

Merimna Part 8

– care, anxiety, worry –

Concept

The Greek concept of **μέριμνα** (merimna) describes a state in which someone is mentally occupied with something. It manifests as an anxious, troubled, and distracted mind. The attention consumed with the cares of this life. The Bible teaches this is Satan's only weapon against a believer in Christ, one that he employs to hinder spiritual growth.

Introduction

This is the eighth and final part in our eight-part study on the Greek word **μέριμνα** (merimna, Strong's 3308) and its verb form **μεριμνάω** (merimnao, Strong's 3309).

Definition

The noun **μέριμνα** (merimna) is translated as *care, anxiety, and worry*. Its root is the Greek word **μερίζω** (merizō, Strong's 3307), which is translated *to divide, or to separate*. So **μέριμνα** (merimna) represents a mental state or condition in which someone is *occupied with* or *dwelling upon something*.

Origin

Derived from the noun, the verb form **μεριμνάω** (merimnao) means *to be anxious, to be troubled, and careful thought*.

Usage

The first six parts of our study were focused on the negative use of **μέριμνα** (merimna) and **μεριμνάω** (merimnao), which is *distraction through occupying the attention of the mind*. Parts seven and eight are a two-part presentation showing the positive application, which is the idea of *focused care*.

Review ~ Part Seven

We studied Philippians 2:20 where Timothy is described as one who "will genuinely **care** (**μεριμνάω**, merimnao) for the things concerning you." Paul presents Timothy as the only one who is like-minded with Paul. That is, Paul and Timothy are the only Christians in Rome whose minds are occupied with, or *dwelling upon*, the spiritual condition of Christians in Philippi.

Meaning Part Eight ~ II Corinthians 11:16-28

We conclude our study of **μέριμνα** (merimna) with Paul's presentation of the qualifications of his apostleship as found in II Corinthians 11:16-28.

II Corinthians 11:16-28

- 16) Again I say, *that* not anyone should think me to be foolish, but if not indeed, even if as *a* foolish one receive me, in order that I also may boast *a* little something.
- 17) What I speak, I do not speak according to *the* Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.
- 18) Since many are boasting according to the flesh, I also will boast.
- 19) For you gladly tolerate the foolish ones, while being wise.
- 20) For you tolerate if anyone enslaves *you*, if anyone devours *you*, if anyone takes *from you*, if anyone exalts himself, if anyone strikes you in *the* face.
- 21) According to dishonor I speak as that we ourselves became weak; but in whatever anyone might be bold - I speak in foolishness - I myself also am bold.
- 22) Are they Hebrews? I also *am*. Are they Israelites? I also *am*. Are they *the* seed of Abraham? I also *am*.
- 23) Are they ministers of Christ? I am speaking being beside myself - I *am* beyond *them*; in labors more abundantly, in stripes beyond measure, in imprisonments more abundantly, in deaths often.
- 24) By *the* Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one.
- 25) Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I have spent a night and a day in the deep;
- 26) *in* travels often, *in* dangers of rivers, *in* dangers of robbers, *in* dangers from *my* race, *in* dangers from *the* Gentiles, *in* dangers in *the* city, *in* dangers in *the* desert, *in* dangers in *the* sea, *in* dangers among false brothers;
- 27) in labor and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;
- 28) apart from the things outside, the daily pressure, the care (μέριμνα) of all of the churches.

Context

False teachers had come into Corinth presenting themselves to be "Super Apostles." They claimed to have superior knowledge and greater revelation than that which had been given to Paul. They basically said that Paul's teaching was outdated. Paul answers these charges by listing his qualifications as an apostle of Christ in II Corinthians Chapters 11 and 12. In this article, we are going to focus on the hardship and suffering he endured through outward circumstances and mental stress as presented in II Corinthians 11:16-28.

Outward Circumstances

In II Corinthians 11:17-19, Paul says that he is presenting his own ministry on the same basis as the so-called super apostles are. He says that since they are boasting according to the flesh, he is going to do so as well; while at the same time acknowledging that such boasting is foolishness. In Verse 19, he points out to the Corinthians that they gladly tolerate those who present themselves as wise, but who are actually fools. Then he presents six lists contrasting the carnal qualifications of the "super apostles" with his credentials as a genuine apostle of Christ.

List One - "Qualifications" of the False Leaders

In Verse 20 Paul enumerates five things the Corinthians are tolerating from the false teachers. They are tolerating enslavement and the taking and devouring of their things. In addition, the Corinthians are tolerating the self-exaltation of these false leaders, to the point of suffering humiliation at their hands. Paul is showing the Corinthians they are putting themselves under the control of of unjust and corrupt leadership.

List Two - Paul's Pedigree

In Verse 22, Paul presents his pedigree. He finds it necessary to remind the Corinthians of this because some were questioning whether he was even a Hebrew.

List Three - Minister of Christ

Paul elaborates on his credentials as a minister of Christ by presenting three things in Verse 23. He reminds them that his ministry is in labors beyond measure, imprisonments more abundant, and in situations of death often.

List Four - Physical Suffering

In verses 24-26, Paul continues giving his credentials as a minister of Christ focusing on the things he has physically endured: He received 39 stripes from the Jews five times; was beaten with rods three times; was stoned once; shipwrecked three times; spent a day and a night floating in the ocean; and traveled often.

List Five - Dangers

In Verse 26, Paul amplifies on what he has had to endure while traveling. Here he lists the various dangers he has endured; rivers, robbers, those of his own race, and the Gentiles. He has encountered these dangers everywhere he has gone; in the city, in the desert, in the sea and among false brothers.

List Six - Personal Hardship

Paul gives his sixth and final list in Verse 27 where he presents the personal hardships he has had to endure in serving Christ. His hardships came in labor and toil as he worked

with his own hands in order to earn a living so as not to create an offense to the hearing of the Gospel; also in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, and in cold without adequate clothing.

Mental Stress - Focused Care (merimna)

Paul then presents the mental hardship of serving the Lord in Verse 28, "apart from the things outside, the daily pressure, the **care** (**μέριμνα**, merimna) of all of the churches." In addition to struggling against all of the physical circumstances listed above, Paul explains that his mind is continually occupied with the spiritual welfare of all of the churches. While the false teachers presented themselves as strong and successful based on financial wealth and multitude of followers; Paul demonstrated the true success of a servant of the Lord is measured in what he suffers and what he sacrifices for the well being of the Lord's people whom he serves.

Conclusion

Paul's defense of his calling and ministry in this section of Scripture clearly shows that false leaders oppress and misuse people for their own gain; in contrast to the true apostle who is motivated by continual concern for the spiritual well being of God's people. Paul detailed what a true servant of Christ experiences in ministry because it is essential for Christians to understand the spiritual motivation behind the actions of their leaders. A true servant of Christ is always facing opposition - opposition that comes from all directions and through a myriad of circumstances. Yet, while being opposed, the true servant of Christ's mind is continually consumed with concern for the spiritual well being of the Lord's people and the Lord's work.

Series Summary

Hopefully, this eight-part series has given you an in-depth understanding of the concept of the Greek words **μέριμνα** (merimna) and **μεριμνάω** (merimnao) as found in the Scriptures. Peter taught that **μέριμνα** (merimna) - *the occupation of the attention of the mind* - is Satan's only weapon against a believer in Christ. Jesus established that a human being can serve only one realm – God or the material; and commanded that we not be occupied with the necessities of life, but rather seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In addition, Paul pointed out how important it is to be occupied with the Lord and His work.

Notes

- Merimna is the English font spelling of the Greek word **μέριμνα**.
- Merimnao is the English font spelling of the Greek word **μεριμνάω**.
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