

Sermon for Trinity 15 – Matthew 6:24-34

In the Name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“No one can serve two masters,” but oh, how we try. In fact, in our culture of multi-tasking, serving only 2 masters should be a snap. We drive ourselves to be the smartest student, the best athlete, the best musician, the richest dad or husband, the mom or wife who can run the household and run a business and look perfect.

Seeking greatness in the different parts of our lives is commendable. It’s good to strive to be the best in the vocations God has given us (father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or employer/employee). But it’s not an end in itself. How do we know that? Jesus said, “... Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...” It starts with God’s kingdom and righteousness. We love our parents, spouses, and children not for our own sakes or because we’re so good, but because God loves them and wants to teach us how to love them as He loves them. We respect our workplace superiors, not for our own self-promotion, but to learn how to honor God’s authority. We learn to serve our subordinates as Christ serves us. Our abilities, time, and money are gifts from God to help our neighbor and not to promote ourselves. For in using God’s gifts to promote ourselves, we see the true face of the 1st master we try to serve—just look in the mirror.

But also notoriously first among the gifts from God that we serve in place of God is money. Money (or mammon as it’s called in the Bible) is another master that our Lord mentions in today’s Gospel, besides Himself. “You cannot serve God and money.” It’s simply undeniable that we love, yes, we devote ourselves to the other master. Don’t believe me? What about our expensive cars with the burdensome payments that put stress our life and family? What about our pursuit of the next gadget that promises to entertain us? Do we ever call to question the main assumption of our culture that better clothes, nicer cars, larger homes, better technology, or whatever makes us more blessed and makes us more respectable? Can you look our gluttonous culture in the eye and tell it, ‘No’?

When we make God’s gift of money our greatest joy, we’re using it in a way in which it was never intended to be used. If we set our hopes on wealth, if we hitch our value to material success, we’ve sunk ourselves into a devastating trap. Not to mention, we’ve robbed our neighbor, who needs our gifts. Serving money as our master is vain and debilitating. Money doesn’t satisfy. Possessions have no ultimate value. Yes, this truth can be ignored for a long time, especially if someone accumulates considerable wealth and is also blessed with years of good health. Nevertheless, we started life with nothing; if we die before Christ’s return, we will exit this life with nothing.

Money and possessions are ever and always intended to be seen and received as gifts from the Giver, and they are to direct our attention to Him. The genius of Luther’s

explanation of the 4th petition of the Our Father is putting the gifts and the Giver into proper perspective: "God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving." True worship belongs to the Giver and not to His gifts.

Serve only the Giver. He is our True Master. Our portion is allotted to us from God Himself. Christ taught that God provides for non-laboring lilies, that God provides for the birds that make no investments for the future. And yet, Christ didn't come in the form of a lily or bird, but He was made man. He died for you to make your eternal future secure. He is the One God of One Baptism, of One sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, and of One Communion in His Body and in His Blood. He is the Living God of Truth. He is Life. But He is found in death. If you will be His, than you can belong to no other god. But you need no other god. For no other god is of any help or comfort. Jesus is One, the only One. And He still wants you. He still seeks you. "[He] has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness."

You cannot serve two masters. In fact, you'll never be very good in this life at serving even one of them. But therein is the surprise: the True Master will serve you instead. That is what Jesus said, "I have not come to be served, but to serve." He serves you, dearly beloved, by laying down His life for you and by taking it up again for life everlasting. "... Why are you anxious about clothing?" He serves you by washing you clean in Holy Baptism. There you were clothed with the pure white raiment of Christ's perfection through water and the Word. Solomon's glorious attire cannot compare to the magnificent garment with which you're arrayed! There Christ's forgiveness is yours forever!

So why are you anxious about what you eat? Christ forgives you and gives you His Body and Blood to eat and drink. God's kingdom and His righteousness come to you today to satisfy you more than any bird of the air. He serves you by giving you all that He has to give - by pouring His Own sin-quenching Blood and holiness down your parched throat. Your Master serves you. Your Master loves you. Your Master forgives you.

So don't worry about tomorrow. God has your tomorrow and your eternity in His care because His only Begotten Son has died for you sins. Amen.

The Peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen. ✠BJF✠