

To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, forever and ever. Amen.

²⁴No one can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money. ²⁵Therefore I tell 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 important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶Look 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? ²⁷Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If 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, O you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (NIV)

Text: Mt. 6:24-34 New Yr's. Day 2018 Lam. 3:21-26, 31-33 Ja. 4:13-16 Ps. 146 Resp. Ps.: 90
Hymns: 744, 785, 789, 738

LIVE EACH DAY WITH THE LORD

Dear fellow believers in Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever,

Jesus tells us, *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."* God expects us to be responsible for ourselves, and work to provide for our needs. God gives us our abilities, and our health, and our opportunities. God blesses our work, giving us everything we have. He wants us to enjoy what He gives us. We read in the book of Ecclesiastes, *"It is good and fitting to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward"* (5:18, NASB). At the same time, the Lord warns us to watch over our heart, and not let our heart's devotion get divided between Him and things of this world. If we do that, our heart's devotion can end up being turned away from God altogether. Our God, who tells us, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love"* (Jer. 31:3), wants our heart's devotion, and deserves our heart's devotion. He tells us in His Word, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might"* (Dt. 6:5).

“See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 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, O you of little faith?” With all his wealth, Solomon couldn’t match the beauty God gives the wildflowers. Since God so ‘clothes’ the flowers, we can trust Him to clothe us.

“Do not worry” (literally, from the original text, *“Stop worrying”*) *“about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”* God gave us our body and life. He will see to it that we have clothes to wear, and enough to eat and drink.

“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?” Our heavenly Father, who provides food for all the birds, certainly provides for us, whom He made in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27), the crowning glory of all His creation (Gen. 1:28-30).

During the Cold War there was fear of nuclear war with Russia, resulting in nuclear winter where nothing can live. Currently there’s the fear of “climate change” and “global warming.” God promises us in His Word, *“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease”* (Gen. 8:22). God is taking care of our planet, seeing to it that as long as the earth exists we have will the seasons, warm temperatures and cold temperatures, and planting and harvesting.

“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” Worrying can affect us physically, even shortening our life. There isn’t a single good thing that worrying accomplishes. So why do we hold onto our worries, when God wants to take them all on Himself? *“Cast all your care on Him”* Peter urges us, *“for He cares for you”* (1 Pet. 5:7). The Bible tells us, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths”* (Prov. 3:5-6).

“Do not be anxious, then.” Five times in our text God uses the word *“anxious.”* Where we are limited, God is not. God helps us to face whatever we have to face, and do whatever we have to do. He tells us in His Word, *“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand”* (Is. 41: 10).

Speaking of our earthly needs God reminds us that *“the pagans run after all these things.”* We don’t want to pick up the attitude of the unbelieving world. Without God, this life and their things are all they have. The world is constantly grasping for more things, and desperately trying to hold onto this life. Just before our text Jesus tells us not to place our trust in our earthly

treasures. Rather we want to be continually laying up and placing our trust in our heavenly treasures.

“Your heavenly Father knows that you need [all these things].” Our heavenly Father knows what we need. He will continue to take care of us. He assures us in His Word, *“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands”* (Is. 49:15-16 a).

If my pursuit of things of this life comes before God, I have a serious problem. *“But seek first [the] kingdom [of God] and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”* Put God and hearing and studying His Word, and making time to come to His house, and having a close relationship with Him first in your life. He promises He’ll take care of all of our needs.

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” As if what’s happening now in our life isn’t enough for us to deal with, how often do we also worry about what might happen in the future? Alcoholics Anonymous teaches, *“One Day at a Time.”* Learn from the past, but don’t live in the past. Plan for the future, but live in the present.

The Apostle Paul says, *“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”* (Ro. 8:32). We are so precious to God that He sacrificed His only Son, Jesus, on the cross to save us. Since God gave us Jesus, He’ll certainly take care of everything else we truly need. Dear Christian friends, **LIVE EACH DAY WITH THE LORD.** Amen.