

## **Two Masters Calling** **Matthew 6:24-34**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Most of us growing up learned the opening verse of this text without containing the word ‘money,’ for we remember it saying, “You cannot serve both God and mammon.” That is the better translation, for the Greek word there is mammona. Most newer English translations simply translate it as money.

Simply saying money, hardly does justice to the word mammon. Mammon is wealth or possessions. It is more than what is in a person’s wallet or bank, it is all that one would claim as possession.

Jesus helps us understand what He means by mammon when He continues. “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” You might say that mammon has to do with our earthly possessions, the things of our earthly existence in this world.

There are two things in life that would like to be masters over us, and both are calling out to us. And as Jesus points out, you cannot have two masters, especially when those two masters are often in direct contradiction. The two things calling for your attention are God and mammon, God and the things of this world.

Some people want to be Sunday morning Christians, and worldly the rest of the week. And sometimes, the alluring call of the world wins out over the call of God even for that one hour out of the week.

Which of those two master calling out to you, do you heed? What is the priority in your life which occupies more of your mind’s time?

Consider this. What will your conversation revolve around this morning in the narthex, in the parking lot, over a donut, in the car ride home, or even over lunch with family after service? Fishing? How many bucks, coyotes, wolves, and bear were caught on the game camera? Where the blinds set for bow season? Will the Packer offense and Aaron Rodgers get back on track? What happened to the Brewers who looked so good in May and June?

Or maybe those conversations revolve around other things. That incredible, new raspberry torte recipe? The latest fad diet? Hertha’s latest escapade with her new boyfriend? The miracle cream that can turn back Father Time’s aging process and get rid of crow’s feet? Or just maybe where the best sale is on the latest fashions?

When was the last time your conversation after the service started one of these ways, “You know, I was reading in Matthew’s Gospel this past week, I remembered this text. I have really found reading through my Bible interesting...” or “Wow, I never looked at the passage pastor preached on today in that light.” Or, “You know, I was glad to be in God’s house today, my week wasn’t the best, and it was good to hear the Word and receive Christ’s body and blood.

It is hard, isn’t it, for the world calls out seductively. Even Sunday mornings it is beckoning us to think, “OK, I did the God thing, I gave Him one hour, I have that out of the way, now it is time to get on with life.” And so, the rest of the week is devoted to heeding the call of the other master, the world. But friends, you cannot have two masters.

What master is it that you heed the most? You cannot put away the God thing, for either your faith impacts your daily life, or it doesn't. Your faith will inform how you treat everybody in your life, and how you approach every decision you make.

Or, you have another master who's call you listen to.

Dear friends, which master do you serve? You and I have so many masters we're trying to serve that it isn't even funny. Our mind is pulled in so many directions and our thoughts flit from one thing to another like a hummingbird. But most of those things are mammon. It is amazing how we can be so caught up with the things of the world, things we often call "life," that we fail to really live.

None of the things of this world are bad in and of themselves. In fact God created the world and gives all that exists in the world for our use, to provide all that we need for this body and life. Problems arise when the things of this world call to us, and the things of God call to us, and they collide – when a choice must be made between one or the other. Too often, in all our lives, it is the call of mammon that wins.

Jesus had some good friends, if only He'd done as they suggested and done things a bit differently, maybe they wouldn't have abandoned Him in His hour of need. He loved His mother, yet He gave her to John to care for. Jesus forsook all the things of this world – the pleasures, the fame, the honor, His family, and even the power of ruling over all the world – because He listened to the call of His Father to serve Him.

His Father called Him to make you His priority. He did this on that Friday we call Good. On the cross, Jesus gave up His clothes, food, drink, and even His very life – in order to obey the call of His Father to give you life eternal. Jesus made the things of God – you, and all those whom He created – His greatest priority. He gave up His own life to save you and me from our sinful preoccupation with mammon and putting God a distant second.

God even uses the things of this world for His purpose of calling out to you. Jesus calls us His own in the miracle of baptism. He uses simple water, the most basic element of life in this world, to cleanse us from sin, bestow faith, make us members of His family, and grant us eternal life.

Christ calls out through the voices of His ministers in the spoken word. In the use of language, the worldly way by which we communicate with one another, Christ forgives the sins of those who too often neglect Him and His Word.

Christ calls out in His Word and gives you His body and blood to eat and to drink. According to worldly standards, it is not much. The bread He uses may be stale, and the wine barely wets your whistle. In fact, as a worldly meal, it would be insufficient in proportions to sustain a person for even a light day's work – at least in the world. But this is a miraculous meal! Christ's own body and precious blood, shed for us on Calvary, is a meal which gives that which is necessary for eternal salvation to all those who believe.

Yes, there are two masters calling out to you. Christ heeded the Father's call to make you His priority. All that He is, and everything He does, is His calling out to you so that you might join Him eternally in His kingdom.

Thanks be to God that He continually calls out to us, that He continually comes to us, and that He continually makes us His own. Thanks be to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.