

Trinity XV

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Preacher: Seminarian Ian Jarrells

[0 : 00] Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Please be seated.

Our gospel text today is relevant for several reasons. First, it is always relevant to talk about money. Our lives seem to be governed by this mindless piece of paper, having no mind but yet being able to control our own minds and persuading us to make decisions that are contrary to our own convictions.

Secondly, it is relevant because of what we have been focusing on at St. Philip's this past month. Let me explain what I mean. I imagine that many people are familiar with the term double agent. It is a common trope in movies and television shows about spies. To refresh our memory, a double agent is someone who is a spy for two different parties.

They pretend to be a member of both teams, only to bring back information to the opposing team that would give them an advantage over the other. One side may think that the spy is a double agent for their benefit, but ultimately there is no security that the double agent won't switch sides and betray the ones they were working with so closely.

[1 : 23] The only person that really benefits from this relationship is the double agent. He gets to enjoy the perks of being involved in both parties, but is free to ditch one or the other when things go bad.

This is the one who attempts to serve both God and mammon or money. It could be quite easy for someone to think that they could serve both.

Serving God is quite easy. This person goes to church, pays his tithe, tells the priest that he preached a good sermon, and then goes on his merry way. Afterwards, he spends his money on the things that he desires, not just the things that he needs or would make life a little bit more convenient, but would also make his life easier and more enjoyable than every other human being alive.

He spends his money without concern for those who are poor, those who are not able to make a choice about whether they can spend their money on a new boat, bookcase, or bottle of bourbon. Surely, I've given enough money to the church. They have enough, and now it's time for me to buy what I desire. I've given enough, after all, and I should be able to buy whatever I want.

[2 : 35] This world runs on money, and it would be foolish of me to try and stop acquiring it. I just need a little bit more, and I will be satisfied. Friends, there's a reason that we call Jesus the greatest prophet.

There are some who mistake him only as a prophet, of course, but we would be mistaken if we didn't also declare him to be the greatest prophet. Let us listen to his words today as the great prophet.

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Jesus is very clear here. We cannot serve both God and money. To understand it better, we cannot serve both God as well as our desires to have the things in this world that will make our lives easier. This is why Jesus tells us that we should not worry about our lives, about the things that we put on or in our bodies. For most of us, it is hard to understand the things that Jesus says.

[3 : 42] We must not worry about the things that we wear. But why not? Is it not a good thing to make sure that our bodies are clothed? Must we not be concerned with making sure that we have adequate clothing for all of what occupies our lives?

Must we not make sure that we are properly clothed with what is appropriate for church, for business, for casual affairs, etc., etc., whatever else it may be? Ultimately, Jesus says no. But Jesus must not be concerned for what we put in our bodies, the types of food that keeps us healthy, as well as the types of food that allow us to provide for others who have high expectations of us.

Again, Jesus says no. Rather than capitulating to our desires, Jesus gives us two illustrations. Aren't the birds provided with the food that they need in order to make it in this life?

The lifespan of the birds in this illustration would be much shorter than our own. But God makes sure that they have what they need. Why do we worry then about what food we need?

[4 : 54] Also, the flowers of the field, they are not concerned with how they are dressed or how they are clothed. And yet, they are dressed better than the greatest king of Israel, King Solomon.

Solomon is the greatest king to have lived in Israel in terms of his material possessions. In the book of Ecclesiastes, he mentions that he is the one that is the greatest king to have lived and the one to have had the most possessions out of any in all of Israel.

Yet, even the lilies of the field are dressed better than he is. Now, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

After that, Jesus asks the disciples if they are of little faith. In order to understand the seriousness of what Jesus is teaching, let us think of him asking us this question.

Why do we worry about clothing? Why do we worry about what we will eat? Why do we worry about the things that we will wear? These are the things that the people of this world worry about.

[6 : 08] We have a God who cares for us much more than the birds and the lilies, both being things that God does care immensely for. If he clothes them and feeds them things that he cares less about than for us, why do we worry about whether or not he will care about what we have to clothe us or to feed us?

We must seek first the kingdom of God and he will give us all that we need. Well, this begs the question, what is this that we must seek in order for us to seek first the kingdom of God?

It means that we must seek the things that Jesus cares about. That means that we must not care more about providing for our material needs than for the salvation of those who are far from the kingdom of God.

It means that we must care more for the poor than we care about buying our next book or drink or item for our house that we have been coveting. It sounds very easy, but in reality, it is very difficult. Jesus would not teach us such things if we had already figured out everything we needed to know about how to care about this present life. The bottom line is this. We care too much about the things that might burden us tomorrow.

[7 : 29] Instead, we should care about the things that might burden others. And if we do that, we won't care so much about what concerns us. If we actually did seek first the kingdom of God, we would be able to provide for those of us in our own congregation that needed enough money or food to take care of us tomorrow instead of worrying about paying for what we already have, whether it be for those that we know here, but also out in the world, in our communities, or whoever, or whatever way that we are related to them.

Instead of worrying about the things that we need or the things that we think we need, let us seek what is above, the heavenly blessedness that is promised to us for a life of faithfulness to our Lord. Any need that we think we now have can be overshadowed by what is promised to us in the life that is to come, a life that is full of joy, bliss, and happiness.

And this happiness that is promised to us is a life of food and clothing, the food of eternal life, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and the clothing of his immortality.

Let us worry about today's holiness and not tomorrow's wants. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[9 : 08] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.