



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This week's Gospel reading comes from Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount. Our Lord first teaches the crowds the importance of guarding what proceeds into "*the lamp of the body*", our eyes. Then He reminds us that it is truly impossible to serve both God and Money, for we "*...will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other*" (Matthew 6:23). How does our Lord conclude these powerful thoughts?

He continues: "*...And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?*"

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matthew 6:28-33).

We know from the prophecies of the Old Testament, and from the genealogy in Matthew's Gospel, that our Lord was the Messiah. As a direct descendant of King David, he was also descended too, from David's son, King Solomon. Following the mistakes and sins of his father, the Bible takes care to note that Solomon was the King who pleased God, especially because he asked, not for wealth to enrich himself, but for wisdom to become a just ruler. Therefore, for our Lord to say, that the lilies of the field—small flowers of no "practical value"—are more radiantly clothed than one of the great Kings of Israel is striking. And of course, our Lord says this to demonstrate how little material possessions matter to our Father in Heaven.

God did indeed create everything that is beautiful on this earth; but, as the Lord says, even the beautiful flowers that He clothed will not remain. We of course, enjoy reflecting in Nature, but we should not mistake the temporary things of this world—clothes, or food and drink—for the absolute reality. Since the Fall of Man, the world has been an imperfect reflection of God's Kingdom; and so, we need to "*consider the impermanence of lilies of the field*" if we truly want to challenge our doubts, live righteously, and (in doing so) strive instead for eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

**+SEVASTIANOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta**