

Sunday, May 1, 2022
"Meet Your King"
Summary of Jesus' Cure of Anxiety
Matthew 6:19-34
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In the first half of Matthew 6 (vv1-18) Jesus describes the Christian's private life 'in the secret place' (giving, praying, fasting); in the second half (vv19-34) he is concerned with our public business in the world (questions of money, possessions, food, drink, clothing and ambition). Or, as Stott notes, the same contrast could be expressed in terms of our 'religious' and our 'secular' responsibilities. This distinction is misleading, however, because we cannot separate these into watertight compartments. 'Indeed, the divorce of the sacred from the secular in church history has been disastrous, writes Stott. He continues, 'If we are Christians, everything we do, however 'secular' it may seem (like shopping, cooking, etc.) is 'religious' in the sense that it is done in God's presence and according to God's will.'

One of the emphases Jesus makes in this chapter is precisely on this point, that God is equally concerned with both areas of our life – private and public, religious and secular. For on the one hand, '*Your heavenly Father sees in secret*' (4, 6, 18), and on the other, '*Your heavenly Father knows that you need*' food, drink, and clothing (32). In both spheres also the same insistent summons of Jesus is heard, the call to be different from the popular culture: different from the hypocrisy of the religious (1-18) and now different also from the materialism of the irreligious (19-34). For although the Pharisees were largely in his mind at the beginning of chapter 6, it is 'the Gentiles' whose value-system he now bids us renounce (32). In fact, Jesus places the alternatives before us at every stage. There are two treasures (on earth and in heaven, 19-21), two bodily conditions (light and darkness, 22, 23), two masters (God and mammon, 24) and two preoccupations (our bodies and God's Kingdom, 25-34). We cannot sit on the fence.