

Sunday School Lesson #5: Differences in the Sermon on the Mount

Submitted by Michael Kelley 2006-07

Lesson #5 Intended Audience: There is one section of the Sermon on the Mount from the Bible concerning taking no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or drink etc. which is somewhat different from the Book of Mormon account. Below these differences are highlighted in *Bold Italics* and I will offer possible explanations for these differences on the following page.

Matthew 6:25 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? 26 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? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] *not much more* [clothe] you, *O* ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (*For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:*) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 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. Matthew 7:1 JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

*3Nephi 6:1-13 And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he looked upon the twelve whom he had chosen, and saith unto them, Remember the words which I have spoken. 2 For behold, ye are they which I have chosen to minister unto this people. 3 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? 4 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? 5 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 6 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; 7 And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. 8 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *even so* will he clothe you, *if ye are not* of little faith. 9 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 10 For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 11 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. 12 Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient *is* the day *unto* the evil thereof. 13 *And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he turned again to the multitude, and did open his mouth unto them again, saying, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Judge not, that ye be not judged.**

In the body of the text there are only minor differences such as the reference to Gentiles being omitted from the Book of Mormon. This may be due to the fact that the Nephites had no social interaction with the Gentiles while the Jews did and thus the reference would have more meaning to them. Also another minor difference is in the Bible it states “O ye of little faith” verses the Book of Mormon’s “If ye are not of little faith” which seems more conditional and fitting rather than accusatory.

The primary difference between the Sermons on the Mount in this section is the introduction and ending of this section. Clearly in the Book of Mormon this section was intended only for the Twelve and not intended for the multitude. Of the 12 Apostles it is recorded:

Mark 10:28-29 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

Mark 6:7-10 And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; 8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse: 9 But *be* shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. 10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

Clearly it was only the Apostles (and possibly the seventy additional Elders) who were sent forth two by two as traveling missionaries who were to give up their worldly cares and trust in God to provide for their bodily requirements such as food and clothing. It would not be logical or reasonable to expect this of the entire multitude, whether it be the unconverted listeners or converted lay members to leave their homes and responsibilities to go forth as Missionaries when they were not even called for that work. Even those of other ministerial offices such as Priests and Teachers were commanded to work for their own pay and support of their families:

Mosiah 11:155 Yea, and all their priests and teachers should labor with their own hands for their support, in all cases save it were in sickness, or in much want; and doing these things they did abound in the grace of God.

1 Peter 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Some Christians who have only the Bible could possibly stumble with certain passages of the Bible and think these requirements are for them when they were in actuality never chosen for such a work and the associated sacrifices. Some also could fall prey to wolves who use these and like passages to con them into selling all of their possessions so that these false leaders may glut themselves off of the labors of the people. Thankfully we have the Book of Mormon that clarifies these passages and other Hebraic sayings such as “If thine eye offend thee pluck it out” or “If thy hand offend thee cut it off” which were never intended to be taken literally but rather figuratively.