

## Homily

From our second lesson, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.”

It is in our second lesson that we are confronted with a choice. Will we choose God or will we choose Mammon? We cannot serve two masters, it must be one or the other.

In this passage, from the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord tells us not to worry. He tells us specifically not to worry about three things that tend to be rather important in life. Do not worry about food, do not worry about your clothing, and do not worry about tomorrow.

In life we need to think about these things and use the information to make plans. We have to make decisions to move forward in life. But thinking about them is one thing, worrying about them is something else. The difference, I think, is the context in which we make those plans and the decisions that come with them.

I believe that anxiety grows out of being drawn in two directions at once. A psychiatrist once told me that depression is created by worry about the past while anxiety is spawned from worry about the future. We get anxious when we are undecided about which direction to take, which choice to make or which objective to pursue. Where should we invest our time, our money or our energy? Whose friendship should we cultivate and whose company should we avoid. How should we react when people are cruel to us, they ignore us or betray us?

We are confronted every day by a host of such decisions and we agonize over them until we make a fundamental decision. A decision that involves the overall direction of our life and whether we commit to serving God or serving Mammon.

Again Jesus states, “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.” Make this decision in your life. Commit yourself to the service of God and the pursuit of His values and purposes for the world. Once you have done this, the little decisions in life will follow. Once you have decided to let God be in charge a great deal of worry will go away.

Because God has endowed all of us with free will, you do have an alternative to God. Instead of committing yourself To God’s will and purpose, you can choose to

devote your life to the pursuit of worldly goods and unhealthy values. Either way you will still deal with daily decisions about food, clothing and associations. Either way you will need to think about tomorrow and what it might bring. Since the master you choose to serve becomes responsible for your welfare, the question resolves itself to a matter of trust. In whom or what do you place your trust? Do you choose to entrust your welfare to God or to the wealth and possessions of this world? What is your choice?

It is ironic that the words “In God We Trust” appear on our currency. It almost seems like our founding fathers intended to warn us that we needed to be careful and trust in more than the money we have. So many people hold the ownership of money and possessions to be the most important thing in their life, and the focus of their goals and ambitions. God is always faithful and will not ebb and flow like the money in your bank account. God will not back out of a deal at the last minute and leave you hanging. God always delivers on His promises and He takes care of those who put their trust in Him. The same cannot be said of our money and possessions.

It is important to understand that mammon is not evil. Mammon is not a person or a living thing. Mammon is simply an Aramaic word that means riches or wealth. Mammon is a gift from Almighty God. As such it has a proper place in the order of things and should be used, like all of God’s gifts, in accordance with His will and His intentions. Mammon can be used, and should be used, to build relationships, relationships that endure in this world and in the world to come. Jesus himself said In Luke 16:9.

“Make friends for yourself by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails, they (those friends you have made with your wealth) may receive you into the eternal habitations.”

By calling mammon unrighteous, Jesus does not mean that it is evil. He means it is simply not righteous. Of itself, money and wealth have no morality. The evil comes when it is not used properly or when relationships are sacrificed in order to obtain or keep it. Or when it becomes more important than God.

The definition of idolatry is to put what God has created in the place of God Himself. It is the most commonly mentioned sin and the most severely condemned sin in the Bible.

The first of the Ten Commandments is “Thou shalt have no other God’s before me.” St. Paul talks about the foolishness of men who worship and serve the creature rather than the creator, and since God is the creator of all material things, whoever chooses to serve mammon rather than God is a fool and an idolater.

“No man can serve two masters,” said Jesus. We have to make a choice as you cannot serve mammon and God at the same time. One of them has to give way to the other and whichever one you choose will determine the context in which you will make all the other decisions, big or small, in your daily life.

You will feel anxiety until you make the fundamental decision about how to invest your life. Until you make the critical decision between God and mammon you will always be torn in two directions. You will be like someone trying to ride two horses at once, or chase two chickens running in different directions.

You will struggle with each decision you make and where to spend your money, where to invest your time and energy and what friendships you wish to cultivate. You will struggle with whose company to keep and how to react when people ignore you, insult you or betray you. You will struggle with anxiety and how to respond to all the demands and requests for your time, your energy and your resources.

All of these decisions are made in the context of one big decision that gives them their ultimate meaning. Not my will but let your will be done. This is a prayer that I use a great deal of the time. Learn to trust God and all the little decisions will be much easier.

In Daniel 6:23 we are reminded of this trust in God.

“Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. “

Ask yourself today, Who or what stands in the place of God in my life? A creature? Money? Or do I trust the Creator? In whom or what do you put your trust?

“You cannot serve God and mammon. Open your wallet or purse and read what is written on your money. In God we trust.

“So do not worry saying what shall we drink or what shall we eat. For the Pagans run after all these things and your Heavenly father knows that you need them. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.”

To the only wise God our Savior

Be glory, majesty, dominion and power both now and forever. Amen