

Yr A Eighth Sunday



Matthew 6:24-34

24 Jesus said to his disciples: 'No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.

25 'That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it.

26 Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! **26** Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? **27** Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? **28** And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; **29** yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. **30** Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith? **31** So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?" **32** It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. **33** Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well. **34** So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.'

Other readings: Isaiah 49:14-15 Psalm 61 (62) 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

There are two themes in this excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount. In the first paragraph the question before us is: Are we to serve God or money, God or the things of this world?

The second paragraph brings in a related theme. If we choose to serve God, then we can rely on God's goodness to provide for our needs. Jesus' words have an extraordinary immediacy for the world of today. In so many ways we are enslaved to the values of the world. Our ideas and actions in relation to food have changed remarkably. More food is wasted than ever before by those who have it, and yet much of the world's population does not have the food it needs. Food has become a source of entertainment, rather than something which we need, something for which we thank God, and something we share.

It is similar with clothing. Many people have become obsessed not only by what they wear but also by their appearance. The quest to look perfect, often in a way which is counterfeit and sham, has entrapped many. Jesus says that these are the concerns of the 'pagans'. As Christians we must challenge the false values proclaimed around us, values which deceive and disappoint. We must set our hearts on God's kingdom and on God's righteousness.

Am I deceived by false and pagan values?

Am I obsessed with what I eat and how I appear?

Pray for detachment, that from our abundance we may provide for those in need.

Pray for a new spirit of gratitude and trust in God.