

Trinity XV

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Preacher: Father Randall Russell

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. I think everyone here understands that money cannot buy happiness.

The world is full of miserable people, and not all of them are poor. Many of them are rich. Money cannot buy happiness.

But what about safety and security? Can money buy that? Can money buy safety and security?

Well, I think it's important to point out that in this morning's gospel, before our Lord tells us to not worry about our lives, he first tells us that no one, 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, which is the Hebrew word for money or wealth.

Yet how many have bought into the lie that only money can provide safety and security? How many have bought into the lie that only money can provide us with a worry-free life?

[1 : 31] For just how many parents teach their children, either directly or indirectly, how many parents teach their children either directly or indirectly, that there are a lot of important things in life that are important.

But the most important thing, priority number one, is that they find a good job that pays well, because then, then they'll have money, because then they won't have to worry, because then they will be truly safe and secure.

Until you know, they're not. Everyone with money feels safe and secure until the market crashes, or they lose their job, or they lose their pension, or worse, they contract some horrible illness.

At which point, most people will tell them to go out and find the best doctors that money can buy.

And why? Because money makes everything all better.

Right? Wrong. Wrong. Money cannot truly buy safety and security, because money is fleeting.

[2 : 53] Sure, it's nice to have, but it does not last. It is not eternal. All we can really do with money is spend it, lose it, or give it away.

And even though we can also save it, hoard it away for ourselves, or put it in a bank where it incurs interest, that still, still is no guarantee that the money will be there when we need it most.

And why? Because it really is, it really is all just a matter of faith. faith. And faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Therefore, Jesus tells us this morning, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

[4 : 07] And it is only two short verses later, only two short verses later, in the very same sermon, in the Sermon on the Mount, that our Lord goes on to say, for 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 both God and money.

For our Lord talks an awful lot about money. In fact, statistically speaking, one out of 10 verses in all four gospels combined, deals specifically with the subject of money.

And that's not to say that every single one of those verses is negative. Money in and of itself is not evil, and can in fact do a lot, a lot of good.

For St. Paul never says that money is the root of all evil, but he says that the love, the love of money is the root of all evil.

[5 : 18] And in light of this morning's gospel, I think it's very easy to understand why the apostle said that. Because it is all, all too easy to take money and to turn it into a false God.

The very first thing we all turn to in every time of need. And the very first thing we so often look to for all security, stability, and peace.

And maybe this is why in American politics, the maintenance of true religion and virtue is often considered of, considered of less importance among American voters than the issue of the economy.

But what does Jesus say? In this morning's gospel, our Lord tells us to look at the birds of the air and to consider the lilies of the field and to remember how our heavenly father provides for them both.

And then he adds, therefore do not worry, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For after all these things, the Gentiles seek.

[6 : 34] For your heavenly father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.

And that doesn't mean that we will always eat only the finest food or always be the best dressed for every occasion. But it does mean, it does mean that our heavenly father will provide for what we need most.

If, if, we continue to serve and to follow and to obey him no matter the cost.

for money isn't everything. And yet that is exactly what the Lord provides for us. Everything.

However, money remains that one sacred cow which no one wants to sacrifice. Even though money cannot provide for our eternal safety and security, only Jesus can do that.

[7 : 45] For if we really want to lead worry-free lives or at the very least have less worries, then let us consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air and let us put our faith in Jesus Christ rather than in dollars and cents.

For dollars and cents really are just nothing more than paper and metal that a lot of people spend their entire lives devoted to because they believe that such things will provide for all their needs and more.

And if that is not the definition of idolatry, I don't know what is. For if we say that we truly believe that Jesus Christ is our Lord and our God, then let us put our money where our mouth is and not despise the very one who this morning tells us that no one can serve two masters.

You cannot serve both God and mammon. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.