

Trinity 15  
 September 20, 2009  
 I Kings 17:8-16; Galatians 5:25-6:10; Matthew 6:24-34

Pastor T. Clint Stark  
 St. John's LC-MS  
 Topeka, KS

*Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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

Who your Master is, makes all the difference. If God is your master you are free to live like the birds of the air without a care in the world. If God isn't your Master then you should be anxious about today, tomorrow, and forever.

Think of the world. The world isn't a slave to God and should be worried. The world doesn't confess that God owns everything that exists and is masterfully in control. The world is a selfish slave to money, thinking their possessions belong to them and that they can do with them as they please. It isn't that God doesn't provide enough money, food, and water to sustain every living creature. He does. The problem is that greedy man serves money and hates God and neighbor. The world only stores up treasures on earth, blind to the fact that rust and moth will win in the end. The world cares more about getting sleep, being first in line at IHOP, and watching a football game than receiving the eternal gifts at Church Sunday morning and then living a life of mercy toward the neighbor. The world eats, drinks, and is merry today, but tomorrow its glory fades and it will be thrown into the fire. Yes, the world is a slave to a merciless master who never provides rest. The world is the dog who returns to the abusive master until it is beaten to death both temporally and eternally. It is no surprise to us that the world doesn't use its time, gifts, and money to serve God. But, what about Christians?

What do we think when we hear Christ's words? **“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.”** Do we grab our wallet and purse a bit tighter and justify to ourselves that we do serve God and not money? You know it can't be both. We can only serve and love one master, not a 10% - 90% balance of both.

Who do we serve? Do you rightly not worry about money, your health, or your life? Are we smarter than a birdbrain? Or, are the birds of the air better Theologians than us? Birds don't worry and fret and our Heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't we of more value than they? Do you store up for yourselves treasures in heaven? When you give money back to God, do you give cheerfully from the first fruits, or, do you give what is left over? Do you give back to God only if the collective congregation agrees with your will? Do you give just enough to make the church budget or do you give generously back to God what is already His? Is it that God doesn't provide us with enough resources to do more for missions in Russia or here at home - or - that we are enslaved to money?

**“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.”** Again, what thoughts fill your head when you hear Christ's description?

**For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself... Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.**

Do you think that you do serve God and not money? The truth is you don't. Do you give enough to the church? The answer is no. Do you do enough for your neighbor? Not even close. Do you trust God fully? No way. We can never go to bed at night thinking we have given enough, served enough, or believed in God enough. Thinking we can make God our Master by our service is a futile attempt at salvations by works of the Law.

If you do realize that you haven't served God above all things - if you do realize that you worry constantly and don't fear, love, and serve God with your whole heart or your neighbor as yourself - don't make this mistake. Don't think that you can make God your Master by trying to serve Him and not money. Slaves don't set themselves free, but must be freed.

God is your Master because He serves you, not because you try to serve Him. The Master of all creation came down from heaven taking on the form of a servant. The One Who deserves to be served constantly, took on our flesh, to serve. He took our place under God's Law and did serve God and never money. Jesus served His neighbor sinlessly, storing up good works for you. Christ was never anxious and never doubted that God would provide. He did seek first the kingdom of God and always sowed perfectly. Christ has set you free from the mercilessly Law by satisfying Its demands in your stead - and so we reap what He sowed.

After Christ fulfilled the Law for you, He then placed on Himself your sins. He placed on Himself your greed and your anxiety. All of our birdbrain sins were placed on Jesus. And Jesus didn't just die for our sins only, but the sins of the entire money-serving world. There is no sin too big or small that Jesus didn't cry, sigh, and die for. Through His life, death, and resurrection He has set you free. The door to the prison is open and your death sentence removed since Jesus suffered and died on the cross in your place.

You are free. This freedom that Jesus won for you is given to you in Baptism. In Baptism, apart from your service, God serves you the forgiveness of sins and declares you to be His salve. In Holy Communion Your Master serves you His body and blood for the forgiveness of all the times you fail to serve, fear, love, and trust in Him above all things. In Absolution when we come to our Master as dogs who have failed to serve Him, He doesn't beat us, but forgives us. Since Jesus has died for all of our sins, what sins are left for you to suffer and die for? If Jesus has served God perfectly in your place, is there any work left for you to do to earn heaven?

Who your Master is, makes all the difference. Your Master is Christ, apart from you serving Him. This relationship never depends on you. If it is up to us to remain a slave of God by our service, we are all in trouble. Thinking that your works keep you in God's kingdom puts you back, living a life of slavery under the Law. It would be like the prisoner remaining in the jail cell trying to tunnel through the floor when the door is open.

Do you see how free we really are? Christianity is not about God being our task Master with a long list of do's and don't's. Being a Christian is about living under a Master Who has done it all for us already. Therefore, we are truly a slave of God and

walk in the Spirit. We are free to drown our old greedy flesh in our Baptism. **So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.** We are free to serve our neighbor. We are free to give back to our Merciful Master a ridiculous amount of money apart from the deeds of the Law.

It is true that our works are always tainted with sin. But our Merciful Master doesn't see the sin because our works are dripping with the blood of Christ. So, you are free to store for yourself treasures in heaven knowing that this life is but a breath. You are free to take one day at a time. You free to believe that worry and anxiety don't depend on your circumstances, but on Who your Master is. Your Master takes care of the birds of the air and you are of more value than they. Your Master clothes the fields, He certainly will cloth you. Not only does He cloth you today, but He has clothed you with His righteousness that lasts all the days of your life. Listen again to the tender words of your Master to you.

**“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? 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 which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious 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 arrayed like one of these. 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? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (ESV)**

Yes, you are free to take one day at a time knowing that Christ your Master is with you to the end of the age. This makes all the difference today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen.