

Merimna Part 2

– *care, anxiety, worry* –

Concept

The Greek concept of **μέριμνα** (merimna) describes a state in which someone is mentally occupied with something. It manifests as an anxious, troubled, and distracted mind. The attention consumed with the cares of this life. The Bible teaches this is Satan's only weapon against a believer in Christ, one that he employs to hinder spiritual growth.

Introduction

We are continuing with part two in our eight-part study on the Greek word **μέριμνα** (merimna, Strong's 3308) and its verb form **μεριμνάω** (merimnao, Strong's 3309).

Definition

The noun **μέριμνα** (merimna) is translated as *care, anxiety, and worry*. Its root is the Greek word **μερίζω** (merizō, Strong's 3307), which is translated *to divide, or to separate*.

Origin

Derived from the noun, the verb form **μεριμνάω** (merimnao) means *to be anxious, to be troubled, and careful thought*.

Review ~ Phases of the Christian Life

So **μέριμνα** (merimna) represents a mental state or condition in which someone is *occupied with* or *dwelling upon* something.

As a foundation for our word study, we established a scriptural understanding of the phases of the Christian life: the first being Salvation; the second being Growth and Change.

As previously discussed, Scripture shows that the Early Church established the presence of the Spirit of Christ dwelling within a person as the proof of salvation (Romans 8:9; II Corinthians 13:5; I John 3:24; I John 4:13). Additionally, Ephesians 1:13 states that a believer is "sealed by the Holy Spirit." Hence, anyone who belongs to Christ has the Spirit of Christ indwelling and sealing his spirit. These two things make it impossible for any other spirit to penetrate the spirit of a believer.

We also studied that once saved, a believer grows and changes through the "transformation of the mind" (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23).

Review ~ Meaning Part One

Based upon these scriptural facts, I Peter 5:5-8 becomes the foundation Scripture for our study on **μέριμνα** (merimna). In verse 7, Peter exhorts us to cast our care (**μέριμνα**, merimna) upon

the Lord because Satan (our adversary) is walking around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Since Scripture presents that the spirit of a believer has been saved and sealed by the Holy Spirit, we understand this scripture to mean that Satan is not looking to devour a believer in Christ spiritually, but mentally. Satan attempts to disrupt the growth and maturation process of a believer by occupying the attention of his mind. This **μέριμνα** (merimna) is the only weapon Satan can use against a believer - he cannot take a believer's salvation, he cannot unseal a believer's spirit, he can only attack a believer's mind, attempting to distract his attention away from God's Word thereby hindering spiritual growth and maturity.

Meaning Part Two ~ Matthew 6:24-34

This week we are going to study from the teaching of Jesus Himself in Matthew 6:24-34. This is the teaching upon which Peter and Paul based their teachings of this important issue.

Matthew 6:24 is the primary teaching upon which Verses 25-34 are based. We must understand this most important principle before we can understand the importance of the Lord's teaching on **μέριμνα** (merimna).

24) No one is able to serve two lords; for either he will hate the one, and he will love the other; or he will cling to one, and he will despise the other. You are not able to serve God and mammon.

Singular Capacity

The word *able* in this text is the Greek word **δύναμαι** (dunamai, Strong's 1410) and means *ability* or *capacity*. Jesus taught a human being has been created with a capacity to serve only one lord or master. He cannot and does not have the capacity to serve two.

The word *mammon* at the end of the verse is from an Aramaic root meaning *materialism*; which Jesus personifies here as being *the lord of materialism*. Materialism, according to the concept of *mammon*, involves both physical things as well as ambitions and desires for them. Jesus is saying that a human being is created with the capacity to serve either God or the material realm but is unable to serve both. [**μαμμωνα** (mammōna) Strong's 3126]

Instruction

Notice how Verse 25 starts:

25) On account of this I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you should eat and what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on. Is not life more than the food and the body more than the clothing.

The phrase, *on account of this* (**διὰ τούτου**, dia touto) means *on the basis of the truth I just stated*. Jesus follows His presentation of the principle of singular capacity with His teaching on

μεριμνάω (merimnao). He instructs believers to not be anxious about the things pertaining to this life because a human being has been created with the capacity to serve only one realm or master.

Command One of Two

Jesus then presents the first of two main commands in this text: "do not be anxious (**μεριμνάω**, merimnao) for your life." Jesus knows that because we have the capacity to serve only one master, we can't be consumed with thinking and worrying about the necessities of our life and be serving Him at the same time.

Jesus then goes on to say:

26) Look at the birds of heaven, that they do not sow, nor do they reap, nor do they gather into barns, and your heavenly Father is feeding them; do you not differ more than they?

27) And which of you while being anxious is able to add one cubit upon his stature?

28) And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Observe the lilies of the field, how they grow; they do not labor nor do they spin;

29) but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself as one of these.

30) And if God clothes in this way the grass of the field, *which is existing today and tomorrow is being cast into an oven, will He not much more clothe you, little faith ones?*

Outline

In the body of His message, Jesus presents two secondary commands and four questions in order to drive home the importance of the knowledge of **μεριμνάω** (merimnao).

Secondary Command

The first secondary command is "Look," **ἐμβλέπω** (emblepō, Strong's 1689) translated *to consider, to study*. Jesus is commanding the disciples to study the birds of the air and see how their heavenly Father takes care of them.

Question

Jesus then asks the first question, "Do you not differ more than they?" He is saying that since the heavenly Father feeds the birds, He will certainly feed the ones who belong to Him.

Question

In Verse 27, Jesus asks the second question, "And which of you while being anxious is able to add one cubit upon his stature?" The word *anxious* is the participial form of

μεριμνάω (merimnao) and denotes *a habit of life*. Jesus is showing that a person can be continually occupied with his height but will not be able to add to it even though he is constantly thinking on it.

Question

In Verse 28, He asks the third question, "And why are you anxious (**μεριμνάω**, merimnao) concerning clothing?"

Secondary Command

He then gives the second secondary command, "Observe the lilies." [**καταμανθάνω** (katamanthanō) Strong's 2648, translated *to examine, to observe*.] Drawing attention to the fact that God clothes the flowers and grass of the field. They do not labor or spin in order to obtain their clothing; He provides it for them. Jesus said that when Solomon clothed himself, he was not clothed as one of these.

Question

The Lord then asks the fourth question in Verse 30, "Will He not much more clothe you, little faith ones?" Jesus is presenting throughout these scriptures that trust in the Lord is the key to dealing with the necessities of life. We do not have the capacity to be occupied with our necessities and to trust the Lord at the same time; but when we occupy our minds with the Lord, He makes sure that we have what we need for life.

Conclusion One of Two

The Lord presents the first of two conclusions in Verse 31:

31) Therefore, do not be anxious for your life saying, "What should we eat?" or, "What should we drink?" or, "With what should we be clothed?"

He starts with the conclusion *therefore* [**οὖν** (oun) Strong's 3767] and presents a series of subjunctives working off of the main command in Verse 25. The reasons we should not be anxious about these things are given in verse 32:

32) For all these things the nations are seeking after; for your heavenly Father knows that you are in need of all these things.

The heathen of the world are seeking the things of survival and have the attention of their minds constantly on mammon. Jesus is saying our heavenly Father already knows the things that we need.

Command Two of Two

The second main command of this teaching comes in verse 33. In light of the fact that a human being has the capacity to serve only one master, either God or mammon, Jesus says:

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

Since we have been created to have the capacity to seek and serve only one master, we are commanded to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Since our Father knows that we are in need of earthly things, they will be given to us by God while we focus our attention on the things of the Lord. Note that He did not say we would get what we want, but that we will have our needs taken care of.

Conclusion Two of Two

There is a second conclusion in Verse 34, οὐν (oun). Jesus again uses a subjunctive mood to express what we should not do based upon the main command, "Do not be anxious for your life" in verse 25. He says,

34) Therefore, you should not be anxious (μεριμνάω) for the tomorrow. For the tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient for the day is the adversity of it.

Jesus not only warns us that having the attention of our minds occupied with the necessities of life will distract us from seeking and serving the Lord, but He presents that being anxious about tomorrow will also occupy our thinking processes. He says that there will be enough worry (μεριμνάω, merimnao) coming with the day itself and the adversity is sufficient without our worrying over tomorrow before it gets here.

Importance

In these verses, Jesus introduced the concept of *the occupation of the attention of the mind*. He established that a human being does not have the capacity to serve God and the material realm at the same time and that Satan uses even the necessities of life to occupy our thinking and take our attention away from the Lord.

There are many believers today who find themselves occupied with the material realm all week long. On Sunday they attend church, but experience frustration over not growing in the Lord. This happens because our minds are occupied with the things of the physical realm even while we are sitting in church. We simply are not focused on the Word. Similarly, believers go to fellowship out of duty, but do not experience the "transformation of the mind" because they are occupied and anxious about so many things.

We believers must understand the battle is not over just because we are saved. Salvation is assured; but another battle is being waged. It is the battle for the attention of our minds and our growth and our maturity as believers is at stake. The mind is the arena where God ministers His Word and brings healing from the effects of sin.

Conclusion

This is why Peter says, "Be humbled under the mighty hand of God having cast all our care (**μέριμνα**, merimna) upon the Lord." He explains God is concerned for us because we have an adversary who desires to devour us through the occupation of the attention of our minds. Satan will use any goal, any ambition, any activity, or any material thing to occupy the attention of our minds so that we will not be receptive to God's Word, and, consequently, unable to grow or be changed.

Notes

- Merimna is the English font spelling of the Greek word **μέριμνα**.
- Merimnao is the English font spelling of the Greek word **μεριμνάω**.
- All Biblical quotes contained herein are a Literal English Translation of the Bible produced by BTE Ministries - The Bible Translation and Exegesis Institute of America.