

Matthew 6:24-34

**‘No one can serve two masters:**

**for a slave will either hate the one and love the other,  
or be devoted to the one and despise the other.**

**You cannot serve God and wealth.**

**‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life,  
what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body,  
what you will wear.**

**Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?**

**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?**

**And can any of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your span of life?**

**And why do you worry about clothing?**

**Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow:**

**they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you,  
even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.**

**But if God so clothes the grass of the field,  
which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven,  
will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith/!**

**Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat? or What will we drink?  
or What will we wear?’**

**For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things;  
and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

**But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness,  
and all these things will be given to you as well.**

**So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own.  
Today’s trouble is enough for today.**

**Meditation:**

In a small town next to the Mississippi River the rains came and came  
and the river was close to overflowing its banks,  
so the town mayor decided everyone ought to evacuate  
and sent the local police to knock on everyone's door

But when they knocked on the front door of the local minister, he said:  
Thank you, but I'm going to stay home... I'm not worried!  
You see, he said: God will save me...

Well, the rains came and came...and the river overflowed its banks and now it was  
at the minister's front door...

this time rescuers came by in a row boat..  
Please reverend...get in the boat, the river is still rising...

Ah...thank you very much but no...  
God will save me...

Now, the rains continued and the flooding is so bad,  
the water is rising to the second story  
of the minister's house.  
It forces him onto his roof...  
so this time, the rescuers come by in a helicopter...  
PLEEEEESE Reverend...grab the rope, we'll pull you up...  
No, thank you...he replies...God will save me...

Well, with that he drowns...and the minister goes to heaven  
and looks at God squarely in the eye and said:  
"Hey! what gives? I thought you would save me..."

**and God replied: "I tried, 3 times!"**

**'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life,  
what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body,  
or what you will wear.**

**Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?**

**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?'**

**You know...my Dad used to say: God helps those who help themselves...**

**A young woman I know sits home most Saturday nights,  
waiting for God to send her the man she was meant to marry...**

**The old woman told me: Work as if everything depended on you  
and pray as if everything depended on God...**

**and I have heard of not a few young men, lying on the couch waiting for the job offer to  
appear...**

**So, what gives? This is so confusing!**

**Does God provide?**

**or do we have to go after what we want, pound the pavement, be assertive, be aggressive!??**

**and...why does Jesus tell us not to worry about what we should eat or wear....**

**Is he kidding me? People have to eat, don't they?!**

**Of course they do...and Jesus knew that. Don't forget who he was talking to back then.**

**His followers always had to worry about their next meal.**

**They didn't have a closet full of clothes...**

**So what is going on here?**

**According to Scripture Scholar Sr. Diane Bergant:**

**“Jesus is talking about setting one’s priorities straight; appreciating our place in the natural world and trusting in the goodness and providence of God.”**

**Jesus uses examples from the natural world because the birds and the flowers follow their nature...they do what is most natural for them.**

**Therefore....we need to do what is natural for human beings...**

**Well....that sounds all well and good...**

**But what natural for human beings?**

**What is our true nature?**

**What does it mean to be human?**

**In many Christian denominations the answer is easy:**

**we were born with Original Sin, and therefore we are naturally sinful.**

**Ahh...but Original Sin only one thread of understanding in the Christian Tradition...**

**there is another and not quite as well known**

**and it is called Original Blessing.**

**In this understanding of what it means to be human**

**we come to know that we are a species in the process of becoming....**

**and I underscore, process**

**We were never once ‘perfect’: whatever that means...**

**but they we are a species that is evolving, growing emotionally and spiritually.**

**Teilhard de Chardin once said:**

**“We are not human beings trying to have a spiritual experience,**

**but spiritual beings trying to understand what it means to be human.”**

**I believe that statement to be very, very true.**

**Really...Most, if not all, mentally healthy people know the right thing to do...**

**but so many of us have such a hard time doing it!**

**We know forgiveness is good...but boy, our egos like to hang on to our wounds.**

**We know generosity is right...but yikes! our egos like to get more and more, bigger and better...**

**We know that to love our neighbors is true wisdom itself...**

**but again, our egos want to define our neighbors as strictly**

**those who think and look just like we do....**

**We live in very important times... global tensions are high and fraught...**

**and much—if not all if it, is brought on by trying to understand what it means to be human...in all of our many shapes, sizes and colors...**

**But these days we are no longer separated by oceans deep or man made border lines...**

**We live in an interconnected, interrelated world where goods, services and people have contact and access to all others in a nano-second....**

**We have come to understand that we share more than 90% of our genetic inheritance with other species...**

**We know that our waters can be and often are tainted by toxins created far, far away... and our air can be and often is polluted by dirty air coming from industries on the other side of the globe..**

**How are we to find the food, clothing, shelter and safety that each of the 7 billion of us need and yearn for?**

**What does it mean to be human in this world, this day and age?**

**The Wisdom of Jesus has been never more important:**

**Trust in the Love and Goodness of God.**

**Trust that we are indeed made in the image likeness of the Creator and so our natural human tendencies are ones of forgiveness, mercy, generosity and compassion.**

**Trust that selfishness, worry and fear serve no higher purpose...**

**Trust that the Power of God, the Power of Love has the Final word...**

**Trusting in God's power and the power of love does not mean that we don't have to work for a living, or don't have to put forth the effort to get what we want...**

**of course we do.**

**But, again, according to our human nature:**

**we cannot do everything.**

**We do what we can do, and then Trust that God will complete our efforts...**

**whether we get what we want or not...**

**We don't always see the bigger picture, or the greatest good...**

**Remember that song, "Thank God for unanswered prayers"?**

**So today's question is not shall I work or shall I wait,  
shall I seek or shall I sit....**

**Today's questions really are:**

**Am I willing to trust in the Goodness and Love of God?**

**Am I willing to open my heart and mind to God's providence in all of its  
many ways, shapes and forms?**

**am I willing to become fully human: willing to live a life of compassion and kindness**

**am I willing to trust in the Power of Love?**

**Do you know what your answer might be?**

**Amen.**