

MATTHEW 6: 22-33.

22. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

24. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

If we find the courage to honestly examine our inner selves and compare the concerns of our hearts to what the Savior asks of us, we will probably have to admit that our primary concerns and interests are vastly different from what the Savior wants us to be concerned with. We spend a lot of time worrying about money and will work excessively long hours at our jobs at the expense of our family life. The clothes that we wear have to be of the latest fashion, and we spend an inordinate amount of time shopping around for them. We are so concerned about how we look that we tailor our eating habits accordingly. We research all the latest fads and diets and attempt to assiduously follow them, sometimes even to the detriment to our health. All of these and other such earthly concerns consume so much of our time that we have no time left for God.

But, is this the way our Savior wants us to live? Is this the life that He created us for? The answer to this question is a resounding no! The Lord through this Gospel reading warns us that our worrying too much about money could begin to lord over us and prevent us serving our true Lord. No man can serve two lords. The Savior then asks us why do we worry so much about our earthly and material needs? Have we forgotten that God created us and knows very well what our needs are? And wouldn't He as our Heavenly Father provide us with them?

Why is it then that we do live the way we do? The answer probably is because we are very attached to this world. What we don't think about is that this attachment turns our eyes away from God, the source of light, and into the world. And as the Gospel laments, this turning away from the light makes our whole body full of darkness. In our darkness we forget that life is more than food and the body more than raiment. This darkness hides from us the fact that we are sacrificing our eternal blessed happiness for a much inferior and temporary enjoyment.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ. We have an incredibly wonderful promise from God. He tells us that we shouldn't think about what shall we eat, or drink, or what we shall put on our bodies. Instead, we should strive to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And if we do, He promises that all these things shall be added to you. Our relationship with our Savior should be the primary concern of our life. Without Him, our life is futile and can never be truly happy.

At the same time, this promise does not absolve us from the need to be concerned about our bodily and material needs. We are not angels, and we still need to physically work for a living. This promise simply directs us to a correct hierarchy of values. Our loving Creator should be the primary concern in our life. And because this is so hard to accomplish in this sinful world so full of earthly temptations, the Lord promises to bless us with everything that we need simply for trying. What a wonderful God is our God!

I greet all of you with the approaching celebration and look forward to sharing with you the joy that awaits us this weekend.

With love in Christ,

Archpriest Serge Kotar