

Holy Textures

Meeting Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
Short, easy to use, faith-provoking insights.



Matthew 6:24-34

Having our intentions aligned with God's desires plus trusting God frees us from being anxious / worried / fearful about what will happen next; allows us to let go of expectations.



Year A

Epiphany 8

March 2, 2014

Sunday Between February 25 and March 3 Inclusive OR

Sunday Between February 25 and March 2 Inclusive in a Leap Year

Not used if assigned date follows Ash Wednesday.

May be replaced by Transfiguration Sunday if the assigned date is the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday.

OR

Pentecost 2

Not Used in 2014

Sunday Between May 24 and May 28 Inclusive, if after Trinity Sunday.

Proper 3, Ordinary Time 8

Read the passage at the bottom of this post: [Matthew 6:24-34, The Message](#) or [Matthew 6:24-34, The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#).

Click [here](#) for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this note.

Sermon by the [Rev. Dr. George Hermanson](#), "[Worry?](#)"

Matthew 6:24-34 is part of the [Sermon on the Mount](#). See my post, [Sermon on the Mount, Matthew, Chapters 5, 6, and 7](#), for a short overview of these chapters.

The sermon ends with a teaching from Jesus about a difference between those who are wise and those who are foolish:

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the

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winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell--and great was its fall!

Matthew 7:24-27 (NRSV)

What is the crucial difference between the one who is wise and the one who is foolish?

It has nothing to do with what we usually associate with wisdom: knowledge, many years of experience, perspective, intelligence, insight, etc.

Nor does it have to do with **HEARING** what Jesus has said. Both cases begin - "Everyone who hears these words of mine ..."

The difference between being either wise or foolish is in **ACTING** or **NOT** acting.

It is not enough for us to hear these words of Jesus; to study them; to be inspired by them; to have hopes / aspirations / dreams based on them. We must **ACT** on them; practice them; live them in our everyday lives.

So whatever passage we read from the Sermon on the Mount, we must hear it with one question in mind:

*What must I **DO** to make this the bedrock of how I live?*

So what is today's passage telling us to do?

It might be helpful to pause on the word, "Therefore," which begins verse 6:25 and review the "whereas's" that begin in Chapter 5:

- The Beatitudes
- Being salt of the earth and light of the world
- Obeying and fulfilling the law
- Anger and reconciliation
- Adultery in our hearts
- Divorce
- Let your Yes be Yes or your No be No
- Do not retaliate, instead publically expose the unjust authority
- Love your enemies
- Give alms, but don't make a show of it
- Pray, but don't make a show of it
- Fast, but don't make a show of it
- Store up treasures in heaven not on earth
- Make sure your inner light is healthy
- Don't think you can serve two masters: God and wealth

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These teachings are the basis for the "Therefore, do not worry" in Verse 25.

The teaching in Verses 25 to 34 is about worry: anxiety, fear, fretting, fussing.

It is **NOT** about planning, being responsible, caring. It is not encouraging us to have a laid back, "whatever" attitude. Notice the strong verb in Verse 33 - strive / seek / desire / endeavour.

The opposite of worry / fear / anxiety is faith - or better still - trust.

If we were to trust God as simply and completely as the birds of the air and the flowers of the field do, we would not be anxious. We **WOULD** still have responsibilities but would not be anxious about them.

And more than this, if we set our responsibilities within the framework of first and foremost desiring God's realm and its justice, then our intentions don't get confused with our expectations.

Having our intentions aligned with God's desires plus trusting God frees us from being anxious / worried / fearful about what will happen next; allows us to let go of expectations.

Today's trouble is enough for today. Indeed.

David Ewart,

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Historical background information in this post is drawn primarily from Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, see link below, page 50.

* [Link to Amazon.com Bibliography for Bruce Malina, Richard Rohrbaugh, et. al.](#), Social Science Commentary on ... The Synoptic Gospels; The Gospel of John; The Book of Acts; The Letters of Paul; The Book of Revelation; and others.

Matthew 6:24-34 (NRSV)

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.

³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will

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he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³² For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

³⁴ "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

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Matthew 6:24-34 (The Message)

²⁴ "You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.

²⁵ "If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. ²⁶ Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.

²⁷ "Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? ²⁸ All this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, ²⁹ but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

³⁰ "If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? ³¹ What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. ³² People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. ³³ Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

³⁴ "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

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