

This sermon script is furnished with  
the good wishes of the Reorganized Church  
of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Hear Ye Him #124  
Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister  
All Rights Reserved

World Headquarters: The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri

The Sermon: TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW

Scripture: Matthew 6:24-25; 31-33.

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. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what he shall eat, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? ... Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

\*\*\*\*\*

Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.

This generation has done more than any other generation in the history of the world to promote the security of the individual, the common man. We have instituted great humanitarian movements which have provided assistance for the aged, the blind, the handicapped, and the victims of great disasters of Nature. We have bought billions of dollars worth of insurance against all the hazards of life from death to a rainy holiday. We have guaranteed bank deposits and mortgage payments. We have instituted a program of social security under which most of our citizens have a guaranteed income after retirement.

Yet in spite of all these measures, men are less secure today than they have been for a long time. With the menace of atomic warfare hovering over us, no man knows whether he will be alive tomorrow or next year to enjoy the various provisions for security which have been so carefully built up through the years.

Where is security to be found? Jesus told a parable about one man who thought he had it. His lands had brought forth so abundantly that he had not room to store all his possessions; so he tore down his old barns and built larger ones. Then he settled back to enjoy security -- but have provided physical security, he died and was left with nothing. The security supplied by piled up possessions and wealth is never secure. It can be destroyed overnight by financial panic, depression, fire, earthquake, flood, drought, lingering illness, war, change in government, inflation. And even though one should escape all these, he cannot eventually escape death, in which all material wealth and security are left behind.

Much of our security today depends on the government under which we live. We look to our government to give us protection from foes without and criminals within. But we, as individuals, are collectively the government, and the same government which guarantees our collective security may demand that the individual give up all his security and go to war in defense of his country. For the individual, there is no security even under government.

Neither does a strong nation or a strong government necessarily guarantee long range collective security for the group. Dozens of strong, invincible nations of the past have disappeared from the face of the earth, leaving hardly a trace. If you doubt that this is true, try to name ten nations of today's world which have the same form of government which they had a hundred years ago. Our own United States stands as one, but she stands almost alone in the ruins of countless kingdoms and empires which still exist racially or geographically, perhaps, but whose governments have joined those of ancient Greece and Rome and Egypt.

Perhaps after all we are too much obsessed with the pursuit of security. Could we stand security if we had it? If we knew that nothing could jeopardize our job, our health, our possessions, would not most of us forget God and settle back lazily to eat, drink, and take our ease, with no challenge, no incentive, no drive for any one of us.

According to the King James version of the Bible, Jesus said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, not yet for your body, what ye shall put on ..... Take no thought for the morrow." There are at least five interpretations of this "Take no thought" passage. First, that to make any plans or take any forethought at all shows a lack of faith in God. Second, that this commandment was only for Christ's ministry. Third, that this is a temporary principle to be followed until the coming of the kingdom. Fourth, that it represents a ideal attainable only in the triumphant kingdom. And fifth, that it is imperfectly translated in the King James version. Other translations say instead, "Take no anxious thought," "Be not anxious," "Be not solicitous," "Do not worry," "Never be troubled," etc.

Jesus never condemned careful forethought and planning. Much of his teaching was rather a plea to look ahead, to provide for the future, to count the cost, to ignore the seeming and immediate good in order that long range objectives might be obtained. The man who does not consider how today's actions and choices will affect the consequences of tomorrow is foolish and stupid and sinful. The good and wise and profitable servant is the one who looks forward to the day of his Lord's coming, and makes daily planning and provision for it. The wise and faithful servant has provided oil in his lamp and waits his Lord's coming; he has looked ahead and provided a wedding garment in anticipation of the wedding feast.

Yes, the Christian is concerned about physical security, about tomorrow's food, clothing, and shelter, about provision for his old age, about insurance against tragedy and want. But he should not be exclusively, or even primarily concerned about such things. To be exclusively or primarily concerned about worldly things is to be constantly in a state of anxiety and worry, lest some of these things be lost. The worldly-centered man who loses any one of his prized possessions is immediately miserable, frustrated, despondent, lost, and beaten, but the man who is God-centered could lose all, and even lay down his own life, and still have peace with God.

Jesus did not teach improvidence. He did not bid us take no thought for the morrow, but rather to take no anxious thought for the morrow -- not to be overly solicitous, or anxious, or worried; for worry is evidence of servitude to mammon rather than to God, and ye cannot serve both God and Mammon. To emphasize and illustrate his point, Jesus called attention to the birds of the air, and the lilies of the field. They toil not, as men toil, neither do they spin, as women labor. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns. Such labor is natural and proper for men, and if men will do their part, God will do his part by blessing their labors. The point is that birds and lilies are never anxious, never worried. They are not idle. No one who has ever watched birds building a nest or feeding their young; no one who has watch a lily lift and push aside a heavy clod, could contend that birds or lilies were idle or lazy. They do the work which it is their nature to perform, and commit their ways to God in trust that he will provide for their needs.

Men, too, should do that work which they are fitted by nature to do, and which wisdom and industry demand. In the doing of it, they should seek first the kingdom of God; their lives should be God-centered; they should "be careful for nothing," but cast all care and worry on him, trusting him to provide. If they do this, God will provide, and with anxiety, worry, and superfluous care cast aside, the channels of our lives will be open to receive the blessings which God knows are necessary for our daily life and comfort and happiness.