

WEDNESDAY 18 May 2022 "God's Supply" (Matt. 6:25-34)

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

Yesterday, we concluded our time pondering one of the most powerful statements Jesus made, recorded for us by Matthew: ***"Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do not decay, and thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there your heart will be also."*** (Matt. 6:20,21) It's a profound and very true statement, and it applies to every age group of people, in every part of the world, doesn't it? ***That which we cherish, that which we love, that which we treasure... will captivate and capture our hearts. And since our hearts have profound influence on our thinking and our desires, our decisions and choices almost always follow our hearts.*** We understand what Jesus was saying, don't we, my friends?

Almost 1500 year earlier, as Moses led the Hebrew slaves out of Egyptian slavery, they followed the God provided cloud by day and pillar of fire by night which led them to Mount Sinai. There this nearly 1 million people, who had lived in slavery for generations, *spent several months with God learning about God's vision for a people who would live God honoring lives as a people of God in a wicked, often broken and dysfunctional world.* God gave those Hebrews 10 Commandments which formed the foundation of their unique culture as God's people. Among these God given, life guiding, values are these six statements:

- * ***"Honor your father and mother..."***
 - * ***"You shall not murder."***
 - * ***"You shall not commit adultery."***
 - * ***"You shall not steal."***
 - * ***"You shall not covet..."***
- (Exodus 20)

These, and four other Commandments, were audibly spoken by God to His people in their unforgettable encounter with God at Mount Sinai as recorded by Moses in Exodus 19 & 20. Later God carved these Commandments into tablets of stone, given to Moses, which were then placed inside the Ark of the Covenant and kept in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. *It's easy for us to see that all of these Commandments challenge the condition of our human heart, which by nature is selfish, prideful, covets what others have, and is willing to do almost anything to pursue and gain the deepest desires of our hearts...* what we want in life, isn't that right? That's but a glimpse of the wickedness of our sinful human nature and it resides deep in that place Jesus spoke of called our 'heart'. *That's why when our hearts are captured, captivated by the things we love, the results can be either wonderful and God honoring... as we pursue that which the heart of God loves, or it can be terrible, wicked, evil, and destructive... as we pursue those things which are of the devil, the kingdom of darkness, the rejection of God.*

That's why Jesus said **"No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and Money."** (Matt. 6:24) Jesus could just as easily have said, "You cannot serve God and Self", **because when we pursue those things our natural, evil heart desires, we will almost always be drawn AWAY from God.**

So as these people listened to Jesus that day, they, of course, had the same practical concerns that you and I have for our survival and our well-being, and that of our families and our future. Jesus knew that, so He continued: **"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. 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? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"** (Matt. 6:25-27) Now these people knew there was no such thing as any government assistance programs in the Roman Empire to feed and clothe them and provide them housing. They also knew that if they simply sat at home food would not magically appear on their table nor would clothes suddenly appear in their closets. Jesus was not advocating a welfare lifestyle of dependence on the government to provide for all life's needs. Nor was Jesus advocating a lazy, do nothing approach to life.

Jesus was challenging the people to understand that the God who created them and designed human life, understood completely what we humans need for living life as God designed it. And God will faithfully provide to our planet and all who live here, everything needed for us to use our time, our talents, our energies, our wisdom to provide for ourselves and each other, all that is needed for living. I see this in the very first explanation we have of God guiding Adam. Genesis 2:15 says: **"The LORD God took the man [Adam] and put him in the Garden of Eden to WORK it and TAKE CARE of it."** There it is! Isn't that a wonderful picture of God's perfect utopia design for living on planet earth? God provides what is needed, we take care of what God has provided, and we work to then use what God has provided to supply for our needs and the needs of humanity.

The dysfunction occurs in our world when in our selfishness and greed we doubt God's ability to provide what He knows we need, we worry about our needs not being met and we ignore God's guidance and guidelines for living life in respectful balance with God, with His creation and with each other. Jesus said to those gathered on that hillside that day: **"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink' or 'What shall we wear?' For your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself."** (Matt. 6:31-34) With these words Jesus was beginning His invitation to the people to understand and live a radical, God reliant, God glorifying lifestyle. From this day on His teachings and His miracles had as their purpose helping the people know God, understand His great love for them, *and learn how to live with their hearts aligned with God's heart.*

So, in closing today, my "Walking with Jesus" friends, I wonder if perhaps some questions might help us better understand all this, and evaluate how aligned you and I are with the heart of God and HIS design for how human life should be lived?

1. How do I evidence my belief that God really knows my needs even better than I do? What are the things I worry about and what does my worry normally lead me to do?

2. How do I evidence my trust that God will provide what He knows I need for living my life for His honor and glory?

3. How do I discern the difference between what I need and what is extravagant, excessive and unnecessary to live a God honoring life?

4. How do I recognize when something is appealing to my natural selfishness and drawing me away from thinking about or spending God's resources in a God honoring way?

5. How does my heart respond when I see abject poverty, especially when it is the result of injustice, or corruption, or laziness, or misuse of limited resources? How does my heart respond to exploitation of the disadvantaged or children or the uneducated?

6. How does my heart respond to waste or abuse of precious, God given resources?

So, let's finish today my friends by thanking God, and cherishing these words from Jesus... ***"For your heavenly Father knows what you need... But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow..."*** And let's hold firmly to the wise advice Solomon gave us in Proverbs 4:23 ***"Above all else guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life."*** So, my friends, let's be sure we guard our hearts from ANYTHING that will draw us away from Jesus. I've found a great song... "Here's My Heart LORD", that I hope will help you, wherever you are at this moment, have a significant time with Jesus, as you and HE look closely into your heart.

Today's Scripture is Matthew 6:25-34.