

“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God”

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

This portion of the Gospel of Matthew begins with an easy to understand statement, you cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Webster's dictionary defines "Mammon" as: 1) the false god of riches and avarice. 2) Riches regarded as an object of worship and greed.

The instruction seems clear and easy to understand. We are not to make idols of wealth or power or possessions. We are to worship the Lord our God and have no other gods before Him, sounds familiar.

But then Jesus continues to teach us and what He is saying becomes more difficult for us to hear. Do not worry about what you are to eat, or drink or wear. We are to place our trust in God completely. Does this mean that we are to be like turtles? Lying on our backs in the sun waiting for someone to come along and turn us over so that we can continue on our way?

No, we are not helpless and we have a part in the Created Order. Each one of us is known by God and Loved by Him. Each of us to use the gifts, skills and talents we have given. Jesus is telling us what God provides for the birds of the air and flowers of the field. God provides for them so that when they are being birds or flowers what they need is present..... so that they can be and become what God created them to be.

Like the birds and the flowers we are to strive to be authentically God's People. And when are being God's People we will have all that we need and more than we imagine or desire.

That's the difficulty isn't it "Being God's People - fulfilling His Will for us". How can we know? How can we be sure that we are being faithful?

Several years ago my parish gave space to the local AA group. I became their chaplain and spent many hours talking with the members. Many of the conversations centered on this issue of knowing God's Will. There were many that became convinced that if they could be sure of God's Will, if they could understand what he wanted them to do their lives; they would be back on track. They were ignoring the basic issues of their lives and focusing on an issue that is in fact unanswerable.

That is not to say that we do not know God's Will for us and that we cannot or do not know what He wishes that we do. He has told us, He has revealed His plan to us and He sent His Son so that we would understand how we could be authentically human and to reveal to us the nature of God Himself. Loving and Self Sacrificing for those He created.

The difficulty for the people of the AA group, and perhaps our difficulty is that that we want to focus on God's Will for us as individuals and that we rely on our own shallow intellect instead of Trusting in God's Holy Word and the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

God has given us His Word, His Son and the Presence of His Holy Spirit that we might know His Will and follow it. Our task is to strive to be faithful and moment by moment listen to the Voice of God. Listen to His Word – read our Bibles and study what is revealing to us.

Listen to the voice of God in the people with whom we share life. Not just family or our parish, but all those in the community. Listen to those in need and work to meet the needs of those less fortunate. Listen to the old and to the young. There is wisdom and prophesy that comes from age and mouth of babes.

Struggle each day to be authentically Christian and to share our faith. Not all of us are called to be evangelists, but all of us are called to share our faith. In the General Thanksgiving we pray that we might show forth our praise not only with our lips but with our lives. Some of us are to witness our faith with our lives. Others will see not only what we do but how the stress of daily life affects us. If we are trusting God for all that we need, our stress over the day to day challenges of life are greatly reduced.

And then there is the final practical part of the message of the Gospel for today. Both Matthew and Luke record this teaching and both stress His final part of the message. Can you add a moment to the span of your life? Of course not! We learn in Ecclesiastes there is a time for every season, a time to be born and a time to die. God alone determines when we are born and when we die.

Our part of the work of the Created Order is to be God's Faithful People.

We are to seek first the Kingdom of God – we are to live as Kingdom People in the World that neither knows God, nor serves Him. We are to be light and leaven - we are to show the Light of Christ to the least, the lost and lonely.

Serving God and not mammon

Living this way is not easy, but it is the only way to find real peace.

Knowing that we are loved by God and that he will give us all that need and more that we can either imagine or deserve

Amen