

“Today’s Trouble is Enough for Today”

Matthew 6:24-34

I have to admit that I have a love/hate relationship with this text. I love this text because of the beautiful prose, poetry, and the imagery that can be found among its lines. When hearing the words from this text, One can almost imagine lilies swaying in the breeze, not a care in the world and birds soaring through the air, the wind lifting them to new heights, all the while, graceful and free. One can almost imagine what it truly feels like to be worry free: peaceful, peace-filled, calm, comforted, tranquil. Exactly the things and feelings we look to and want from Scripture as people of faith, words that give us hope, words that give us comfort, words that silence the anxieties of the world and fill us with peace.

Its beautiful simple message reminds us that we are valued more than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. And God will take care of us. Who doesn’t like to hear those things? Who doesn’t need to be reminded of these things nowadays? This text is good news for us as people of faith: God is in control.

Beautiful imagery; Peace-filled words, inspirational message: All things we hope for and need to hear when we read God’s word for us as God’s children.

And to be honest, these are also all these things that frustrate me the most about the text. When I read these words from the Gospel of Matthew, all I really

want to say is “Really?” “God, you really think it is that simple. Don’t worry. Do you know us at all? Worries fill our lives. Worries seem to be a part of everyday living. It is almost as if there is a universal truth that says if we live life here on earth, we worry.”

These beautiful images of lilies and birds seem shallow and empty when compared to reality. They come off as hollow promises. When we read this text, we just want to say, “Well, God that is well and good for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, but they don’t have mortgage payments that keep going up, they don’t have to worry about gas prices hitting the \$4 dollar mark, they don’t have to worry about their kids’ education funds. They don’t have to watch as expenses keep going up and income staying the same or going down. They are birds. They are lilies. They are not people, living and trying to make ends meet in this world.

All the things that I love about this text, the beautiful prose, poetry and imagery also leave me frustrated, angry and confused. This text With its simple message, Its seemingly easy promises seems out of touch with reality. Exactly the things that I don’t look for or want when I look to Scripture for God’s word for God’s children. And the ironic thing is that These exact same words that gave us comfort and peace don’t seem to exactly fit the bill for good news for God’s people nowadays .

So you see, it really is a love/hate relationship with this text. Its very simple message which fills me with peace and comfort is the very same message that leads me to question its ability to really be applied and lived out in our everyday lives in the face of present day realities. You see, it is a love/hate relationship with this text. An uncomfortable place to be as a person of faith and even more uncomfortable place to be as a preacher who is supposed to be bringing the Gospel message for God's people.

But this got me to thinking. Maybe I'm not the only one who has this type of relationship with this text. A relationship of hope yet doubt. A relationship of peace yet worry. A relationship of comfort yet wondering how it is all going to turn out.

And I realized that is the exact same place that the disciples were in when they heard these words for the very time when Jesus spoke them to his disciples as part of his Sermon on the Mount. And this is significant because it through this sermon that Jesus talks about the realities and the principles of the Kingdom of God and how these realities and principles call us to live by God's standards and not the world's. It is through the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus really explains to the disciples and us today what it means to be and to live our lives as Jesus' disciples here on earth. It is through this Sermon on the Mount that he talks about a promised realized reality for God's creation for all of God's children that calls us

to a different and new way: a way that this world does not understand. A way that calls us to seek God's justice for all of God's children. A way that welcomes all of God's children to the table. A way that flips this world upside down: where poor will be rich and the rich will be poor, where the strong will be made weak and the weak made strong. Where the meek will be blessed and the lion will lay down with the lamb.

And we know that it is through this way of Kingdom reality that we should hear this text that call us not to worry and to trust in God.

In our Scripture today, we get another part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. As part of this sermon, he has shared the Beatitudes. He has called his disciples to be a light for the world and he has asked them to be perfect. And now he tells them not to worry because God will take care of them.

He can see that although his words have given hope to his disciples, he sees that there is doubt. He can see that although his words have given peace to his disciples, they have also filled them with worry. Jesus can see that although his words have given his disciples comfort, the disciples are worried about how this Kingdom of God here on earth is going to turn out because these all sounded like empty shallow promises in the face of the realities that they were facing in their world, a world where oppression and violence ran free, a world where the poor was pushed to the margins, where power and might did all the talking, a world where

Money was the driving force that shaped and controlled most people's existence, even survival.

In reality, a world that is not much different from our own.

So he shares these words with them. He knows that he is talking to people who have left their homes. People who have left their families. People who have left their jobs. People who have given up everything just to follow him. People who need a little reassurance.

In our text, Jesus has just laid out what was all expected of them as his disciples and he could tell they were worried, confused, and yes maybe even a little angry. And so he shares with them a seemingly odd statement but a statement that serves as the basis for their beginning as disciples: Jesus tells them that they cannot serve two masters. He tells them that one cannot serve God and money, a statement that when heard through the reality of the Kingdom of God makes sense, opens doors, and frees the disciples and us to truly live in the reality that God intended for us from the very beginning.

God and Money: They are two different masters. Two different worldviews. Two very different realities when lived out by their disciples.

Jesus knows that it is impossible to serve both because one will always come first. There is not middle ground.

He does this because he knows that in the reality where Money is the master, there is no real abundance. There is only scarcity. There are only illusions of comfort.

Jesus knows that where Money is our master, we ignore the blessings that are in our lives already because we expect them to never be enough. There will always be something more that we think we need or want. Jesus knows that in the reality where Money is master, there will always be an emptiness that we will try to fill with stuff but never can. Jesus knows that in the reality where Money is the Master, there is only the individual striving to serve his or her own needs. There is no community. There are no relationships. There are not connections with others.

With this statement about the two masters, Jesus is inviting the disciples and us to realize that there is a different way, a new reality when it comes to the Kingdom of God. It is a reality that is based on the understanding that this abundance flows from God's blessings of peace, grace and hope. It is an abundance that gives us true security and comfort while still challenging us to share that abundance with others. It is a reality that money cannot buy.

Jesus knows that this new reality of the Kingdom of God will bring wholeness and grace for all of God's children, more than enough to go around. Jesus knows that when we embrace this reality where God is our master, there are relationships. There is community. There is connection.

That is why he says “Don’t Worry” because Jesus knows that when God is our master, regardless of life’s circumstances, we will never be alone. God is always there and just as important, the community of God is always there as well, supporting us, loving us, caring for us, feeding us, emotionally, spiritually and yes at times even physically.

When we serve God as our only Master, we relate to each other in ways that go beyond simply me and mine. We relate to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, connected, dependent on each other, and complete because of each other.

Because we serve God as our master, we understand how and why we are called to care for each other, physically, emotionally, spiritually, and yes sometimes even financially.

When God is our master, we understand abundance in a different way, a way of security and comfort, a way of connection and relationship, a way of peace and hope.

And that’s the Good News for us today!

We are invited to celebrate our connection, not just with those sitting in the pews beside us but our connection with all of God’s children. We are invited to embrace a new reality that allows us not to worry because we know that we are surrounded by those who support us, love us, and walk beside us always. We are

invited to live a life full of hope; full of peace, and yes, full of worry because we serve God as one and only Master.

May we find comfort and hope in a life free of worry because we serve God as our Lord and Master. Amen.