

Matthew 6:24-34 Part 1
Satan's Only Weapon Against a Believer in Christ Part 1
also Romans 6:12-18 and Luke 9:57-62

Today we began a study on what has been one of the most emphasized subjects that we have given over the years. And the title of the series, if you ever looked it up, is called Satan's only Weapon Against a Believer in Christ. His *only* weapon, he only has one. And Jesus introduces that weapon to us in Matthew 6:24-34. And notice the title of this section is The Correct Understanding of Service. Strange title for Satan's only weapon against a believer in Christ; service, not belief, but service.

The whole emphasis of Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7 is Jesus presenting to the religious Jews that they are religiously practicing what God told them to do externally. That is what religion is. Everything you do outside of your own heart and spirit that is religion. His focus now is on the heart, the inner person. And He was telling - according to Matthew chapter 5 at the beginning - He was telling His disciples (these are not just religious Jews but those who would believe in Him) that from now on you and I are going to have an inner person relationship, not external religion, or practices.

And so we saw in verses 1 through 18 The Correct Understanding of Doing One's Act of Righteousness. And He says the hypocrites always do things for external, for people to see them, and to honor them, and to praise them as they do their acts of mercy; and they pray on the street corners offering up grand prayers for people to see them and be in awe of them. Or they would fast and go without eating but they would not keep their personal appearance up so that it gives off to everybody, it advertises that they are fasting. And Jesus said, "Do not be like the hypocrites." If you are going to do your act of mercy do it privately, between you and Christ. If you are going to pray, pray privately to Christ. That is what it is for. It is talking to Him and communicating with Him, not a religious appearance. If you are going to fast, that is going without food in order to weaken the human body so that one can spiritually seek God, do it privately. It is not for people to see. And is not for people to know.

But as we took last week, we saw The Correct Understanding of Wealth, still focusing on the inner person. He says, **Do not be treasuring up for yourselves treasures upon the earth but rather be treasuring up for yourselves treasures in heaven.** Whatever you are working for, whatever you are working toward. In America most people are working toward retirement. Jesus said, "Be continually treasuring up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Be continually not treasuring up for yourselves things upon the earth." Verse 21 was The Concept or Principle, **For where your treasure is there your heart will be also.** That is very important for today. It is not the opposite: *where your heart is your treasure will be*, but *where your treasure is there is where your heart is going to be*. Your heart is going to be occupied and caught up with whatever your treasure is. Your ambition, your goal, your passion.

In verses 22 and 23, The Concepts Concerning Wealth. Basically you will look at things in accordance with the condition of your heart. If you are evil on the inside you are going to see things in an evil way. But if you are right with the Lord on the inside, you are going to see things the way He sees things.

So today we carry this emphasis on, do not get caught up in external religious practices but realize that a relationship with Jesus Christ is the inner person, not external, inner.

Verses 24 to 34, The Correct Understanding of Service. Here is why this is important. Let me read to you from Romans 6:12-18. Romans chapter 6 Paul is talking to the believer, the person who is saved and he mentions the fact - in verse 11 of Romans 6 - that when you receive Christ you died. You live to God in the spirit, but you have died to yourself. That is why we have mentioned over the years that when Jesus Christ died on the cross in my place He died my death, therefore I have died. But spiritually, in Christ, I have been made alive.

Listen to this, **Let not the sin**, Romans 6:12, **Let not the sin therefore reign in your mortal body**. I emphasize the definite article *the* sin, because he is talking about The Sin Principle who is the spirit of Satan. **Therefore**, because you have died, and Christ has now saved you, and lived within, **do not let the sin reign in your mortal body, for you to obey it in the lusts of it**, that is, your mortal body. **Neither be yielding** (surrendering, presenting yourself) **the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but be continually yielding, presenting yourselves unto God, as living from the dead, and the members of your body as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule** (have dominion, or lord it) **over you; for you are not under law, but you are under grace**. Once you are saved you have been set free from the dominance of Satan and the flesh over your life. Christ now lives within. **What therefore? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? May not happen. Do you not know that to whom you are yielding yourselves slaves for obedience, his slaves you are to whom you are obeying**. The word *obey*, ὑπακούω (hupakouō), means *to put your hearing under*.

Now I want to tell you this, establish this for you today, so that we understand correctly what the Bible teaches. Everybody, saved and unsaved, everybody is a slave to something. The Bible says before you were saved you are a slave to sin. You served sin; you are its slave. But once you receive Christ you now become a slave of Christ. We are never free. We need to get that out of our minds. So we are either the slave of sin, or a slave of Christ. The only possibilities that can be. So Paul is saying, "Now that you have been set free and saved by Christ, do not be yielding the members of your body over to sin anymore, but rather yield them for righteousness."

As we were saying the first hour, the way you communicate, the way you express your life, let the expression of your life be the expression of Christ. Do not yield your human members of your body over to unrighteousness, but rather you are slaves of righteousness. Put your hearing under Christ, you are a slave to Christ.

Verse 17, **Whether of sin unto death, or whether of obedience unto righteousness? But to God be thanks, that you were slaves of the sin, but you obeyed from the heart a form of doctrine to which you were delivered. After having been made free from the sin** (principle) **you became slaves of righteousness**. And so he says, "Do not yield yourself." You are now a believer. A born-again believer cannot say, "The devil made me do it," because he is basically saying, "Sin shall no longer have dominion or lord it over you." You have been set

free. You have been saved from the sin principle who is Satan, who is energizing you to sin. Do you still sin? Yes you do. But you are not the slave of sin. You are now a slave of Christ.

That is why the title to the section, The Correct Understanding of Service. You see, we are all serving somebody or something. Bob Dylan, I remember a long time ago, I was in the Navy barracks in Pensacola back in the late 1960s. I remember Bob Dylan's song we used to always play all the time. I was not saved. But I remember him in his song saying, "Everybody has been born to serve somebody. And if you are not busy being born again, you are busy dying." Everybody is a slave to something.

Verse 24 of Matthew chapter 6 is so very important. **No one is able to serve two masters.** See, service. No one is able to serve two masters. So I want to point out to you, the first of two of the most important principles a Christian can understand.

1) The first principle is *no one is able*. Some texts say, *no one can*. The word *able* or *can* in the Greek text is the word *capacity*. No one has the capacity as a human being to serve two masters, two lords. It is impossible. God did not make us that way. It did not say *belief*, it says you cannot *serve* two masters. So man was created with the capacity to only be able to serve one thing. One. Uno. And in case you have not caught on yet, who you believe in is not necessarily who you serve.

No one has the capacity to serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and he will love the other, or he will hold firm to the one and he will despise the other. You are not able to serve (there is our word) God and mammon. The word *mammon* comes from an Aramaic word and most people know it as meaning *money*, or *wealth*. But it is literally applied to the whole physical realm. The physical realm, all of its activities, money, and even goals and ambitions, anything that has to do with the physical realm is called *mammon*. It is impossible to serve, I did not say *believe in*, it is impossible to serve God and mammon. Why? Because human beings have been created to only serve, or have the capacity to serve, one thing at a time. And so he says you cannot serve because either you going to hate the one and love the other, or you will hold firm to the one and despise the other.

The word *despise*, **καταφρονέω** (kataphroneō) in Greek, has to do with *have a frame of mind against something*. You do not know how many Christians I have run into that believe in Jesus Christ and believe what the Bible says about Jesus Christ, but they despise - their frame of mind is against anything that has to do with what the Bible says about their life and the direction of their life. You cannot love both. You cannot love the Lord and love your own self at the same time. You cannot love the world and love Christ at the same time. You will either hate one and love the other or hold firm to the one and you will despise the other, because you do not have the capacity to serve God and mammon. It is impossible.

2) **Therefore**, in verses 25 to 30, The Conduct of Man, how man functions. Listen to this, because verse 25 is the second principle of the most important two principles to understand about this life for a Christian. **On account of this**, on account of what? You

are not able; you do not have the capacity to serve God and mammon. **Because of this reason, I say to you** - and this is the literal translation - **stop being anxious for your life.** The definition of the word *anxiety or worry* as some translations translate it; **μεριμνάω** (merimnaō) is the verb form, **μέριμνα** (merimna) is the noun form of the word representing *anxiety and worry*. It literally means *to have the attention of the mind occupied with something*. *Anxiety* is the expression of *having one's mind occupied with something*. *Worry* is the expression, and the effects, and the consequences of *having one's mind occupied with something*.

So we put these two things together, these two principles. We only have the capacity to serve one master, one thing. Whatever our minds are occupied with, that is who and what we are serving. I can believe the Bible. I can believe in Jesus but have my complete life - twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week - occupied with the things of this life, and that is what I am serving. I can believe in Jesus, but I am not serving Him.

And in our culture, what Christians do, for the most part, what Christians do is they form the proper beliefs from the Bible, show up to church with the other Christians, but the rest of their life all week long is having the attention of their minds occupied with themselves and or the things of this earthly life. We believe the right things, but we do not serve the right things and Jesus said, "Who you serve is who you really are."

So the battle is for the mind. If I only have the capacity to have my mind occupied with one thing in overall life, and the attention of my mind is occupied with the things of this earthly life, then I am not fellowshiping with and having interaction with Christ.

Now catch this because we are going to take it more next week. After you are saved the rest of the Christian life as Paul says in Romans 12:2, **Stop being conformed to this world but be continually being transformed by the renewing of your mind.** See, once I am saved, once Christ has come in and saved me, I cannot lose Him. I am always saved. And so now from inside, from within, as I hear His word, and as I study His word, there is a transformation and a healing process that takes place in my mind. You see my mind is still damaged from sin. I am saved but I am not healed. So I am involved in a lifestyle, a lifetime of having my mind renewed; healed from the effects of sin and renewed with the mind of Christ. His thoughts, seeing life His way.

So that is what Satan does. You see, if Satan can occupy the attention of our mind he can take us away from the Word. We can say, "Well that is okay because I am saved and going to heaven, that is all that counts."

"Yes, but are you being transformed by the renewing of your mind?"

"No, I am too busy."

See, the mind is occupied with something.

So this is why Jesus introduced this, **On account this I say to you, "Stop being anxious."** Notice the tense of the verb, continuous: *stop continually being anxious*. I am responsible for what I allow my mind to be occupied with. And that is Satan's only weapon, to find something to occupy my mind with so that I am not focused on Christ, I am too busy for His Word, and I am not open to His Word. A lot of Christians go and listen to the Word, but they are not hearing it. Because their mind is occupied with other things. Going and listening does not do any good. Hearing the Word, allowing God's Spirit to minister to us.

But He goes on to say, **On account of this, I say to you, "Stop being anxious for your life, what you should eat and what you should drink, neither for your body be anxious, that is what you should put on."** So even the basic necessities, do not get occupied with it. Do not worry about it. Why? **Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?** Life is about spiritual; it is not about the physical. So that is the first command: stop being anxious.

Second command, verses 26 and 27, **Look intently at the birds of heaven, that they that they are not sowing (that is *planting*) nor are they reaping, neither are they gathering into barns, and your heavenly Father is feeding them. Are you yourselves not more valuable than they are?** God automatically provides for the birds of heaven, birds of the air. All they have to do is fly around. There are the sources all over the place. And so what Jesus said is "Why are you worried about your food? If God takes care of the birds are you not more valuable than they are?" You see, you are the one for whom Christ died, are you not more valuable than the birds?

In verse 27, the second example that we are to look intently to, **Now who from out of you, while being anxious, is able to add upon his stature one cubit?** A cubit is 18 inches. The measurement from the elbow to the end of the of the small little finger. So let us say your ambition is to become a basketball player and you need to be taller, you think you need to be taller. All right, sit around and be occupied with it. How is that going to make you grow. It will not. So he is using that as an example.

The third command in verses 28 through 30, the third command, **And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Learn - this is your third command: *learn*.** Before we it was *look intently*, now it is, **Learn from the lilies of the field, how they are growing. They are not laboring nor are they spinning (that is, *weaving*) and I say to you that not even Solomon in all of his glory was clothed like one of those. If God this way is closing clothing the grass of the field which exists today, and tomorrow is being thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you, little-faith ones?**

So the first conclusion, verses 31 to 33, **Therefore you should not be anxious (occupied) saying, "What should we eat? Or what should we drink? Or what should we put on?" For all these things the nations are seeking after.** The *nations* would be the *Gentiles*, another name for the nonbelievers. The people of the world are worried about these things. They are occupied. Everybody is occupied. Do you know what the one word is that you get a sense of that people are living for? Survival. People are trying to earn enough money to survive and do what they want to do and live. So he says, "The people who do not know Christ are seeking after these things." **For your heavenly Father knows that you are having need of**

all of these things. God already knows that you have need. Matthew 6:8 about prayer, Jesus said, "Do not think that through much words and much praying, God is going to hear you, He already knows what your needs are before you even ask." God knows, just like He knows about the birds. He provides for them. He knows about us.

But verse 33 is the key concept for the conclusion, **But you be continually seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these things** (the necessities) **will be added to you.** Notice the phrase *will be added*. Since we only have the capacity to have the attention of our minds occupied with one thing, he says, "Seek first the Lord and His kingdom and He in turn will add to you whatever your needs are." Do not have to seek them. Do not have to strive after. Do not have to plan for them. So I can only seek one thing. I cannot seek the Lord and seek the worldly things, or for the things of myself at the same time. If God has not given it to me, I do not need it. I do not have to go seeking for it.

The Second Conclusion, verse 34, **Therefore you should not be anxious for tomorrow.** If you are like me, I can remember when I was in business, Sunday afternoon was taken getting prepared for and having my mind occupied with what I possibly might face tomorrow when I go to work. My customers on Monday, who they are. "Oh him, oh good grief. I hope he is not home when I get there." You know, your mind just gets occupied with it. **You should not be anxious for tomorrow. For tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient for the day is the adversity of it.** There will be enough adversity tomorrow to be occupied with without me hypothetically projecting myself into the future before it even happens.

One of my big weaknesses is looking ahead. "Well, what if this happens? What happens if this happens?" I am not even there yet. God's grace is not there. When you hypothetically project yourself into upcoming situations God's Spirit is not even there yet to give you the grace, and to reveal what His will is to begin with, but I am already worried about it. I am already anxious. I am already deciding, "Well, if he says this, I will do this, and if he does this I will say this..." already planning.

Every teaching of Jesus has these principles: capacity and anxiety as the foundation teaching for everything that He says.

In Luke 9:57-62 Jesus presents about being disciples. They seem pretty harsh. In fact, He said a lot of things that were almost inhuman. **But while He was going along the road somebody said to Him, "Lord I will follow you wherever you should go."** In the Greek it is very emphatic, "Wherever you decide to go, I will go. I do not even know where you are going to go, but I will follow you wherever you go." **And Jesus said unto him, "The foxes have holes, and birds of the heaven have their nests; but the Son of man does not have where he might lay his head."** He said, "I do not even have a place to live." Made the guy think twice. "Hmm, I don't know. I got a nice condo here in Jerusalem, and I told the Lord I would follow Him wherever He goes, and He is telling me that that He does not have place to live, and we might be sleeping up in the garden." Occupied. **And He said unto another, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, allow me first, after having gone to bury my father."** Simple request, is not it? It seems very humane. **But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead: but you after you go declare the kingdom of God."** He says, "You cannot even go and bury your

father." You understand that his father did not just die? Because they bury them right away. You have to understand that he was taking care of his dad, there to bury him when he did die. And what Jesus is saying is, "If you are going to follow Me, you cannot serve both man and God." You do not have the capacity.

"Lord, I'll follow you, but I am going to serve over here."

"No, you serve because my calling for you is to proclaim the kingdom of God. You cannot do that over there."

It seems like He is not being fair. But Jesus is understanding that you only have the capacity to serve one thing. **And another also said, "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my household."** Seems very fair. "Lord, I will be back, 15 - 20 minutes max. Just let say goodbye to my family and pick up my things." **And Jesus said unto him, "No one, after having put his hand to the plough, while looking to the things behind, is lined up with the kingdom of God."** So he says, "Right now you are surrendering your life to Christ, you are putting your hands to the plow, and you are lining yourself up with the kingdom of God and you are plowing this plow a straight furrow toward the kingdom of God, but you cannot do that if you are looking back." Look where the plow goes. It is going all over the place. The occupation of the attention of the mind, you cannot look back, you cannot go back, and be lined up with the kingdom of God moving forward; because man does not have the capacity to look in two directions, two different things, serve two different things.

As we continue with this study, and the reason why we are focusing on this so much is because these are the main principles that every believer wrestles with. The fact that we are created with the capacity to only serve, not believe in, but serve one master. And Jesus said, "Do not allow yourself to be occupied with the things of this life, or the things of yourselves, seek first the kingdom of God, be occupied was that." God will add everything that you need, do not have to worry about it.

And next week we will see how all of this fits in with Satan's only weapon against a believer in Christ as we study how Satan works to get believers, the attention of their minds occupied with the things of themselves, and the things of this earthly life. To get them away from having their minds renewed by the Spirit of God through His Word.

Let's close with prayer.