Title	10. Teaching on the Mount, Part IX Loving God Means Living As a Person He Loves Supremely

COMMENT:

Today’s reading continues the thought of yesterday’s reading, for it begins with **“Therefore...”** The truths of today’s reading involve a conclusion that is based upon what said earlier by Jesus. This passage contains a key command, and a supporting rationale. We will begin with the rationale.

We saw in the previous reading that our unrivaled, supreme love is to be given to God alone. He alone is worthy of our ultimate love. However, our ability to love God is dependent upon his unconditional, prior love for us. Our love

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for God is only possible as a response to his much greater love for us. The greatness and certainty of God's love for us is the rationale for Jesus' command. How does this text show us God's love for us?

Jesus turned the attention of his disciples on the Mount to his Father's love and providential care for creation in this text. Unlike most of us, they lived close to nature and experienced the glory and beauty of Jesus' power as Creator every day. Sunrise and sunset were his daily artwork of visual glory for them. The colors of flowers, fruit, seasons, animals, birds, food, seeds, or insects brightened their lives, rather than man-made hues on man-made things. The providence of God for all living things was evident to them in the way all creatures were sustained and flourished before their eyes. When Jesus spoke of the beauty of a flower, or the way his Father fed the birds it was immediately clear to these disciples.

Jesus taught his listeners to value their own lives as the supreme expression of God's love within all creation. His providential love for people is greater than his love for the animals he cares for all the time. Likewise, his loving desire to provide clothing for the people he loves is much greater than his care for flowers--yet he does clothe even flowers in spectacular ways. Jesus was telling us that God loves people the most--supremely--as the pinnacle of his creation.

Because God loves each person supremely within his infinite universe, he is intimately aware of our needs. After all, HE created us to have needs in the first place. God's passionate love for people means that he is committed to meeting our needs, much more than the rest of his creation. Jesus' death on the cross would prove this truth to the infinite degree in the future. Jesus didn't die for clams, horses, or roses. He died for every person, even when we were his enemies.

As Jesus spoke to his disciples on the Mount in Galilee, his appeal to the way his Father provided for the needs of everything living thing in creation was the strongest argument he could make for the way his Father loves and values each of person. His infinite love caused him to create us, know our needs, provide everything it takes to meet those needs, and make the perfect plan for delivering his fullness to us...forever. Therefore (this is the "therefore" that Jesus began today's reading with...) Jesus gave us a command that assures our every need will be met.

Jesus commanded us to keep on focusing all of our attention on total obedience to his will for us--what he has deemed "right" for each of us in his perfect omniscience. God is perfect love. He has perfect knowledge. He has every resource in the universe under his command. He has already formulated his will to meet all of our needs according to his own riches in Jesus. Therefore, the only fool-proof way to complete contentment and supreme satisfaction in life is to obediently follow God's perfect will.

This is why Jesus coupled his command with a fabulous promise. ***"I command you to constantly seek first to surrender yourselves to his reign in you, and his righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you as well."*** The only sure way to experience ***"all these other things"*** that contribute to the ultimate joy and satisfaction--bar none--that is possible, is to constantly focus on total obedience to his plan for us.

Jesus was the most joyful, fulfilled person who ever lived. He achieved perfection by constantly seeking to obey his Father's plan for him. Imagine looking back on your life when you die and being able to say: *"That was perfect. It literally could not have been any better than that!"* Jesus was the only person who could ever say that. He knows exactly what he is talking about when he says God's infinite, unconditional love for every person has caused him to formulate the perfect plan for each of us. Our temporal and eternal pleasure lies in focused, passionate pursuit of obedience to that plan alone. God will provide everything else we need other than him. It really is that simple.

APPLICATION:

Most of us are afraid to surrender ourselves to God's will because we are afraid of what we think he will make us do. The assumption underlying this fear is that we know what makes truly satisfies us better than God does, and that we are more capable of achieving our fulfillment on our own terms, than his.

This kind of thinking has two fatal flaws. First, it ignores the fact that we are sinful, and therefore incapable of knowing and doing what is best for us in every situation. Secondly, it ignores the truth that God alone is both

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perfectly loving, and omniscient. God alone is therefore capable of formulating a perfect plan that insures the very best for us. God's will is our only sure salvation from our sinfulness and limitations, not a barrier to our happiness!

Now Jesus' instruction to pray about a heavenly attitude toward knowing and doing God's will makes great sense. Our sinfulness means we never start out seeking God's will as the very best for us. However, as we pray daily about a godly attitude toward obedience, God gives it to us, and we become more and more passionate about surrendering to his will. Prayer is the key to a transformed attitude about God's will.

What are you afraid to give up, in order to do God's will?

This fear will surely destroy your true contentment if you hold on to it. God's love means his will is the best for you.

How will you pray through the fear, into fiery love of doing God's will?