

INI

***Your Heavenly Father Knows What You Need***

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Sunday, September 12, 2021

Matthew 6:24–34

What would it be like if we still had prophets today, as in the days of the Old Testament reading for today? When Elijah spoke to the woman and she told him that she and her son had no more food, Elijah declared to her a direct word from God. Make bread from the flour for me and then for you and the jar of flour will not run out. Wouldn't it be nice if when you were paying your bills and there wasn't enough to cover them you could receive a direct word from a prophet, Pay your bills and your bank account will not run out of money. Or the many things you worry about, if you could hear directly from a man of God that you may continue as you are and everything will work out fine.

Well, we have no more prophets today, not in the sense of the men God called in Old Testament times. Anyone today who claims direct revelation from God may be a prophet but is in fact a false prophet. We are not to look for some direct word from God but rather rely only on His written Word, which is the Old Testament and the New Testament. Those who are called to declare the Word of God must do so only in accordance with the written Word of God.

The Word of God before us today in the Gospel reading has Jesus giving you a promise. It is not so specific as the woman in Zarephath had received from Elijah. But it concerns a lot more than food for another day. His promise to you is about so much more! What are the things you are concerned about? What things keep you up at night? Are you scared about an upcoming surgery? Are you worried about your failing health? Are you anxious about the influences of society on your children and how they might succumb to harmful or immoral behavior? Are you worried that your job is in danger because of the economy and the uncertainties of covid? Are you disheartened at your struggling marriage?

Satan is tempting you to despair over these things or anything you are struggling with. These are real concerns. They are real challenges. God will not send anyone to tell you specific solutions to your specific problems. But He does give you a promise about what you face. When our Lord spoke the words of the Gospel reading for today He addressed things many of us in our country do not experience. We aren't wondering where our next meal is going to come from. You and I aren't putting on the same clothes seven days a week. Of course there are people today who are so poor that they don't have enough food and don't have different changes of clothes. But our society is wealthy compared to what many of those Jesus was speaking to experienced. You may not be worried about what you will eat and drink or what you will wear but are you worried and anxious about many things? Jesus' words are for you.

Would you go up to someone who doesn't have enough to eat or to wear and tell them not to worry? That would add insult to injury. And yet see what our Lord is doing here. He is telling us, Even if you do not have enough food or enough clothing, do not worry. Do not be anxious about the most basic needs of your life. Is not your life more than food and your body more than clothing? But you and I who do not need to worry about such things are instead worrying about other things! But even if we were without basic necessities, Jesus is telling us that our life is worth more than food and clothing!

We are so caught up in the things of this world that we become anxious about them. Jesus says instead to learn from the things in nature. The birds do not sow or reap or gather into barns. And they do not spend any of their time worrying. But the Heavenly Father takes care of them. Are you not of more value than they? Can you add anything to your life by worrying? Look at the flowers of the field. They do not labor or toil. And they are glorious. Not even Solomon exceeded their glory. The flowers are here today and gone tomorrow and yet God clothes them in splendor. How much more will He care for you, O you of little faith?

He says straight out, Why are you worrying, saying, What will we eat, or What will we drink, or What will we wear? Do you need these things? Yes, you do. You need them. But why are you worrying about them? Why are you spending your time consumed by them when your Father in heaven knows what you need? Jesus says that the Gentiles are the ones who seek after such things.

And this is the difference between us who know God and those who don't. They seek after those things. They are consumed by the things of this world. They are worried if they don't get them. You and I however do not need to seek after these things. We will live in faith in the same way that the birds and the flowers live. Not worrying, not being consumed by their needs, but simply being provided for by the God of heaven.

We need the basic necessities of life. And we have a gracious God who also gives us many more things we need and many things we may enjoy and make use of. But keep it all in perspective. Jesus says, Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. God has given you a brain and abilities and many resources to obtain the things you need in life. But do not seek after these things. Do not see them as the non-Christian world does. See them for what they are. They are good gifts from God. They are most definitely good and they are most definitely from God. They are not from yourself or the world.

But these things only benefit us so far. God's greatest gifts go beyond this life. The woman who was given food for another day eventually died as all people do. Those who have unrestrained wealth die at the same percentage as those who are starving to death, and that is 100%. God takes care of the birds and the flowers but they still die. You will die. And yet God takes care of you. He knows what you need. He will take care of you.

How much time are you spending worrying? Your time would be better spent in reading the Psalms. How much energy are you expending in being anxious when you could be spending that time in prayer? Why are you caught up in the needs for your body? Why not rather recognize that in the Holy Supper of your Lord you are fed with food for your immortal soul. Yes, you will die. But you will be raised up bodily on the Last Day. The Feast we celebrate as we gather around this altar is a foretaste of the Feast to come. You are nourished and strengthened with the body and blood of your very Lord and Savior to face all your needs and struggles. The body and blood of your Lord strengthens and preserves you in the confidence that He has already provided for you in body and soul.

Each day brings its own trials. There is no need for you to play the part of God as if you somehow can control your life. Do not worry about tomorrow. Commend it and all things to God. Focus on today and what He has given you to do each day. He has created you and has made you into a new creation. You have new and eternal life even in the midst of your needs and concerns. Christ saw His life as not His own but entrusted it to His Father, even though it meant going to His death. Even though He sacrificed Himself by taking on Himself all our sin and guilt He was not anxious but joyfully entrusted Himself to His Father's will.

And He has done this for you! Your Father knows what you need and has given you everything you need in His Son. How valuable are you that God gave His own Son to give you for you to enjoy the vaults of heaven for eternity! Amen.

SDG

Rev. Paul L. Willweber  
Lutheran Service Book Lectionary: One-Year, Gospel  
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, San Diego, California