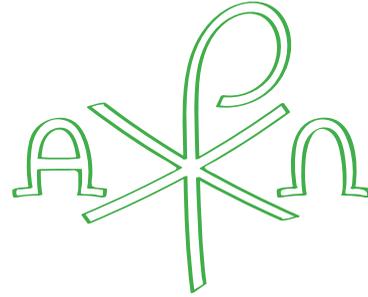


THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Daniel Hinton



MATTHEW 6:24-34 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused St. Matthew Levi the Apostle and Evangelist to write this gospel around AD 50. This is a portion of Jesus' great Sermon on the Mount. Not long before this passage begins, Jesus says, "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." (Matthew 6:19-21) Jesus continues this teaching with the passage that follows.

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

- The Lord makes it clear in the First Commandment that He permits nothing and no one to be served as a god alongside Him. It is a general truth that servants cannot serve two masters; Jesus is speaking here of serving God and mammon, or money, Note well that He is not condemning the possession of wealth, but instead He condemns the love of it.

²⁵ "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?"

- Jesus is not giving generic self-help advice like one might find on daytime television. Instead, He is teaching that anxiety about the daily necessities of life is more than self-destructive; it is in fact a denial that God provides such things for us. Thus the source of this kind of anxiety is a lack of trust in God.

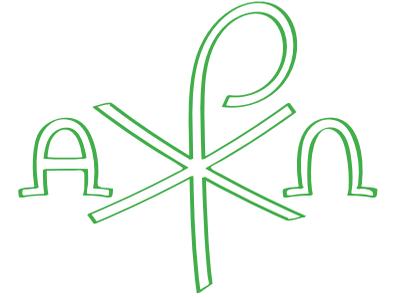
²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

- Compared to man, birds do very little. They do not work ahead for coming hardship, and yet God sees fit to provide even for these! Jesus wants the disciples to consider how the birds have all they need and see in their little example that it is God who cares for them.
- Moving from the simple birds to the complex lives of humanity, Jesus reminds His disciples and us how God cares for man as well as the birds.

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²⁷ **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?**

- Despite claims to the contrary, our positive thoughts carry no ability to bless ourselves.

²⁸ **And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.**

- The flowers do not work in order to be clothed with their glorious petals. Instead, God cares for them and gives them their glory. Solomon was known, among other things, for the splendor of his clothing and for the luxury provided by his immense wealth. And yet, the flowers which are clothed by God are far more beautiful than Solomon and his robes.

³⁰ **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?**

- As impressive as the lilies may be, they are more or less weeds with very little value. However, the Lord clothes them. The contrast with the lilies is the children of God, whose value is infinite and who are cared for so richly by God and yet worry about whether they will have what they need.

³¹ **Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’** ³² **For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.**

- The Gentiles (that is, pagans) know nothing of God and see nothing beyond creation as the supplier of their needs. The pagans take confidence in their accumulation of wealth as proof that they will have the things they need. Because they trust in their wealth to provide for them, their god is Mammon. Their hearts

are turned toward their possessions, which is what Jesus warns His followers *not* to do.

³³ **But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

- Because Jesus treats the kingdom of God in contrast with earthly things and wealth, it must be said that the kingdom of God does not consist of the things of this world.
- Christ’s disciples are to seek His kingdom as of first importance, and the little earthly things of this life will come in due season.

³⁴ **“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**

- Because the world is full of evil, every day brings its own evil to the children of God. We are not to worry about the future. Rather, we take what each day has to give us, trusting that the Lord will help us through and preserve us both now and in the future.
- Your Heavenly Father, who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds of the air, will provide for you, His own dear child. Not only will He provide the little things we need for each day, but He provides us with our righteousness through faith in Christ.

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