



Seek Ye First *(part 1)*

The story of the final and crowning temptation that the Devil offered Jesus is found in Matthew 4: “Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of

them.” That’s the most riches anybody had ever been offered—the whole world. “And saith unto Him, ‘All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.’” There was the final crowning temptation the Devil tried on Jesus. What did Jesus answer? “Get thee hence, Satan: For it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’”¹ Satan says, “Fall down and worship me!” Jesus said, “Get behind Me. God says you should only worship God.”

So the worship of the riches of this life is idolatry. The Lord warned us in Matthew 6:19–21 to “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” He says don’t bury your heart in those treasures, because those treasures will vanish away or get stolen, rust, corrupt, or rot—along with your heart. They’ll corrupt your heart!

The 24th verse says, “No man can serve two masters: For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.” It’s impossible to serve two people equally. If you’ve got more than one boss, you’re bound to like one of them better than the other one. In fact, you may get to the point where you love one and hate the other. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Jesus says: “I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.”² Don’t worry about whether you’re going to have anything to eat or enough to wear. Now there are two things that God knows you can’t possibly do without for very long—food and clothing. Jesus said don’t even worry about the things that you really have to have, much less the things that you don’t have to have, that you just want.

He says don’t even worry about the necessities of life. “Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” He says, “Listen, don’t you know that I know that your life is more valuable than your food? And your body is much more valuable than the clothes that you put on it! I know it! I made your body, I gave you life. Don’t you think I’m going to take care of it? If I went to all the trouble to make something as valuable as your body and as priceless as your life, don’t you think I’m going to give you enough of your necessary food to eat, so it will keep you alive? And some raiment, some clothes, to wear to protect your body?”

If God made you and your life, He'll certainly provide food and clothing for you. He'll certainly take care of that body and that life He gave you.

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.” They don't have to reap and store up for the future. “Are you not much better than they?”³ He said, “Listen, if I can feed the birds, don't you think I'm going to feed you?” Don't you think you're important enough that God will give you what you need?

“And which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? Why take ye thought for raiment?” Don't worry about your clothes! Keep them clean, but don't worry about whether you're going to have any. He says, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”⁴ He says, “Here, look at the lilies. Look at these nice pretty flowers. God makes them, God clothes them, and they didn't even work for it.” So, certainly God's going to take care of you! If you serve Him, He'll take care of you.

“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 ye of little faith?”⁵ If He's so careful to take care of the grass which only lasts a little while before somebody mows it down, casts it in the oven, and burns it, don't you think He's more concerned about you? He takes care of the grass, so He'll surely take care of you, won't He?

“Therefore take no thought”—that means fretting, anxious thought. It doesn't mean never to prepare. We don't go in there and sit down to the table, and say, “Okay now, God, feed us.” Somebody has to take a little thought, as far as preparation is concerned. That's not the kind of thought it's talking about. It's talking about worrying, being afraid that you're not going to get what you need. Don't worry about, “What shall we eat, or how shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles”—the unbelievers—“seek.”⁶

Many worldly people, that's all they live for, all they work for. That's their life: to have something to eat, drink, wear, and live in. They're slaves of things.

I remember a friend of mine, when I was in college. One day, while he was out, some guy came in and stole his camera, typewriter, and everything else. You know, he had a better attitude about that loss than most Christians do. He acted relieved, believe it or not. He said, “I'm almost glad. I was getting to where I belonged to those things. I was a slave of those things, instead of them belonging to me and serving me.”

I wonder how many people own a car, or how many people cars own? I'm wondering how many people own houses, and how many houses own people? You can be a slave to your home, a slave to your car, a slave to things. They can own you instead of you owning them. You can be working for them instead of them working for you. (*to be followed*)