

Sermon on the Mount, 9

By John Wesley

Text from the 1872 edition - Thomas Jackson, editor
from www.wordsofwesley.com

Proper Cite: John Wesley. Sermon 29 "Sermon on the Mount, 9" in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson via WordsOfWesley.com (Accessed May 02,2024)

Sermon Number Sermon 29

Sermon Title Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount Discourse 9

Sermon Footnote (text of the 1872 edition)

Sermon Scripture "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 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? 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? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore 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 all 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. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."" Matt. 6:24-34.

I 1. It is recorded of the nations whom the King of Assyria, after he had carried Israel away into captivity, placed in the cities of Samaria, that "they feared the Lord, and served their own gods." "These nations," saith the inspired writer, "feared the Lord;" performed an outward

service to him (a plain proof that they had a fear of God, though not according to knowledge;) "and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: As did their fathers, so do they unto this day. (2 Kings 17:33.) How nearly does the practice of most modern Christians resemble this of the ancient Heathens! "They fear the Lord;" they also perform an outward service to him, and hereby show they have some fear of God; but they likewise "serve their own gods." There are those who "teach them" as there were who taught the Assyrians, "the manner of the God of the land;" the God whose name the country bears to this day, and who was once worshipped there with an holy worship: "Howbeit," they do not serve him alone; they do not fear him enough for this: But "every nation maketh gods of their own: Every nation in the cities wherein they dwell." "These nations fear the Lord;" they have not laid aside the outward form of worshipping him; but "they serve their graven images," silver and gold, the work of men's hands: Money, pleasure, and praise, the gods of this world, more than divide their service with the God of Israel. This is the manner both of "their children and their children's children; as did their fathers, so do they unto this day."

2. But although, speaking in a loose way, after the common manner of men, those poor Heathens were said to "fear the Lord," yet we may observe the Holy Ghost immediately adds, speaking according to the truth and real nature of things, "They fear not the Lord, neither do after the law and the commandment, which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob; with whom the Lord made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor serve them. -- But the Lord your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies." The same judgment is passed by the unerring Spirit of God, and indeed by all the eyes of whose understanding he hath opened to discern the things of God, upon these poor Christians, commonly so called. If we speak according to the truth and real nature of things, "they fear not the Lord, neither do they serve him." For they do not "after the covenant the Lord hath made with them, neither after the law and commandment which he hath commanded them, saying, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." "They serve other gods unto this day." And "no man can serve two masters."

3. How vain is it for any man to aim at this, -- to attempt the serving of two masters! Is it not easy to foresee what must be the unavoidable consequence of such an attempt? "Either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." The two parts of this sentence, although separately proposed, are to be understood in connection with each other; for the latter part is a consequence of the former. He will naturally hold to him whom he loves. He will so cleave to him, as to perform to him a willing, faithful, and diligent service. And, in the meantime, he will so far at least despise the master he hates as to have little regard to his commands, and to obey them, if at all, in a slight and careless manner. Therefore, whatsoever the wise men of the world may suppose, "ye cannot serve God and mammon."

4. Mammon was the name of one of the heathen gods, who was supposed to preside over riches. It is here understood of riches themselves; gold and silver; or, in general, money; and, by a common figure of speech, of all that may be purchased thereby; such as ease, honor, and sensual pleasure. But what are we here to understand by serving God, and what by serving mammon? We cannot serve God unless we believe in him. This is the only true foundation of serving him. Therefore, believing in God, as "reconciling the world to himself through Christ Jesus," the believing in him, as a loving, pardoning God, is the first great branch of his service. And thus to believe in God implies, to trust in him as our strength, without whom we can do nothing, who every moment endues us with power from on high, without which it is impossible to please him; as our help, our only help in time of trouble, who compasseth us about with songs of deliverance; as our shield, our defender, and the lifter up of our head above all our enemies that are round about us. It implies, to trust in God as our happiness; as the centre of spirits; the only rest of our souls; the only good who is adequate to all our capacities, and sufficient to satisfy all the desires he hath given us. It implies, (what is nearly allied to the other,) to trust in God as our end; to have an eye to him in all things; to use all things only as means of enjoying him; wheresoever we are, or whatsoever we do, to see him that is invisible, looking on us well-pleased, and to refer all things to him in Christ Jesus.

5. Thus to believe, is the First thing we are to understand by serving God. The Second is, to love him. Now to love God in the manner the Scripture describes, in the manner God himself requires of us, and by requiring engages to work in us, -- is to love him as the ONE GOD; that is, "with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength;" -- it is to desire God alone for his own sake; and nothing else, but with reference to him; -- to rejoice in God; -- to delight in the Lord; not only to seek, but find, happiness in him; to enjoy God as the chiefest among ten thousand; to rest in him, as our God and our all; -- in a word, to have such a possession of God as makes us always happy.

6. A Third thing we are to understand by serving God is to resemble or imitate him. So the ancient Father: Optimus Dei cultus, imitari quem colis: "It is the best worship or service of God, to imitate him you worship." We here speak of imitating or resembling him in the spirit of our minds: For here the true Christian imitation of God begins. "God is a Spirit;" and they that imitate or resemble him must do it "in spirit and in truth." Now God is love: Therefore, they who resemble him in the spirit of their minds are transformed into the same image. They are merciful even as he is merciful. Their soul is all love. They are kind, benevolent, compassionate, tender-hearted; and that not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. Yea, they are, like Him, loving unto every man, and their mercy extends to all his works.

7. One thing more we are to understand by serving God, and that is, the obeying him; the glorifying him with our bodies, as well as with our spirits; the keeping his outward commandments; the zealously doing whatever he hath enjoined; the carefully avoiding whatever he hath forbidden; the performing all the ordinary actions of life with a single eye and a pure heart, offering them all in holy, fervent love, as sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.

8. Let us consider now what we are to understand, on the other hand, by serving mammon. And, First, it implies the trusting in riches, in money, or the things purchasable thereby, as our strength, -- the means whereby we shall perform whatever cause we have in hand; the trusting in them as our help, -- by which we look to be comforted in or

delivered out of trouble. It implies the trusting in the world for happiness; the supposing that "a man's life," the comfort of his life, "consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;" the looking for rest in the things that are seen; for content, in outward plenty; the expecting that satisfaction in the things of the world, which can never be found out of God. And if we do this, we cannot but make the world our end; the ultimate end, if not of all, at least of many, of our undertakings, many of our actions and designs; in which we shall aim only at an increase of wealth, at the obtaining pleasure or praise, at the gaining a larger measure of temporal things, without any reference to things eternal.

9. The serving mammon implies, Secondly, loving the world; desiring it for its own sake; the placing our joy in the things thereof, and setting our hearts upon them; the seeking (what indeed it is impossible we should find) our happiness therein; the resting with the whole weight of our souls, upon the staff of this broken reed, although daily experience shows it cannot support, but will only "enter into our hand and pierce it."

10. To resemble, to be conformed to the world, is a Third thing we are to understand by serving mammon; to have not only designs, but desires, tempers, affections, suitable to those of the world; to be of an earthly, sensual mind, chained down to the things of earth; to be self-willed, inordinate lovers of ourselves; to think highly of our own attainments; to desire and delight in the praise of men; to fear, shun, and abhor reproach; to be impatient of reproof, easy to be provoked, and swift to return evil for evil.

11. To serve mammon is, Lastly, to obey the world, by outwardly conforming to its maxims and customs; to walk as other men walk, in the common road, in the broad, smooth, beaten path; to be in the fashion; to follow a multitude; to do like the rest of our neighbours; that is, to do the will of the flesh and the mind, to gratify our appetites and inclinations; to sacrifice to ourselves; aim at our own ease and pleasure, in the general course both of our words and actions. Now what can be more undeniably clear than that we cannot thus serve God and mammon?

12. Does not every man see, that he cannot comfortably serve both? That to trim between God and the world is the sure way to be disappointed in both, and to have no rest either in one or the other? How uncomfortable a condition must he be in, who, having the fear but not the love of God, -- who, serving him, but not with all his heart, -- has only the toils and not the joys of religion? He has religion enough to make him miserable, but not enough to make him happy: His religion will not let him enjoy the world, and the world will not let him enjoy God. So that, by halting between both, he loses both; and has no peace either in God or the world.

13. Does not every man see, that he cannot serve both consistently with himself? What more glaring inconsistency can be conceived, than must continually appear in his whole behavior, who is endeavoring to obey both these masters, -- striving to "serve God and mammon?" He is indeed a "sinner that goeth two ways;" one step forward and another backward. He is continually building up with one hand, and pulling down with the other. He loves sin, and he hates it: He is always seeking, and yet always fleeing from, God. He would, and he would not. He is not the same man for one day; no, not for an hour together. He is a motley mixture of all sorts of contrarieties; a heap of contradictions jumbled in one. O be consistent with thyself one way or the other! Turn to the right hand or to the left. If mammon be God, serve thou him; if the Lord, then serve him. But never think of serving either at all, unless it be with thy whole heart.

14. Does not every reasonable, every thinking man see that he cannot possibly serve God and mammon? Because there is the most absolute contrariety, the most irreconcilable enmity between them. The contrariety between the most opposite things on earth, between fire and water, darkness and light, vanishes into nothing when compared to the contrariety between God and mammon. So that, in whatsoever respect you serve the one, you necessarily renounce the other. Do you believe in God through Christ? Do you trust in him as your strength, your help, your shield, and your exceeding great reward? as your happiness? your end in all, above all things? Then you cannot trust in riches. It is absolutely impossible you should, so long as you have this faith in God.

Do you thus trust in riches? Then you have denied the faith. You do not trust in the living God. Do you love God? Do you seek and find happiness in him? Then you cannot love the world, neither the things of the world. You are crucified to the world, and the world crucified to you. Do you love the world? Are your affections set on things beneath? Do you seek happiness in earthly things? Then it is impossible you should love God. Then the love of the Father is not in you. Do you resemble God? Are you merciful, as your Father is merciful? Are you transformed, by the renewal of your mind, into the image of him that created you? Then you cannot be conformed to the present world. You have renounced all its affections and lusts. Are you conformed to the world? Does your soul still bear the image of the earthly? Then you are not renewed in the spirit of your mind. You do not bear the image of the heavenly. Do you obey God? Are you zealous to do his will on earth as the angels do in heaven? Then it is impossible you should obey mammon. Then you set the world at open defiance. You trample its customs and maxims under foot, and will neither follow nor be led by them. Do you follow the world? Do you live like other men? Do you please men? Do you please yourself? Then you cannot be a servant of God. You are of your master and father, the devil.

15. Therefore, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; and him only shalt thou serve." Thou shalt lay aside all thoughts of obeying two masters, of serving God and mammon. Thou shalt propose to thyself no end, no help, no happiness, but God. Thou shalt seek nothing in earth or heaven but him: Thou shalt aim at nothing, but to know, to love, and enjoy him. And because this is all your business below, the only view you can reasonably have, the one design you are to pursue in all things, -- "Therefore I say unto you," (as our Lord continues his discourse,) "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:" -- A deep and weighty direction, which it imports us well to consider and thoroughly to understand.

16. Our Lord does not here require, that we should be utterly without thought, even touching the concerns of this life. A giddy, careless temper is at the farthest remove from the whole religion of Jesus Christ. Neither does he require us to be "slothful in business," to be slack and

dilatory therein. This, likewise, is contrary to the whole spirit and genius of his religion. A Christian abhors sloth as much as drunkenness; and flees from idleness as he does from adultery. He well knows, that there is one kind of thought and care with which God is well pleased; which is absolutely needful for the due performance of those outward works unto which the providence of God has called him. It is the will of God, that every man should labour to eat his own bread; yea, and that every man should provide for his own, for them of his own household. It is likewise his will, that we should "owe no man anything, but provide things honest in the sight of all men." But this cannot be done without taking some thought, without having some care upon our minds; yea, often, not without long and serious thought, not without much and earnest care. Consequently this care, to provide for ourselves and our household, this thought how to render to all their dues, our blessed Lord does not condemn. Yea, it is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. It is good and acceptable to God, that we should so take thought concerning whatever we have in hand, as to have a clear comprehension of what we are about to do, and to plan our business before we enter upon it. And it is right that we should carefully consider, from time to time, what steps we are to take therein; as well as that we should prepare all things beforehand, for the carrying it on in the most effectual manner. This care, termed by some, "the care of the head," it was by no means our Lord's design to condemn.

17. What he here condemns is, the care of the heart; the anxious, uneasy care; the care that hath torment; all such care as does hurt, either to the soul or body. What he forbids is, that care which, sad experience shows, wastes the blood and drinks up the spirits; which anticipates all the misery it fears, and comes to torment us before the time. He forbids only that care which poisons the blessings of to-day, by fear of what may be to-morrow; which cannot enjoy the present plenty, through apprehensions of future want. This care is not only a sore disease, a grievous sickness of soul, but also an heinous offence against God, a sin of the deepest dye. It is a high affront to the gracious Governor and wise Disposer of all things; necessarily implying, that the great Judge does not do right; that he does not order all things well. It plainly implies, that he is wanting, either in wisdom, if he does not know what things we stand in need of; or in goodness, if he does not provide

those things for all who put their trust in him. Beware, therefore, that you take not thought in this sense: Be ye anxiously careful for nothing. Take no uneasy thought: This is a plain, sure rule, Uneasy care is unlawful care. With a single eye to God, do all that in you lies to provide things honest in the sight of all men. And then give up all into better hands; leave the whole event to God.

18. "Take no thought" of this kind, no uneasy thought, even "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?" If then God gave you life, the greater gift, will he not give you food to sustain it? If he hath given you the body, how can ye doubt but he will give you raiment to cover it? More especially, if you give yourselves up to him, and serve him with your whole heart. "Behold," see before your eyes, "the fowls of the air: For they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns;" and yet they lack nothing; "yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Ye that are creatures capable of God, are ye not of more account in the eyes of God? of a higher rank in the scale of beings? "And which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" What profit have you then from this anxious thought? It is every way fruitless and unavailing. "And why take ye thought for raiment?" Have ye not a daily reproof wherever you turn your eyes? "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," (is cut down, burned up, and seen no more,) "shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" you, whom he made to endure for ever and ever, to be pictures of his own eternity! Ye are indeed of little faith; otherwise ye could not doubt of his love and care; no, not for a moment.

19. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat," if we lay up no treasure upon earth? "What shall we drink," if we serve God with all our strength, if our eye be singly fixed on him? "Wherewithal shall we be clothed," if we are not conformed to the world, if we disoblige those by whom we might be profited? "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek," -- the Heathens who know not God. But ye are sensible "your

heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." And he hath pointed out to you an infallible way of being constantly supplied therewith: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

20. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God:" -- Before ye give place to any other thought or care, let it be your concern that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who "gave his only begotten Son," to the end that, believing in him, "ye might not perish, but have everlasting life") may reign in your heart, may manifest himself in your soul, and dwell and rule there; that he may "cast down every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Let God have the sole dominion over you: Let him reign without a rival: Let him possess all your heart, and rule alone. Let him be your one desire, your joy, your love; so that all that is within you may continually cry out, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." "Seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

Righteousness is the fruit of God's reigning in the heart. And what is righteousness, but love? -- the love of God and of all mankind, flowing from faith in Jesus Christ, and producing humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering, patience, deadness to the world; and every right disposition of heart, toward God and toward man. And by these it produces all holy actions, whatsoever are lovely or of good report; whatsoever works of faith and labour of love are acceptable to God, and profitable to man. "His righteousness:" -- This is all his righteousness still: It is his own free gift to us, for the sake of Jesus Christ the righteous, through whom alone it is purchased for us. And it is his work; it is He alone that worketh it in us, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

21. Perhaps the well observing this may give light to some other scriptures, which we have not always so clearly understood. St. Paul, speaking in his Epistle to the Romans concerning the unbelieving Jews, saith, "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." I believe this may be one sense of the words: They were "ignorant of God's righteousness," not only of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to every believer, whereby all his sins

are blotted out, and he is reconciled to the favour of God: But (which seems here to be more immediately understood) they were ignorant of that inward righteousness, of that holiness of heart, which is with the utmost propriety termed God's righteousness; as being both his own free gift through Christ, and his own work, by his almighty Spirit. And because they were "ignorant" of this, they "went about to establish their own righteousness." They laboured to establish that outside righteousness which might very properly be termed their own. For neither was it wrought by the Spirit of God, nor was it owned or accepted of him. They might work this themselves, by their own natural strength; and when they had done, it was a stink in his nostrils. And yet, trusting in this, they would "not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." Yea, they hardened themselves against that faith whereby alone it was possible to attain it. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Christ, when he said, "It is finished!" put an end to that law, -- to the law of external rites and ceremonies, that he might bring in a better righteousness through his blood, by that one oblation of himself once offered, even the image of God, into the inmost soul of everyone that believeth.

22. Nearly related to these are those words of the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Philippians: "I count all things but dung that I may win Christ;" an entrance into his everlasting kingdom; "and be found in him," believing in him, "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." -- "Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law;" a barely external righteousness, the outside religion I formerly had, when I hoped to be accepted of God because I was, "touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless;" -- "but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith;" [Phil. 3:8-9] that holiness of heart, that renewal of the soul in all its desires, tempers, and affections, "which is of God," (it is the work of God, and not of man,) "by faith;" through the faith of Christ, through the revelation of Jesus Christ in us, and by faith in his blood; whereby alone we obtain the remission of our sins, and an inheritance among those that are sanctified.

23. "Seek ye first" this "kingdom of God" in your hearts; this

righteousness, which is the gift and work of God, the image of God renewed in your souls; "and all these things shall be added unto you;" all things needful for the body; such a measure of all as God sees most for the advancement of his kingdom. These shall be added, -- they shall be thrown in, over and above. In seeking the peace and the love of God, you shall not only find what you more immediately seek, even the kingdom that cannot be moved; but also what you seek not, -- not at all for its own sake, but only in reference to the other. You shall find in your way to the kingdom, all outward things, so far as they are expedient for you. This care God hath taken upon himself: Cast you all your care upon Him. He knoweth your wants; and whatsoever is lacking he will not fail to supply.

24. "Therefore take no thought for the morrow." Not only, take ye no thought how to lay up treasures on earth, how to increase in worldly substance; take no thought how to procure more food than you can eat, or more raiment than you can put on, or more money than is required from day to day for the plain, reasonable purposes of life; -- but take no uneasy thought, even concerning those things which are absolutely needful for the body. Do not trouble yourself now, with thinking what you shall do at a season which is yet afar off. Perhaps that season will never come; or it will be no concern of yours; -- before then you will have passed through all the waves, and be landed in eternity. All those distant views do not belong to you, who are but a creature of a day. Nay, what have you to do with the morrow, more strictly speaking? Why should you perplex yourself without need? God provides for you to-day what is needful to sustain the life which he hath given you. It is enough: Give yourself up into his hands. If you live another day, he will provide for that also.

25. Above all, do not make the care of future things a pretence for neglecting present duty. This is the most fatal way of "taking thought for the morrow." And how common is it among men! Many, if we exhort them to keep a conscience void of offence, to abstain from what they are convinced is evil, do not scruple to reply, "How then must we live? Must we not take care of ourselves and of our families?" And this they imagine to be a sufficient reason for continuing in known, wilful sin. They say, and perhaps think, they would serve God now, were it not

that they should, by and by, lose their bread. They would prepare for eternity; but they are afraid of wanting the necessities of life. So they serve the devil for a morsel of bread; they rush into hell for fear of want; they throw away their poor souls, lest they should, some time or other, fall short of what is needful for their bodies! It is not strange that they who thus take the matter out of God's hand should be so often disappointed of the very things they seek; that, while they throw away heaven to secure the things of earth, they lose the one but do not gain the other. The jealous God, in the wise course of his providence, frequently suffers this. So that they who will not cast their care on God, who, taking thought for temporal things, have little concern for things eternal, lose the very portion which they have chosen. There is a visible blast on all their undertakings; whatsoever they do, it doth not prosper; insomuch that, after they have forsaken God for the world, they lose what they sought, as well as what they sought not: They fall short of the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; nor yet are other things added unto them.

26. There is another way of "taking thought for the morrow," which is equally forbidden in these words. It is possible to take thought in a wrong manner, even with regard to spiritual things; to be so careful about what may be by and by, as to neglect what is now required at our hands. How insensibly do we slide into this, if we are not continually watching unto prayer! How easily are we carried away, in a kind of waking dream, projecting distant schemes, and drawing fine scenes in our own imagination! We think, what good we will do when we are in such a place, or when such a time is come! How useful we will be, how plenteous in good works, when we are easier in our circumstances! How earnestly we will serve God, when once such an hindrance is out of the way! Or perhaps you are now in heaviness of soul: God, as it were, hides his face from you. You see little of the light of his countenance: You cannot taste his redeeming love. In such a temper of mind, how natural is it to say, "O how I will praise God, when the light of his countenance shall be again lifted up upon my soul! How will I exhort others to praise him, when his love is again shed abroad in my heart! Then I will do thus and thus: I will speak for God in all places: I will not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Then I will redeem the time: I will use to the uttermost every talent I have received." Do not believe

thyself. Thou wilt not do it then, unless thou doest it now. "He that is faithful in that which is little," of whatsoever kind it be, whether it be worldly substance, or the fear or love of God, "will be faithful in that which is much." But if thou now hidest one talent in the earth, thou wilt then hide five: That is, if ever they are given; but there is small reason to expect they ever will. Indeed "unto him that hath," that is, uses what he hath, "shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. But from him that hath not," that is, uses not the grace which he hath already received, whether in a larger or smaller degree, "shall be taken away even that which he hath."

27. And take no thought for the temptations of to-morrow. This also is a dangerous snare. Think not, "When such a temptation comes, what shall I do? how shall I stand? I feel I have not power to resist. I am not able to conquer that enemy." Most true: You have not now the power which you do not now stand in need of. You are not able at this time to conquer that enemy; and at this time he does not assault you. With the grace you have now, you could not withstand the temptations which you have not. But when the temptation comes, the grace will come. In greater trials you will have greater strength. When sufferings abound, the consolations of God will, in the same proportion, abound also. So that, in every situation, the grace of God will be sufficient for you. He doth not suffer you "to be tempted" to-day "above that ye are able to bear;" and "in every temptation he will make a way to escape." "As thy days, so thy strength shall be."

28. "Let the morrow," therefore, "take thought for the things of itself;" that is, when the morrow comes, then think of it. Live thou to-day. Be it thy earnest care to improve the present hour. This is your own; and it is your all. The past is as nothing, as though it had never been. The future is nothing to you. It is not yours; perhaps it never will be. There is no depending on what is yet to come; for you "know not what a day may bring forth." Therefore, live to-day: Lose not an hour: Use this moment; for it is your portion. "Who knoweth the things which have been before him, or which shall be after him under the sun?" The generations that were from the beginning of the world, where are they now? Fled away: Forgotten. They were; they lived their day; they were shook off of the earth, as leaves off of their trees: They mouldered away into common

dust! Another and another race succeeded; then they "followed the generation of their fathers, and shall never more see the light." Now is thy turn upon the earth. "Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth! Enjoy the very, very now, by enjoying Him "whose years fail not." Now let thine eye be singly fixed on Him in "whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning!" Now give Him thy heart; now stay thyself on Him: Now be thou holy, as he is holy. Now lay hold on the blessed opportunity of doing his acceptable and perfect will! Now rejoice to "suffer the loss of all things," so thou mayest "win Christ!"

29. Gladly suffer to-day, for his name's sake, whatsoever he permits this day to come upon thee. But look not at the sufferings of to-morrow. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Evil it is, speaking after the manner of men; whether it be reproach or want, pain or sickness; but in the language of God, all is blessing: It is a precious balm, prepared by the wisdom of God, and variously dispensed among his children, according to the various sicknesses of their souls. And he gives in one day, sufficient for that day; proportioned to the want and strength of the patient. If, therefore, thou snatchest to-day what belongs to the morrow; if thou addest this to what is given thee already, it will be more than thou canst bear: This is the way not to heal, but to destroy thy own soul. Take, therefore, just as much as he gives thee to-day: To-day, do and suffer his will! To-day, give up thyself, thy body, soul, and spirit to God, through Christ Jesus; desiring nothing, but that God may be glorified in all thou art, all thou doest, all thou sufferest; seeking nothing, but to know God, and his Son Jesus Christ, through the eternal Spirit; pursuing nothing, but to love him, to serve him, and to enjoy him at this hour, and to all eternity! Now unto "God the Father, who hath made me and all the world;" unto "God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind;" unto "God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God;" be honour and praise, majesty, and dominion, for ever and ever! Amen.

Copyright © 2011-2014 WordsOfWesley.com. All rights reserved.

Proper Cite: John Wesley. Sermon 29 "Sermon on the Mount, 9" in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson via WordsOfWesley.com (Accessed May 02,2024)