

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

51- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 31
The Clear Eye; Secret Worry; and the Supremacy
of Jesus Christ- Part 3

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Matthew 6:22-34

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

25 "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

26 Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

27 And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?

28 And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,

29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!

31 Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'

32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now it helps to periodically restate what is actually going on as Jesus is preaching this perfect Sermon- that we call today, the “*Sermon on the Mount*”. Now keep in mind that this Sermon was really given on a Mountain and Jesus was really preaching this. And all around Him on the Mountain that Day were representatives of all four of the major religious Groups that *dominated* Jewish Life in occupied Palestine back in the 1st Century:

1. The Scribes and Pharisees¹
2. The Sadducees
3. The Essenes
4. The Zealots

And periodically as we go through this Sermon, it is obvious that Jesus is referencing the Way that the Pharisees, in particular, carried out their false religion by saying things that pertained to ONLY them. For example, when Jesus talked about “*Giving to the Poor*”- He said,

Matthew 6:2

So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

... and this is NOT Jesus using certain *phraseology* to make some other Point. The Pharisees literally had someone who actually blew a real trumpet- when they gave money to the Poor- to draw attention to the fact that they were giving- so that they could be “**honored by men**”.

So, everybody on the Mountain that Day knew that Jesus was referring to the Pharisees when He made this remark- because they were familiar with hearing the trumpet when the Pharisees gave. And the Reason I am bringing this up is because as Jesus is preaching this Sermon- the religious Groups were getting more and more angry with Him; and they were thinking about a Way to shut Jesus down- either by *discrediting* Him or

¹ The Reason why Scribes are listed with the Pharisees is because the Scribes were the ones who actually formulated the various Doctrines and developed the Theology; while the Pharisees were the ones who put that Theology into practice in the daily Life of the Jews

by having Him *murdered*. And for some Reason- these religious Hypocrites didn't think that murdering Jesus would violate any Law of their Man-made "god".

Now any time a Group is being publicly shamed- there are some who agree with that Shaming- NOT because they love God or because they think Divine Truth is being perverted- but these people simply enjoy a public Spectacle or a public Fight. And that was going on that Day. But there were also some Jews there that day- who were genuine Believers. And they enjoyed what Jesus was doing and saying- because they loved God and anyone who truly loves God also loves what God has infallibly spoken in Scripture. And these Jewish Believers also understood that the Leaders of those various Groups were all Frauds and Hypocrites; and they wanted the Sin of these people to be publicly pointed out- so others wouldn't be deceived. And that was going on that Day as well.

So, this Sermon that we are studying- is a perfect Sermon being perfectly preached by the incarnate God Himself. And this Sermon is revealing Divine Truth to those who have Ears to hear; eyes to see; and a heart to believe. But at the same time- this Sermon is also one of the most blatant and public attacks against the Man-made Religion of the Jews- that is found anywhere in the entire Bible.

So, there are two great and mighty Things going on with Jesus and His Teaching and His Preaching. There are two Things happening *simultaneously* in, by, and through ALL that Jesus spoke and did while He was here on the earth. Jesus is both bringing Salvation to God's elect; and at the same time- with the SAME Words; and the SAME Actions- Jesus is also bringing Judgment to those who are NOT chosen.

But even more specifically, by saying what He said and by doing what He did all through His earthly Ministry- Jesus is bringing the First or the Old Covenant to a *decisive* End while at the SAME TIME He is establishing the infinitely superior New Covenant. And part of the Problem with these Jewish Leaders was that they wanted to keep the Old Covenant in force- perpetually! And by doing that- they found themselves at odds with God and with the Decree of God that NOW- in, by, and through Jesus- personally; and in, by, and through, ALL that Jesus said and did- the Old Covenant was now coming to an End and the New Covenant was being birthed on the earth!

So, there is both Redemption and Judgment going on at the SAME TIME! There is an "*Embracing*" of the Chosen; while there is also a "*Rejecting*" of the non- elect. There is the "*Gathering In*" of the Remnant; and, at the same time- there is a "*Pushing Away*" of those whom God has not chosen to save.

And this is what the Prophet meant when he spoke by the Holy Spirit in **Isaiah 61:1-4** that says:

1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed

me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

Now what is significant about this Passage is that over in **Luke 4:14-30**- the good Doctor gave us the inspired Narrative of the time Jesus went back to His childhood Synagogue to worship with his extended Family. And Jesus stood up and read all of verse 1 and half of verse 2. He then sat down and in **Luke 4:21b**- it says that Jesus told His uncles and aunts and cousins:

... Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

Now by saying this- Jesus was telling those present that Day that He was the One that Isaiah was prophesying about- 600 years earlier. In other words, Jesus was telling those people that He was the Messiah- who Isaiah said would be “anointed” to give Salvation to the Meek; the Broken-hearted; the Captives’ and those who have been “*bound*” by Sin. And His own *extended* Family *responded* to what Jesus said that Day- by trying to throw Him off a cliff.

But why did Jesus only read half of verse 2? Why did Jesus say that He had come to:

... proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD

... but He left off saying that He had ALSO come to proclaim:

... the day of vengeance of our God...

Why didn’t Jesus quote ALL of **Isaiah 61:2** that Day? By leaving off half of verse 2- Jesus was *emphasizing* that He had come to “**seek and to save that which was Lost**” (**Luke 19:10**). But our Lord was NOT saying to His Family that Day that He had ONLY come to “**proclaim the acceptable year of the**

LORD” and nothing else. In other words, Jesus was NOT saying that the second part of **Isaiah 61:2** did NOT apply to Him. He was NOT saying that. He was merely *emphasizing* to His extended Family the part of this Passage that identified the “*Anointed One*” of **Isaiah 61** as being the long-awaited Messiah (the Christ); and that Isaiah was talking about Him!

Now the reason I am bringing this up is to remind all of us that Jesus did NOT come to this earth the *first* time- to merely save the Lost. He also came to bring, “*the Day of Vengeance of our God*”!

So, by doing all that He did; and by saying all that He said- Jesus was accomplishing BOTH of these Things in the earth:

1. Seeking and Saving those who are Lost
2. Bring Judgment on those who refuse to believe

... and there were *several* things that Jesus wanted people to believe- including:

1. That He was the Messiah
2. That Salvation was through Belief in Him and NOT by striving to keep the Law
3. That the Old Covenant has been abolished in view of the infinitely superior New Covenant that has replaced it

... and there is Divine Judgment for anyone who doesn't believe in ALL of these Issues. And while the four groups of Jewish Leaders of the 1st Century disagreed on many, many Issues- they were unanimous about Two major Issues:

1. Jesus MUST be stopped
2. We MUST keep the Old Covenant in force

... because it was the Old Covenant with its Signs and Shadows and Types and Figures that helped to give these religious Hypocrites their Credibility.

So, all through the **Gospel of Matthew**- this former tax collector makes it a point to illustrate clearly and repeatedly the Hostility that existed between the incarnate God- Jesus Christ and the Jewish religious Leaders.

Now in **Isaiah 61:4**- the Prophet foretold what the chosen people would do- precisely because they had been chosen by God:

And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

So, Isaiah prophesied that these chosen ones will Restore; and Build; and Plant; and Repair; ALL that lost and fallen Man; and Sin; and Satan; has trampled under-foot; and torn down; and wasted; and destroyed. And the Promise of a God who cannot lie- is that these people- anointed with the Power of the third Person of the Trinity- will be used by God to raise back up- that which has laid desolate for many, many generations- like the “*Righteousness of Faith*”; and the “*Beauty of Holiness*”; and the “*Glory of the Lord*”; and the “*Magnificence of the Grace of God*”- that the scribes and Pharisees had trampled under their feet by their false Teaching.

And that is why Jesus is preaching this Sermon. He is telling the chosen ones-

Matthew 5:20

For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

... and ALL of the Characteristics and Attributes (Fruit) that Jesus reveals in this Sermon- is what the chosen Elect MUST put on- to prove that their Salvation is real. But to the religious Frauds and the “non-elect”- Jesus says,

The Hypocrites have their Reward in full!

So, what Jesus is doing in this Sermon is making a clear Distinction. He is drawing a clear Line between the Saved and the Lost; between the Sheep and the Goats; between the Fish on the Left Side and the Fish on the Right; Between the Children of Darkness and the Children of Light; between the Sons and Daughters of Abraham and the children of the devil; between the number of the sands of the sea and the number of the Stars of heaven; between the terrestrial and the Celestial; between the Heavenly and the Earthly; between those who willfully come to the Light and those who love the Darkness; between those with a clear Eye and those whose Eye is Dark (Evil); and between the true Jew and the false Jew; between those who will inherit the New Kingdom of Heaven and those who occupy the kingdom of Israel.

Now for the last two Sermons- I have been teaching about the Connection between a Clear Eye and Faith and a Dark Eye and Worry. And so, we have been dealing with the Passage found in **Matthew 6:22-34**: and what we discovered is that when we Worry over two very important Issues:

1. What we Eat (verses 26&27)
2. What we Wear (verses 28-30)

... that is a Sign to us that our Eye has become Dark (Evil) and we are “serving Wealth”. But when we hope in God and really begin to agree with what Jesus said in verses 31-33:

31 Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'

32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

... we know that we are “serving God” and NOT Wealth.

And so, the main Point in this Passage is that the degree to which we Worry- illustrates the Condition of our Heart. And the Fact that we now understand that our Worry is a Symptom of a much Worse and much more Serious Problem is NOT a very pleasant thing to know. At least not initially. But we must understand that the ONLY reason God exposed this Truth to us- is so we may- in, by, and through His Grace and His Power- overcome that hard, evil, unbelieving Heart and have the Gift of a believing Heart instead.

If God were angry with you- He would have simply left you alone to live your entire Life with that dark Eye and then die with that evil Heart of Unbelief. So, we must conclude that it is God’s Love that compelled Him to expose this Truth to us- so – with His Help- we can expel the hard Heart and have a soft one.

So, finding out the Connection between our Worry about Money; Possessions; and Wealth and our own Unbelief- is actually VERY Good News, because it is the only Way to begin the Battle with the real Cause of our Sin; and get the Victory that God can give us by the Therapy of His Word and His Spirit.

But there is another possible Response to the Truth that our Worry is rooted in our Unbelief in God’s Promises. It goes like this:

“Brother Blair- I have to deal with feelings of Worry almost every day; and so, I feel like my Belief in God must be totally Inadequate.”

... and so, the Issue then becomes-

“How could I ever have any Assurance of being saved- if I worry all the time?”

When Worry raises its ugly Head- and it begins to blur our Vision of God's Glory and the Greatness of the Future that He plans for us- this does NOT mean that we have NO Faith at all- and therefore, we really aren't saved; and therefore, we will never make it into Heaven. That is NOT what it means. Because ALL that it really means is that the Faith we DO have- is being attacked.

And at the first Blow- our Belief in God's Promises may sputter and swerve. But whether we stay on track and make it to the Finish Line does NOT depend on whether we are fought or not. It depends on whether we set in motion a "*Process of Resistance*". So, when we are attacked- we MUST fight back! **Psalm 56:3** says,

When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.

But notice it does NOT say, "*I'm never afraid.*" It also does NOT say, "*I never struggle with Fear.*" What it says is, "*When Fear strikes me- that is when the Battle begins and that is when I make a conscious Effort to put my Trust in God.*"

Now some would say, "*But why doesn't he put his Trust in God all the time? Why does he wait until he is attacked to put his trust in God?*" And the Answer is, "*That's correct. We are always supposed to put our Trust in God- at all times.*" But then the Reality of this Life hits us: "*If we always did what we were supposed to- we would NEVER need Repentance; or the Bible; or the Holy Spirit; or Forgiveness; or the Church.*" *But if we always did the Right thing; if we never veered off course; and if we never failed God and sinned- we wouldn't need Jesus either.*"

You see, dear friends, the Bible NEVER assumes that genuine Believers will NEVER sin. Because that is a myth. We DO sin. And Sin is NEVER okay; it is NEVER Right. But please take note: We aren't *supposed* to Sin- ever! Yet we do. And that is true with the Best of us. And that is why the Apostle John said this in **1John 2:1**:

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

So, John said here, "*DON'T Sin! Don't ever Sin. NEVER Sin!*" John actually told us to never Sin. Ever! But then John also said, "*But when you DO Sin (because you will)- go to the Advocate- Jesus Christ!*" So, John was saying Sin is ALWAYS wrong- so, don't Sin. But then the Reality of our "*Humanness*" comes into play. And so, John also said,

... And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

So, Jesus said, DON'T Worry! Don't *ever* Worry! Worry is a Sign of a very serious, sinful Heart- so Don't ever Worry. But then the Reality of our "*Humanness*" comes into play and the Bible also teaches me to say,

When I sense that I am worrying- I will fight against it by putting my Trust in a God- Who has NEVER failed!

So, instead of the Bible teaching me how to *never* Worry- the Bible tells me how to fight against my Worry- when it comes. For example, **1Peter 5:7** says,

casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

... but it does *NOT* say,

"You will never feel any Anxieties to cast onto God."

... instead, it says,

When the mud splatters your windshield; and you temporary lose sight of the Road; and you start to swerve in Worry- FIGHHT BACK! Turn on your wipers and squirt your windshield washer!

So, my Response to the person who has to deal with Feelings of Anxiety or Worry all the time- is to say:

That's the normal and natural Pattern for the genuine Believer

The Issue has NEVER been and will NEVER be- that you won't ever be fought. The Issue is ONLY how you deal with it when it comes- because it WILL come.

So, God's Answer to fighting against Worry- is this: *You MUST deal with Worry- by battling Unbelief.* And you battle Unbelief by:

1. Reading and Meditating on God's Word
2. Asking God for the Help of His Spirit
3. Asking for Prayer from your Brothers and Sisters

... and in doing that- God has promised to help you; and to clear your sight so you can see His Promises; and learn how to trust in what He says.

But ALL THREE are necessary- God the Holy Spirit; the Holy Word of God; and holy Brethren. Because having a “Dark” or an Evil” eye- is NOT rare- it is very, very Common. Loving Money is NOT rare. It is very, very Common. Serving Wealth instead of serving God is NOT rare- it is very, very Common. And worrying about the Future and about what we will eat; and what we will wear is NOT rare. It is very, very Common. Remember, every single person who doubted in the Bible- was saved. Doubt is NOT a Sign of no Belief at all. Doubt is a Sign that the Faith that you have- is being tested and tried and stretched and forced into Action.

So, we MUST read about the Promises of God in His Word. And then we MUST cry for the Help of His Spirit. And then we MUST not be so Proud; and so Arrogant; and so Self-Righteous; that we can’t ask for the Prayers of our Brothers and Sisters- who are struggling with the very SAME Worry. And as the windshield clears- so we can see ALL that God has for us- our Belief grows stronger; and the swerving of Worry smoothes out.

Let me close by using some Illustrations of how battling Unbelief overcomes Worry- *especially* about Money; Possessions; and Wealth. In this Sermon- Jesus gave the illustration of Worry over Food and Clothing. And even in our Country with its extensive Welfare System- Worry over Finances and Housing can be very intense. But Jesus said in verse 30 that this is owing to Unbelief when He said: **“O you of little faith.”** And so, this Paragraph has at least half a dozen Promises in it to battle that Unbelief.

For example, at the end of verse 32 and then into 33 Jesus said,

... your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

That is a *spectacular* Promise! So, in everything you do at Home; and at Work- put God’s Purposes first- and He has promised that He will provide all you need to live for His Glory. So, believe that Promise, and financial Worry will evaporate in the Warmth of God’s Care. The Apostle Paul applied the Promise to Worry in Philippians like this. In **Philippians 4:6** he says just like Jesus, **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**

... and then in **Philippians 4:19** he gives the Promise like Jesus,

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

... which, by default means that, periodically, we will sense that our Needs are NOT being met and so, we will have to go back and begin to look to Jesus and put our Hope and Trust in our God, who has promised to meet all of our Needs. And so, we follow today the Pattern of Jesus and Paul. We battle the Unbelief of Worry with the Promises of God.

So, when I worry about some risky new Venture- I battle Unbelief with the Promise from **Isaiah 41:10:**

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.

... and when I worry about my Ministry being useless and empty, I fight Unbelief with the Promise of **Isaiah 55:11:**

So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

... and when I worry about being too Weak to do my Work, I battle Unbelief with the Promise of Jesus Christ in **2Corinthians 12:9:**

My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.

... and **Deuteronomy 33:25b:**

... And according to your days, so will your leisurely walk be.

... and when I worry about Decisions I have to make about the Future, I battle Unbelief with the Promise of **Psalms 32:8:**

I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

... and when I Worry about facing Opponents, I battle Unbelief with the Promise of **Romans 8:31b:**

... If God is for us, who is against us?

... and when I worry about being Sick, I battle Unbelief with the Promise from **Romans 5:3-5-** that,

3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

...and when I worry about getting Old, I battle Unbelief with the Promise of **Isaiah 46:4:**

Even to your old age I will be the same, And even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; And I will bear you and I will deliver you.

... and when I worry about Dying, I battle Unbelief with the Promise of **Romans 14:8&9:**

8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

...and when I worry that I might make shipwreck of my Faith and fall away from God, I battle Unbelief with the Promise of **Philippians 1:6:**

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

...and the Promise of **1Thessalonians 5:23:**

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

... and the Promise of **Hebrews 7:25:**

Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

So, as we ALL engage in this “**Spiritual Warfare**” against Worry- especially about Money; Possessions; and Wealth and an Evil, Unbelieving heart- we must remind each other to these four things:

1. Take up the Book of God
2. Ask the Holy Spirit for Help
3. Go to our Brothers and Sisters for Prayer
4. Lay the Promise of God in our Heart

... and Fight!

And remember the Promise of **Proverbs 21:31**:

The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But victory belongs to the Lord.

And in this Way- we prove that we have a “*Clear Eye*”; that we are serving God and NOT Wealth; and that the Sin of Worry (that originates with an evil, unbelieving Heart) has been overwhelmed with the Supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things!

Amen. Let's pray.

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