

God's Social Security Program

by William MacDonald

God's social security program is a plan where we trust God to provide for our needs, rather than trying to accumulate wealth and security on our own.

Duration: 41:07

Scripture: Matthew 6:25

Topics: "Provision"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the main purpose of life should not be focused on pleasure or material possessions. Instead, he encourages listeners to pay attention to the messages that God sends through the birds of the air. The preacher references Matthew 6:19-34, where Jesus teaches about not storing up treasures on earth but rather focusing on treasures in heaven. He highlights the importance of having a single-minded focus on God and serving the interests of Jesus Christ, rather than being consumed by the pursuit of food and clothing. The preacher also discusses the significance of our motives, emphasizing the importance of having a pure and single-minded heart.

Transcript

Let us read Matthew Chapter Six, verses nineteen through thirty-four. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. So, the light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

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! 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. Yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory would not array like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today 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 is a ten-fold seat, 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." This portion of Scripture has to do with God's social security program.

Now, we have all been brainwashed from our earliest days to believe that it is our duty to provide our own security for the future. We speak of it as prudence to lay up for the future. Sometimes we have little jingles to prove the point.

Wise bees save honey, wise men save money, and we somehow have the idea that if we just have sufficient stocks and bonds and savings bank accounts and insurance policies that we can actually guarantee our future as far as finances are concerned. And, not only so, but most of our lives is spent in the accumulation of what we consider to be adequate reserves for our future. Now, in the kingdom of God, the program for future security is quite different.

Here, the Lord Jesus once expressly forbids the laying up of treasures upon earth. He says, "...lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moss and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." And, if this verse says anything at all, it says that treasures on earth do not bring security. In fact, it seems to me that I can see three nervous breakdowns in verse 19.

Moss, rust, and thieves. Just think of the time and money that are spent in our country today seeking to guard against these three enemies. Moss, rust, and thieves.

The truth of the matter is that treasures upon earth do not bring security, and sooner or later we will have to learn that the only security we have in this world is the Lord himself. Some of us have lived through the Depression years when accumulated wealth was wiped out practically overnight. Children who had been taught to save saw the banks close and all their savings that were gone.

And, here the Lord Jesus tells us there is no security in the treasures of this earth, and I expressly forbid you to lay up treasures on earth. Instead of that, lay up treasures in heaven where neither moss nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Now, how can you lay up treasures in heaven? Well, of course, the only way to lay up treasures in heaven is to invest our material things in the work of God down here.

In order to lay up treasures in heaven, we have to lay down treasures here for Christ and for the gospel's sake. But, pray God, there in heaven our treasures are beyond the reach of corrosion and destruction and theft. They are eternal in the heavens.

And, Jesus then adds the illuminating statement, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And, we know as a matter of practical fact that this is exactly the case. Where our treasure is, that is where our affections are also.

In fact, we can easily tell where our treasures are by asking ourselves the question, what can I speak about most enthusiastically? Can I speak more enthusiastically about the stock market, for instance, than I can about missionary endeavor in various parts of the world? Am I more knowledgeable about accumulating wealth on earth than I am about what is going on throughout the world in the work of the gospel? Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And, it really is a fact that our heart can either be in heaven or in a safe deposit box. Now, in the next two verses, there seems to be a change in the subject.

He says, the light of the body is the eye, and so forth. And, in reading the gospels, it's often easy to think that there has been a complete change in the flow of thought, but that is not the case here. Here, the Lord Jesus is speaking about our motives.

He says, the lamp of the body is the eye. If, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. Now, of course, this is figurative language, and it's designed to express a figurative truth.

In the natural realm, it is true that the eye is the lamp of the body. In a marvelous, mysterious way, the light enters the body through the eye, and as a result, a person's being is illuminated. He sees what is going on about him.

He sees where he is walking. And, if his eye is healthy, that is, single here, if his eye is healthy, his whole body is full of light. This is true.

If a man's eye is in a healthy condition, he can see pitfalls. He can see ditches. He can see things that, otherwise, he might trip over.

But, a healthy eye enables him to see where he's going, and avoid the dangers. On the other hand, if his eye is evil, that is, if it is diseased, if it is not permitting the light to come in, it says, his whole body will be full of darkness. Well, that's true, and it's true spiritually, too.

The evil eye here is the eye that has mixed motives. It's the person who's trying to live for this world, and trying to live for the world to come. It's the person who's trying to lay up treasures on earth, and also trying to lay up treasures in heaven.

And, Jesus says, if your eye is evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. That is, if a person has this mixed motive, if he tries to have one foot in the world, and one foot in heaven, his whole being is going to be filled with darkness. Darkness as far as the word of God is concerned, darkness as far as guidance is concerned, darkness in all the spiritual realm.

And then, Jesus says, if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness? That is, if a Christian has received a certain measure of light, but then turns his back on that light, and tries to live for a world of material things, and tries to accumulate treasures on earth, and provide for his own security, Christ says that the darkness, that kind of darkness, is the deepest kind of darkness of all. If therefore the light that is in me be darkness, how great is that darkness? Light rejected is light denied. And then, the Lord says, as a matter of fact, you can serve two masters, and the two masters here are obviously the Lord and mammon, God and things, the Lord Jesus Christ and money.

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. He cannot serve God and mammon. We know as a matter of fact that this is true in the natural realm.

It doesn't work in business, in industry today, to have a man working for two bosses. It creates a division of loyalty, and a division of responsibility that isn't good at all. And of course, the Lord Jesus is saying here, look, you cannot serve me while deep in your heart you have a love of material things, a desire to grow rich in this world, and an aim to lay up treasures on earth, to provide for your own security, and to leave a comfortable nest egg to your children, perhaps.

And so, then the Lord comes to the pits of the whole matter, and he says, 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? The Lord here thinks about men and women whom he has placed on the earth. He created them in the first place, and he saved them in the second place.

What is the purpose of that existence? Why did he put us here? For no higher purpose than that we should spend the great part of our life in the search for food and clothing? Is that all there is to life? He says, don't take anxious thought for food and clothing. Isn't life more important than food, and isn't the body more than just clothing? Isn't the main purpose of life to serve the interests of the Lord Jesus Christ, and isn't the body simply to be a vehicle for that purpose? God never made us in order that we might be connoisseurs of fine food, or that our bodies should be clothed horses fashioning the latest models. Life is more important than that.

It gets sad to say that is life for many people today. Touring the shopping centers on a ceaseless round for clothing and for food. It really is solemn to think of the enormous amount of time and money that are spent in the pursuit of these two things.

And if we were to add the word pleasure, we would have summed up the main purpose of life for many people today. The Lord said, I have a higher purpose for you, and I wish as you go through life that you would realize that all along the road of life I have set some little preachers who are crying out to you all the time. They have a message for you, and how I wish you would hear it.

For the first preachers are the birds, the birds of the air. It says, behold the birds 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? That's an interesting thing.

As we see the sparrows scratching out in the yard to get their daily food, all the time God wants us to learn a lesson from them. These little creatures work hard for the supply of their current needs. They scratch around for it.

They don't sow or reap, but they cast. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't sow or reap. We have that ability, whereas the sparrows, the birds, do not.

But they do work hard for the supply of their current needs, and then they trust God for the future, and that's the point of this passage. An interesting thing is that if you study birds' nests, you will never find a bird that builds a barn or a silo next to its nest. Jesus says that here.

They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly father feedeth them. And, of course, the lesson is that we are of more value than many sparrows. We're much better than they in the sight of God, and if God is interested in the food supply of little birds, how much more is he interested in our food supply? And what this suggests to us, and what I believe to be the general burden of the teaching

of the New Testament, is this, that we as believers should work hard for the supply of our current needs, that we should put everything above that in the work of the Lord, and that we should trust God for the future.

Now, I know that sounds radical. It's contrary to all that the flesh believes or wants to believe, and yet it seems to me that this is the burden of the teaching of the New Testament, that we should work hard for the supply of our current needs and the needs of our families, that we should put everything above that in the work of the Lord, and that we should trust God for the future. If a sparrow can trust God for the future, how much more should we be able to do it? Then the Lord Jesus says in verse 27, Which of you, by taking thoughts, can add one cubit unto his stature? Now, in most of the later versions of the Bible, you'll find that word stature is translated age or length of life, and the Lord is saying, Which of you, by taking thoughts, can add a cubit to the length of his length? Cubit is generally taken to be about 18 inches, about the length from the tip of your finger to the elbow, and the Lord Jesus says, Now, can you, by hard thought, add 18 inches to the journey of your life? Life here is thought of as a journey of so many miles.

Instead of years, it's more or less translated into miles, and here he says, Think hard now, and try to add 18 inches to the length of your life, the journey of life. Of course, we would say, Why, you can't do that! That's absolutely impossible! Well, the point here is that it is far easier to add 18 inches to the length of your life than it is to arrange your future. That's the whole point of this verse.

Let me give you an illustration. It has always been my idea that one of the main responsibilities of a prudent Christian was to accumulate sufficient reserves so that he would be taken care of in his old age, and even after I came into the work for Lord, the thought used to go through my mind, Well, it's all right now. You're able to travel around, and eat, and preach, and you're taken care of by the Lord's people, but what about that coming day when you will be arthritic, perhaps, and rheumatic, and you won't be able to travel around anymore? Who's going to take care of you then? And then, of course, a light bulb went on in my brain, and all my business training came back to me, and I said, Yes, I should be setting aside reserves for that future day, but then a tremendous difficulty faced me, and the difficulty was this.

How much did he know? Let's say that I will no longer be able to preach in 15 more years. Now, how much money should I have set aside by then? Well, of course, the answer is that nobody knows. If I say a hundred thousand dollars, well, actually, with a great inflation, a hundred thousand dollars might not be worth anything, and I might not be able to live off the principle, let alone the interest of a hundred thousand dollars.

If you really examine the question carefully, you'll realize that it is really impossible to provide for your future, because the future is too uncertain. We don't know how long we're going to live, even after we retire. We don't know how many years are left to us, and we don't know how much money is due us by that time.

That's exactly what the Lord means when he says here, which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature, can add 18 inches to the length of his life? And then he says, 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. He had already spoken about food, and how the birds of the air teach us that we don't have to worry about food for the future, and now he says we don't have to take anxious thought as far as clothing for the future is concerned. He speaks about the lilies of the field.

These are not lilies as we think of them, they're the wild anemones that grow in profusion on the hillsides of Israel. The Lord Jesus says, as you walk through the field, and as you see these little wildflowers, just remember that they're preaching a sermon to you. They're saying, we never develop ulcers worrying about where our clothing is going to come from.

God takes care of that, and we are so beautifully clothed that Solomon's regal apparel couldn't even compare with ours. If you know that's true, it's a wonderful thing to study the flowers of the field, and the more closely you study them, the more beautiful they are. Some time ago I was in a home, and there was a centerpiece on the dining room table.

It was made up of wax flowers, and as we sat at the table, I said to the host, I said, my, they're beautiful, aren't they? And he's a man who works a great deal with very powerful microscopes, and he said, yes, they're beautiful, he said, but don't look at them under a microscope. He said, if you want to see real beauty, he said, look at a flower, a real flower, under a microscope. He said, there's nothing but perfection in that real flower, but if you look at these wax flowers under a microscope, he said, they don't come out very well.

And so the Lord takes infinite care, infinite delight in clothing the wildflowers. Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. And then Jesus said, wherefore, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? This is an interesting verse.

In the Bible land, in many of the Bible lands at least, there is a community bake shop, and it usually is an open hearth, and the individual housewives, they don't bake their own bread. They make the dough, and then they carry the dough down to this community bakery. As I say, it's an open hearth, and there are a couple of men tending it, and by the side of the hearth, there's a big pile of grass from the field.

It has all kinds of wildflowers mixed in with it. They just go out and gather the grass from the field, and every once in a while, one of those attendants will take a handful of that grass, wildflowers and all, and he'll just throw it into the fire, and of course it blazes up with the heat and light, and helps to bake the bread. And that's the point of what the Lord Jesus is saying here, that those wildflowers, beautiful as they are, clothed more beautifully than Solomon in all his glory, those wildflowers have a very brief existence.

They're out there on the field today, and the next day they're cast into the oven. And yet, if God takes such infinite care for the details of the clothing of the wild anemones, don't you think he'll clothe you? Why do you take anxious thoughts about such a thing as clothing? Well, of course, the point is we don't have to. That's exactly what the Lord Jesus is teaching here.

Therefore, take no thought saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? The Lord Jesus is saying it's needless to take anxious thoughts for the future. It's senseless, it's futile, and of course it's directly contrary to the word of God. Now, the main point of this passage, it seems to me, is this.

The Lord Jesus put us down here on earth to represent his interests. This is our vocation in life, but as we journey through life we become preoccupied with things like food, and clothing, and security for the future, and it's such an enormous task that we spend the best part of our lives laying up treasures to provide for our future needs, and therefore the work of the Lord is pushed off and to the sidelines. Many people today are so engrossed by their claims of business that they have no time for the work of the Lord.

If anybody offers them some little project to do for Jesus, they immediately protest that they couldn't possibly do it because of their busy lives, busy for the corporation, and so the Lord Jesus is saying here, it seems to me, look, I know that if you have to make the future your concern, you will have no time left for me or for my service, and so I want to make an agreement with you. That agreement is this, if you will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, I'll take care of your future. In other words, I believe the Lord Jesus is making a solemn contract with every believer here that if we live first and foremost for him, as I said before, work hard for the supply of our current needs and the needs of our families, and plunge everything above that in his work, then we can afford to trust him for the future, and he'll never let us down.

Isn't that what it says? To take no thought, take no anxious thought saying, what shall we eat, where what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles think. Well, that's certainly true. The Gentiles here stand for the nations, the unconverted nations of the world, and Jesus is simply making the true observation that most unconverted people live for the satisfaction of bodily desires.

No higher aim than that, but he's saying that should not be characteristic of those who belong to him. Your heavenly father knoweth that he have needs of all these things. Then, of course, the central verse of the whole patent is verse 33.

He says, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. If you underline portions of your Bible, you might underline two words in this verse, the word first and the word God. First, God, and that after all is one of the central teachings of the whole Bible.

Put God first. Isn't that the way the Bible begins? In the beginning, God. Matthew 6 33, God first.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. And so, here the Lord is indeed making a covenant with his people, telling them not to waste the best years of their life trying to lay up for a future that is uncertain at best, but to put his interests first, to live first and foremost for him, and to trust him for the future. And he says here, I will guarantee to you that you'll never lack for the necessity of life if you do that.

Now, somebody might say to me, yes, but in a practical way, how would this ever work out? Here's a man, let us say, and he does, he lives primarily for the Lord. He just has a job to provide his bread and butter, but the principal aim of his life is to serve the Lord Jesus. And now he gets old, he has nothing, he has no bank account, he has no social security perhaps, he has no insurance, no annuity.

Practically speaking, what's going to happen to a man like that? Well, of course, the answer to that is that the New Testament envisages a church that takes care of the members of the church, that is, the believers take care of one another. This is the whole emphasis in the New Testament. For instance, Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says that in urging them to share with one another, to care for one another, he doesn't mean that there should be an inequality, but an equality.

He says in second Corinthians chapter 8 verse 14, but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality. And this is, of course, the way it should be in the Christian fellowship. Wherever there is a need, the money should flow to meet that need.

And this is what would happen to that man. He lives for the Lord. It should be the local church's highest joy and privilege to care for him, and then those who are now caring for him in a coming day will also be made the care of the local church.

Now, you know, because we are so clever with our social security schemes and all our plans for taking care of our future, there are really portions of the Bible that are not too meaningful for us today. For instance, in First Timothy chapter 5, there's a section there on the care of widows in the church, and there it's clearly taught that a widow who has lived for the Lord should be taken care of by the church when she is no longer able to take care of herself. But, for all practical purposes, that passage might just as well not be in the Bible today.

It's meaningless for us today, because we are so clever in taking care of our own future, but at the same time in missing out that which is central in God's sight. Part of our training today is to be independent, and most Christians today would recoil in horror at the thought of being cared for by the local assembly. We've been thoroughly brainwashed to feel, to realize, or to think, I independence is a prophecy.

Actually, the Bible teaches dependence. The Lord wants us to be dependent upon himself, and if someone has said the Christian's life should be a perpetual crisis of dependence upon the living God, that's exactly what we have in this portion of the word of God. The Lord Jesus says, you put me first.

It's not always about future financial security. Just serve me today with all your heart, and I'll take care of your future. I make a covenant, I make a contract to do that for you, and God will probably do it through his beloved people sharing with one another.

So, then, the Lord just closes the passage with each word. Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the sins of itself, sufficient unto the day the evil thereof. Don't be anxious, don't be forever taking anxious thought for the morrow.

Live for God today, and you'll find your need will be met tomorrow. If God attends the funeral of every sparrow, and he does, do you think he's going to let you down? No, he won't. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereon.

It's a 24 hour a day job to live for the Lord Jesus. Now, don't try to borrow tomorrow's problems. God has never promised us grace for tomorrow's problems.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, as by day so shall life's strength be. Now, I realize that all of this is completely contrary to all that we feel as men in the flesh, and to all that we've been taught. This is another example of the revolutionary teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, how radical it is, how unlike the ways of men it is, but it's God's way.

And, just think what would happen in the world today if Christian people took these words of Lord Jesus literally, if Christian people used their secular occupations, if I may use that expression, you know what I mean, to get money for their currency. That's all, and the work of the Lord, and then gave themselves wholeheartedly to the service of Christ, and trusted God's teaching. Just think what that would mean to the worldwide spread of the gospel.

But, our whole trouble is that, in many cases, we are afraid of a blessing. God is holding out to us the blessing of a walk of faith. He's called us to walk by faith, and not by sight, and most of us hold back from this.

We're afraid, and we'd rather see a balance in the bank book than have the naked promise of God to supply all of our needs. May the Lord speak to our hearts and show us that our real security for the future is found in him, and that our real responsibility to the present time is to live for him first, foremost, and always.

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