

## Thought for Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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### Read Matthew 6:16-34

What Jesus is saying throughout these verses is, 'be at peace in your relationship with your heavenly Father'. Don't worry about putting on a show about being a Christian. You don't have to shout it out from the roof tops, let people see your faith by recognising your peace. Verse 16 says; '*When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting.*' I remember the story of the little girl, out with her mum, and she came across a donkey. The little girl said 'that donkey looks like a Christian.' When the mother enquired why she said that, the little girl responded, 'he has such a long face.' Sadly, some Christians give a wrong impression of what it is to be a Christian; don't do this, don't do that, you're not allowed to enjoy yourself, whereas I believe God wants the best for us, he wants us to have a great life, a life of not looking over our shoulder, because if we live in His will, we will have nothing to look over our shoulder for. Verse 17; '*when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting.*' When you do that, not putting on a show of the fact that you are a Christian, then, as it says in the next verse, '*your Father will reward you.*' That doesn't necessarily mean that your bank account will suddenly increase, the Lord rewards different people in different ways, but always by giving His peace. As verse 19 tells us, it's not about material wealth, that can be taken away from you, the peace of God can never be taken away from you. The whole of the rest of this chapter is talking about what the world thinks is important. These last four months, since the start of the Covid19 corona virus, I believe has made people stop and think, to stop and think about what is important in life. Many more people are tuning in to church services, either using something as you are, reading this now, or using the internet, or radio or television, than attended church prior to this pandemic. Some companies have gone under, and that is very sad. But we are told, as the old hymn says to; '*turn our eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.*' Verses 20-21 put it in perspective; '*store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy.... for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*' How we do that is by doing the will of God the Father. That is what we talked about three weeks ago as we looked at the beatitudes, or what should 'be our attitude,' living in the footsteps of Jesus. What do we concentrate our time on? Verse 22; '*the eye is the lamp of the body.*' What Jesus is saying is, what you look at on the television, the computer, what you read in newspapers or books and magazine, permeates your thinking. I remember a lovely Christian couple, very meek and mild, wouldn't say boo to a goose, he developed Alzheimer's and they ended up in a care home, but the saddest part was that he started swearing and cursing, something he would never had done under normal circumstances. Some of that language was most probably picked up, or heard while serving in the forces during the war, and whereas that was not part of his normal vocabulary, it was imbedded into his memory. We cannot shut everything out of our knowledge, we are bound to hear and see things that we would be better off not seeing or hearing, so where you have the choice of what to see and hear, you have the choice of watching programmes on the television or not, there is always the on/off switch. '*if your eyes are good,*' if what you are watching, reading or hearing is good, then; '*your whole body will be full of light.*' We have the choice, as verse 24 says; '*no-one can serve two masters.*' I am sure we would all agree that life has changed over the past 40+ years, the language you hear on the television is not the same as 40 years ago. I was quite shaken to hear on a Saturday evening, on what was supposed to be a 'fun' show, the

language that was being used, as if that is common to the whole country. Maybe I am getting old but I find language that uses unnecessary adjectives, or just bad language, totally repelling and I will turn that programme off. You don't have to pander to everyone else's view, God has shown us the right way to live our lives, and when we do then the last ten verses of this chapter are not relevant; '*do not worry.*' It was Bob Marley who sang the song; '*Don't worry, be happy, every night we have some trouble, when you worry you make it double, don't worry, be happy. Can't find a place to lay your head, somebody can and took your bed, don't worry, be happy...*' maybe it should be a hymn we could sing in church because too many of us do worry, the vast majority of the time about things we have no control over. **Read verses 25-30...** Jesus tells us, as it is. What we worry about are things we cannot change, God will provide. Why does Jesus tell us not to worry? So that we can know real peace. Walking hand in hand with God, with Jesus, is what it is all about, he will not let us go, he wants the best for us and just wants us to trust him. What was the old chorus? '*a little talk with Jesus makes it right all right.*' **Read Psalm 34:4-7...** There are times when we let our troubles overtake us but we must leave these things with the Lord. let's come back to Matthew 6:27; '*Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?*' What are we hoping to do? What are we hoping to change? Do we think that by worrying we can change anything? Worrying won't and doesn't help. I know some people go to counsellors or therapists, they share out all their burdens and instead of leaving them there and getting on with life, they pick their troubles, their burdens up again and carry on worrying. I don't normally nip forward to the next chapter when I know I am going to be looking at that next week, but **read Matthew 7:7-8...** but ask expecting to receive! God does not disappoint. God wants to bless you. The night before Jesus died, he made a promise to his disciples and that promise holds firm today, 2,000 years later, John 14:27; '*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*' SO Jesus begins his ministry telling those he loves; '*Do not worry*' and nothing changes in the three years of his ministry, or in the 2,000 years since; '*Do not worry about your life or about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.*' Amen.

When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way! While we do His good will,  
He abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey!

*Trust and obey! For there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
But His smile quickly drives it away; not a doubt nor a fear,  
Not a sigh nor a tear, can abide while we trust and obey!

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,  
But our toil He doth richly repay: not a grief nor a loss,  
Not a frown nor a cross, but is blessed if we trust and obey!

But we never can prove the delights of His love  
Until all on the altar we lay; for the favour He shows,  
And the joy He bestows, are for those who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet,  
Or we'll walk by His side in the way; what He says we will do,  
Where He sends we will go; never fear, only trust and obey!