

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

If someone were to ask you, “What are you worth?” what would you say? It’s a rather odd question unless you’re an actuary trying to figure out risk assessment for life insurance. For the rest of us, though, we assign value to things or stuff, and we consider our lives and people, to be priceless. That’s good, we should. This is why we fight so hard for life in this country from the womb until the Lord calls us home. It’s why we still are in horror over what happened 25 years ago this past Friday on September 11, 2001. We shouldn’t treat people or even ourselves like we treat a boat or a piece of land for they are different. People have priceless value and worth. God is one who gives life and takes it away and blessed is he who does this.

Today, in the reading from Matthew, Jesus speaks about our value before God. He first tells you that you can only serve one master so you should be aware of what you value. This goes into the fact that Jesus tells teaches you have great value to God. Knowing these things gives you faith which trusts in the Lord and causes you to see your lives in terms as ones who belong to the Father because of the Son. He takes care of you in this world and into everlasting life because in Christ you have great value in the eyes of God.

The point Jesus continues and makes is a very practical one that you know all too well. You really can’t serve two masters, as the Lord says, “for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” It really is that simple you know this. When your master is something other than God then you’re not going to fear, love, and trust in God above all things. You can’t do it because your loyalty remains with another thing.

We do this though, don’t we? Sure, we might like to think it’s not that bad but look at our lives and the things we surround ourselves with and how we view them. Look at what we put all our time, attention, and money towards. If there’s something in our lives, that’s not God, that we can’t live without or we fear losing and think our lives will be over if we lose it, then that thing is either on the edge of becoming a god and master or it already has become a god in our lives. Look too at how upset we can get over something trivial like traffic or a call in a game and yet not bat an eye when God’s word is ridiculed in our midst and just write it off as “well that’s just your opinion and you’re entitled to it.”

The close of the reading today is Jesus telling us all to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. There is no wiggle room about that and no asterisk to give us some exceptions to his instruction. It convicts us and makes us really take a hard look at our lives. Think about how we will work around schedules for many things such as a doctor’s visit, practice, or work but when it comes to showing up for church or reading God’s word and praying in our families, these things are pushed to the side for a more convenient time or simply never at all. Follow the trail in life of what we sacrifice our time, money, and energy toward. You sacrifice for things you care about and work around those things in your schedules, lives, and mind. We sure do these things that Jesus tells us about. We sadly and shamefully serve more one than master which means we don’t always have our master as the Lord. All of us need to always repent and seek Christ and his righteousness first and all place with no ifs, ands, ors, or buts to what Jesus says.

With this laid out it forms a new way of thinking and living. Why do we only serve one master and seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness? This perspective of our lives is seen in terms of who God is and what he has done in Christ. Along with us not able to serve two masters, we are called by Jesus to not be anxious about life. This doesn’t mean we throw up our hands and “let go and let God” in daily life because if you do that literally then you should be anxious because you probably will starve to death, or get cold and be out of work. No, what it means is what Jesus says, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”

The reason why we are to not be anxious and get caught up in the things of this life to the point that we place our trust in them or fear that our lives depend on these things and love the things of this world is because of the value we have in the eyes of God. Jesus explains it clearly, “But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.”

When you worry, when you are anxious, Jesus calls you to repent. Jesus gives you a way of examining yourselves in the Gospel reading that knocks you back into God’s reality when you find yourselves being anxious and worrying. Pay attention to what Jesus says to you in those words. There’s a line of thinking from the lesser to the greater in all this that humbles you and comforts too. When you worry and are anxious it’s ridiculous and almost laughable. Birds are frail creatures. They can fly right into your window and die because they mistook it for a flight path through your house unless you don’t clean your windows and they are too dirty to see through. They also don’t have a job to go to, and they don’t have all the bills, obligations, and various other things that go along with life in this world. They eat, they fly, and they lay eggs. Or look at flowers and how beautiful a field of lilies is. They grow into beautiful sights for you and then wither away and die or are plowed over. As rich as a person may be, or the resources he may have at his disposable he can’t make himself simply grow into such a beautiful sight, yet he isn’t like those flowers which is alive today and tomorrow thrown into the fire.

You think highly of yourselves and low of God when you doubt that God, who tells you he values you, will take care of you when the things of this creation are taken care of, and they will one day pass away. You will not pass away, and Jesus didn’t come down from heaven and become a sparrow or lily. He took on human flesh. He is fully God and fully man. Failure to see, recognize, believe, and live this out in your lives is what God is getting at today in this reading and why he says, “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” There’s enough to do for today that you don’t need to borrow trouble, for sure, and don’t be anxious because do you honestly, I mean honestly, believe that God is going to take care of these things like birds and flowers around you and not take care of you? If that’s what you think, then, yes, you are indeed of little faith. All of us need to repent.

At all times you are to be relying on God as your Father to take care of you. This doesn’t mean you sit on your rear end and do nothing, but God calls you to utilize the vocations and order of this world according to God for your needs. You are called to work and provide for their families. Men who are husbands and fathers are called to lead their families with the heart and mind of Christ toward their wife and children. Women who are wives and mothers follow their husband and take care of their children to see to it they are clothed, fed, and loved. People help each other out as God has given them skills and opportunities to do so. This is the role of individuals in our lives. Doctors and nurses treat the sick and help keep people healthy. The lists go on. The point is that God is involved in all of this. The Lord takes care of his creation because he is, in fact, our heavenly Father.

Where is your hope in all this today? Your hope and comfort are in Jesus, who he is and what he does for you. What does God say about how he looks at you? God cares for you and you are of great value to him. How do you know this? Not only does he just flat out tell you that in this reading, but you have the comfort of the gospel. See Jesus crucified for you and know that God cares for you. And as if that wasn’t enough you have this given to you personally. Your pastor is telling you right this very instant that Jesus has died for you, and I mean you, but you also are baptized into Christ. God has claimed you as his own. The Lord feeds you with his own body and blood given and shed for you. Cling to Jesus through the means as he forgives you, strengthens you, guards you, and takes care of you who are of great value to him

There’s life, eternal life, in these words of Jesus today and a confidence in Christ to live as his baptized child. To cling to these words of the Jesus is to cling to the one who fulfilled all things and the one who suffered for you. It sees a

righteousness found in the one who is the Lord, your righteousness. It's to hold onto the one who is your mercy seat with the Father and by him you know that God loves you, takes care of you, and hears and answers your prayers. It's a confidence to go through this life and not be anxious about the stuff, the mammon, of this world because your citizenship is in the Kingdom which is not of this world. So even times when you face hardships such as from a storm, when the doctor tells you the cancer has spread and there's nothing more to be done, when those whom you love so much are taken from you God's love and care for you has not changed one bit. Jesus is crucified for you. Your sin is forgiven and you have eternal life. That's who you and how much God values you. This is what is known and what is sure and certain amid all that is unknown and uncertain. You face these things and sing boldly the great hymns we sing today such as "What God Ordains is Always Good" and "Who Knows when Death May Overtake Me" because you know what? they preach to you and you actually believe those words and that's the confession which has been placed upon your lips by God himself.

And you're not alone in this either. God has gathered you together into his Holy Church. You bear one another's burdens as the body of Christ. You gladly do good to one another as the household of faith. You "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another." This too is part of God's care for you as you are united in the fellowship that is the church created and sustained by the Holy Spirit through the word and sacraments. We weep with our fellow members, and we rejoice in the Lord who is our head, Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life.

As Christian, you know this through God's word and Jesus teaches you to always keep that in mind. This will mean that your life will be seen through the lens as one who know the Lord is at work to take care of you. He is the one who values you more than the lilies of the field and he still causes them to grow and give beauty to the earth. All of this is because of his great love for you in sending Jesus to redeem you from your sin.

Your ultimate value and worth before the Father, then, is based upon Christ who is your mediator. Seeing Christ crucified and risen for you is the hope and confidence you have even in the day-to-day details of life. But as a Christian, you see it goes beyond this. Your life is more than these things around you because your life is an eternal life given you to by God's grace. The Father sent the Son to take on your sin which separates you from God and gives reason for God to not regard you or see you as his child. Yet the Son willing took your sin on himself and paid the price by his blood so that now you are at peace with God, and the Lord no longer looks at your sin but sees you in terms of his grace and mercy accomplished in Christ.

You can't add a single hour of your life by being anxious about the things of this world but by the death of Jesus you have an eternal life with the Lord that knows no end. The stuff of this world will come to an end, but you won't come to an end. Even your body after it has been laid into a grave and is wasting away will be raised and restored and you will stand face to face before the Lord. You will walk and live in the new heavens and new earth the Lord will recreate and will never pass away.

For this reason, Jesus concludes in the reading with these words, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Putting Christ and his righteousness first is your Christian duty and sees great blessing in your life because it orients you back to the source of your care. Your only master is the one who call "Father" as you pray to him and he hears and answers your prayers. He has called you his child in the waters of your baptism.

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Yearn for the things of God and know that you will not be put shame. You are of great value to the Father as he has paid the price for you with the blood of Jesus. Your sin is forgiven and you have eternal life. God provides for you your daily bread and even if your daily bread should run out your Lord has given you life everlasting. Your value before God is one who is a dear son called in the waters of your baptism. You are redeemed in Christ and your eternal life with him is secure. This is most certainly true for the Lord

15th Sunday after Trinity—September 13, 2026

promises it in Christ crucified and risen and given out through his means of grace. All anxiety and fear are cast out by the Lord who speaks “peace be with you.” This is your God and who you are in his eyes because of Jesus. Thanks be to God for his care for you now and forever.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.