

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 302, 248, 384, 378

The INTROIT

(Ps.86:1-4)

P: Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, hear me;

C: O Thou, my God, save Thy servant that trusteth in Thee.

P: Be merciful to me, O Lord;

C: for I cry unto Thee daily.

P: Rejoice the soul of Thy servant; for unto Thee,

C: O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

The COLLECT

Lord, we beseech Thee, let Thy continual pity cleanse and defend Thy Church; and because it cannot continue in safety without Thy help, preserve it evermore by Thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

THE GRADUAL

(Ps 118:8-9; 108:1)

P: It is better to trust in the LORD

C: than to put confidence in man.

P: It is better to trust in the LORD

C: than to put confidence in princes.

P: O God, my heart is fixed;

C: I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

The EPISTLE

Galatians 5:25- 6:10

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Ps. 119:124)

P: Hallelujah! O Lord, deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy and teach me Thy statutes. I am Thy servant, give me understanding:

C: that I may know Thy testimonies. Hallelujah!

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Matthew 6:24-34

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

Matthew 6:24-34 — “No Man Can Serve Two Masters”

INTRODUCTION

I. NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS

II. YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON

III. SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY THE EVIL THEREOF

CONCLUSION

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Hymns: 302, 248, 384, 378

Matthew 6:24-34 — “No Man Can Serve Two Masters”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Gospel reading appointed for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity is Matthew 6:24-34:

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Today’s readings from Holy Scripture begin with these words recorded by Moses to the chosen people of God:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Love makes a slave of the lover. That which one loves is that which one is bound to with

all of one's heart, with all of one's soul, and with all of one's might. That which one loves is that which fills one's thoughts, words, and deeds. What one loves, one studies and one teaches diligently. What one loves, one talks about continually. What one loves, to that love one is willingly and even joyously devoted completely. What one loves, one worships and serves. What one loves rules over the lover so that the lover subjects oneself to the beloved.

I. NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS

The Lord Jesus addresses this in our Gospel reading for this day. **“No one is able two lords to serve.”**

Even though this makes perfect sense, we ignore this and even defy it with our lives. We pretend that it is possible two lords to serve. We tell ourselves that we can do the impossible, that we can embrace and love two lords or masters simultaneously. But the impossibility will not be ignored. The impossibility is demonstrated beyond contestation. The highest position can only be held by one, not by two. Thus Moses begins his declaration by saying, **“Hear, O Israel, YAHWEH our God, YAHWEH one.”** Interestingly, this declaration contains no verbs except for the command that we must hear the oneness of the LORD our God. We are to hear that the LORD our God is who He is. He is Yahweh. He is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is the one and only God. He has no levels of existence. He says of Himself, ***I AM that I AM, tell them I AM sent you.***

God is. The LORD is. All that exists has its existence from the LORD. There is nothing that exists apart from the LORD. That is why we absolutely cannot put anything or anyone else on the same level with the LORD and continue fearing, loving, and trusting in God. We can only acknowledge one master at a time. It is impossible to have two masters ruling our hearts and lives. As the Lord Jesus warns us, **“for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.”**

Yet in our thoughts, words, and deeds we defy this. We try to have two lords, two masters. In doing so we deny the truth and make God to be a liar. In doing so we turn from trusting God to trusting things that have their existence from God, making idols for ourselves, fashioned according to our own image. Why then are we surprised that we make so much trouble for ourselves in our lives? Why do we act surprised that our ways fail us? The Truth is obvious. The Truth is unmistakably clear. All of creation attests to the Truth. Moreover, God has given to us the written record that testifies the Truth to us. The Truth came to us as a baby and lived among us as a man and sacrificed His life for us to save us. The Truth continues to come to us in His body through the means that He has ordained for His Church on earth. When we hear Him and receive Him in the way that He has ordained, He is our one and only Lord and His love fills us and rules over us and we live in His peace. When He rules our hearts and minds, nothing else can take control over us.

II. YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON

Yet we still seek to have it both ways. We ignore the words of the Lord Jesus, **“Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”** We attend the divine service and we confess the ancient creed, hearing the Word preached and receiving the Word administered to us, and still we seek to serve both God and mammon.

Oh if only this were only true in our personal lives and not in the congregations. Yet we

do not even gather as bond-slaves of the LORD in our gatherings. How many times have we demanded that our “felt-needs” be addressed? How many times, even during our prayers, have our hearts and minds turned to other thoughts?

Today, many congregations even change the form of the worship to conform to the desires of the people. Other congregations pride themselves on holding to the historic forms of worship, imagining that in so doing they are being faithful to the LORD. Either way, the focus very quickly turns from trusting the LORD to trusting self and trusting works. Either way, our hearts and minds become distracted.

Why? The Lord Jesus says:

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

“**Oh ye of little faith!**” Don’t you hate these words? Does it not make you squirm to hear these words from the Lord Jesus concerning your worrying? Why do we take thought concerning these many things that fill our hearts and minds? Why do these things fill our hearts and minds rather than the knowledge of the faithfulness of the LORD? Because we are of little faith! We don’t trust God to be good. We doubt that God is really working good for us in all things. We imagine that God somehow needs our help.

To this Jesus says:

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Literally, “**Not, therefore, must ye have part, saying . . .**”

Jesus further explains: “**All for these the gentiles seek after.**”

For this reason the Lord Jesus also teaches how to pray. He says that when we pray we should pray this: “**Give us this day our daily bread.**”

Notice the contrast between this service and the services that our sinful hearts seek. In the divine service we seek after the kingdom of God and His righteousness, trusting that all else

shall be added unto us in accord with the fulfillment of God's will being done on earth even as it is in heaven. According to our sinfulness we seek after the things of this world, the mammon. According to the prayer or service or worship that flows from the one true faith we pray according to what God wills and according to what God declares. According to the prayer or service or worship that flows from our own little faith, we act like the gentiles or the nations and we say: "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"

Of what do we partake in our lives of worship? What thoughts flow from the faith that we hold? In what or whom do we really trust? What or whom do we declare with our thoughts and our prayers to be the one true master of our hearts and minds?

This is why the Lord never directs us to our own faith but always to the faith that He gives. This is why the Lord never instructs us to believe more firmly but rather instructs us to receive His gifts by which He firms us up in the one true faith that He works in us. The faithfulness to which He directs us is His faithfulness. Our faithfulness is His faithfulness filling us up through the means of grace. He has given to us the means by which faith is given to us and preserved within us, or even better stated, the faith in which we are preserved. The Lord has given the form of worship by which our actions are made to be insignificant and His actions are made to be everything. The Lord has given the form of worship by which He is our one and only Lord or Master. His means of grace teach us that we are nothing so that our hearts and minds are turned to Him so as to be made to be what He will make of us. Then we begin to understand that faith is not something that we do but that God works in us and for us. Then we see that we do not make Jesus Lord of our lives but that He has made us members of the kingdom in which He IS. Jesus IS LORD, and by His grace He comes to us so that we know Him as our Lord. He comes to us through His means of grace and brings us into the communion of His kingdom of grace, where He rules by grace and nothing else has power over us. Then the power of His love is seen clearly and we then love Him with the love that He has loved us.

III. SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY THE EVIL THEREOF

The Lord Jesus concludes this matter, saying:

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Do not take part into the morrow. Why do we imagine that we can do such a thing? Why do we imagine that we can provide for or take action into the future? We do not even know what tomorrow will hold! Will we go to bed tonight and wake up into the morrow? Will we wake up in the same condition or will we have a stroke during the night and awaken paralyzed? Will we start the car and drive to work or will terrorists attack? Will the LORD come during the night and put an end to this evil age?

Why do we try to take part into the morrow? Why do we worry and fret? We worry because we do not trust God. We do not believe God's goodness and so we imagine that we must somehow prepare ourselves for tomorrow. We forget that all good things come from above and so we work and we toil to provide good things for ourselves.

Where do the troubles in our lives have their beginning? Some we cause for ourselves. Others are caused by others or by the curse upon the ground that God gave to call us to repent of our little faith. Can we prevent others from making trouble for us? Can we even truly anticipate what others will do? Can we accurately forecast what troubles will come through changes in the

weather or from shifts in the earth or from things that may fall from the heavens?

There is only One who knows these things. There is only One who is able to control these things. There is only One who can protect and preserve us from these things. So why do we refuse to trust Him? Why do we worry? God knows what we need. We don't know what we need because we don't even know what is happening in the world this moment, let alone tomorrow. But God knows. Moreover, He has planned all things to work for our ultimate good.

He even knows what sins we will commit. He has already taken them into His own body and suffered with them on the cross. In Christ, even our own sinfulness cannot harm us, unless we try to make ourselves to be lords rather than trusting in Jesus as Lord. We can refuse to trust God and thereby cut ourselves off from Him and His goodness. But trusting in Him we are safe. Relying upon His grace we have all things.

Surely today's troubles are sufficient for us. Surely, if we let today's troubles direct us to prayer that relies upon God's goodness, this is sufficient. As we pray in true faith we see that even today's troubles are not what we imagine them to be. As we pray we see that even the day's troubles are being worked for good to us as we become more and more dependent upon the LORD and His promises. As we pray we are led to draw near and receive the blessed Word and Sacrament, realizing that these are the very means by which God's grace is administered in this world. Whatever things that belong to tomorrow will have their part in tomorrow without our participation. Our life is in Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Today's troubles are just that, today's troubles. Tomorrow will have troubles, too. But neither today's troubles nor tomorrow's troubles are of concern to us. We will be preserved through all things unto everlasting life. This is God's promise, in Christ Jesus the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, the only thing that should concern us is who our master is. If we know the LORD as our master, we have no other concerns. He knows the number of days that He has appointed for us in this evil age. He knows what things will come to us throughout the days that He has appointed for us. He knows our weaknesses and our fears and our puniness of faith. He has already provided for us regarding all of these things. He has taken our sin and died with it and has risen from the dead to rule on our behalf. Even death is powerless against His love and care for us. If death has no power against His love, none of the other troubles of the day have any power either. His love and His mercy endure forever. Even as He is from everlasting to everlasting, so are His grace, mercy and peace from everlasting to everlasting. With this knowledge proclaimed to us every Lord's Day in the preaching and in the hymns and in the liturgy and in the Holy Supper, with this knowledge transcribed for us in the holy and inspired Scriptures, with this knowledge being written upon our hearts with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, where is there any reason for us to worry about anything? Why should we ever choose to serve mammon as our master when the LORD has come to us and continues to come to us with blessings and grace and mercy that triumph over every trouble forevermore? We can choose to serve mammon through worry, or we can continue in the faith that the Holy Spirit gives freely. The lord of mammon rules without mercy and fills us with the troubles of the world. The LORD our God rules with mercy without end and takes all of our troubles, giving us everlasting peace that surpasses all understanding. With this blessed proclamation, where remains any room for worry? In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.