



Bible Study - Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

St. Maria Goretti
and St. Peter Claver
Parishes

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“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.” Matt. 6:33-34 NABRE

Reading I: Isaiah 49:14-15

If you Love Him, Trust Him! *“Trust is not a passive state of mind. It is a vigorous act of the soul by which we choose to lay hold on the promises of God and cling to them despite the adversity that at times seeks to overwhelm us.”* These are the words of Jerry Bridges, the celebrated Christian writer from his book, *Trust God: Even When Life Hurts*. This statement captures the struggle to activate faith in God and trust in His Word.

Most of us go through life claiming to love God with all our heart, mind and soul. Yet, we spend most of our waking hours actively preserving our wealth and possessions. We seek God when we are in trouble and abandon Him during times of prosperity. Sadly for some, worship is just a



Learn from the intricate beauty of flowers. Who cares for them?

formality or ritual. The truth is, if we love God we must trust Him in every circumstance.

The first reading shows Israel in exile seeking Yahweh, but feeling abandoned by Him. The many years and the brutality of exile could have restored their love for Him, but they seem to have lost hope. These words of reassurance and consolation from Second Isaiah, emphatically declare to Israel that Yahweh had not abandoned them. Isaiah tells them not to worry, because even if mothers abandon their children, the Lord God will not abandon them. To demonstrate this point, the prophet asks them, if there is a mother so removed from her natural instincts of motherhood who would abandon her infant child (v. 14). Even if human hearts forget theirs, God will never forget His children. In other words, God loves Israel and us (v. 15). Our response is to love Him. And if we love Him, we must Trust Him. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: What is your response to God’s love? How do you show your trust in Him?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT WEALTH?

Wealth is defined as, an abundance of possessions or resources. During the times of the patriarchs, wealth was measured largely in livestock—sheep, goats, cattle, donkeys, and camels. This was true of Abraham (Gen 13:2), Isaac (Gen 26:12-14), and Jacob (Gen 30:43; 32:5). People of the ancient world also measured wealth in terms of land, houses, servants, slaves, and precious metals. The prime example is King Solomon, whose great wealth is described in 1 Kings 10:14-29. Wealth is a major theme in the Wisdom Literature of the Bible (Prov. 10:15; 13:11; 19:4). The most important observation of these writings is that wealth comes from God (Prov. 3:9-10). The popular view that wickedness brings poverty and goodness brings wealth is strongly opposed by the Book of Job.

In the New Testament, many warnings are given of the dangers of letting money and things possess a person’s heart. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of “treasures on earth” and “treasures in heaven” and called upon His followers to be careful of which treasure they chose (Matt 6:19-21,24). (From Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Reading II: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

If you Love Him, Trust Him! The message from St. Paul to the Corinthians and to us is clear, if you love Him, trust His Word and not the preacher of the Word. Previously, St. Paul discussed the “factions” that developed in the Corinthian community. Some claimed to trust the Word proclaimed by St. Paul, Apollos, St. Peter and others. (See 1 Cor. 3 and 4) St. Paul urged them to think of these preachers of the Gospel as servants of Christ.

The Greek word servant here (*ὑπερεται* - *hyperetai*) means “under rower,” one who steers a ship under the direction of another (v. 1). As stewards of the Mysteries of God, ministers must be trustworthy. Since it is God’s Word that is preached, God will determine who has been a faithful and trustworthy servant (vv. 3-5). St. Paul loved God enough to trust only in God’s assessment of his stewardship of the Gospel. He discounted the judgment of others and his own personal judgment. He loved God enough to trust Him. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Who is your favorite preacher? Why? Whose spirituality do you imitate?

Gospel: Matthew 6:24-34

If you Love Him, Trust Him! On what was called "Black Monday", October 19, 1987, when the Dow plunged 508 points, at the request of the Pacific Stock Exchange, a suicide watch was placed on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. During the same week, in Miami, a longtime speculator who lost large sums in the market's crash walked into the local Merrill Lynch brokerage office and requested to see his broker and the office manager. He opened his briefcase, took out a handgun, and shot and killed the two men and himself. A friend commented, "His entire life was devoted to the market, and it collapsed around him. The god that he trusted had let him down." This incident dramatizes that we cannot serve God and mammon. Mammon is an Aramaic word, *mamona*, meaning wealth or property. Serving wealth brings anxiety. Serving God brings peace.

The Gospel continues with Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" as synoptically ascribed by Matthew in Chapters 5-7. In this Sunday's reading, Jesus seem to challenge us with words similar to these, *If you love Me, trust Me for everything*. The choice between God and wealth comes at the end of a discussion on true wealth (v. 19-21, 24 and Luke 12:33-34; Luke 16:13). The choice is an echo of the first beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (5:1). Complete trust in God allows us to rely on Him for everything. Worrying about earthly safety, wealth and accomplishments is a decision to worship "mammon". For Christians, the question is: Do you love God enough to trust Him to provide for your every need?

In the Gospel, Jesus dispels excessive concern over clothing and food. He calls our attention to nature, the birds and wild flowers, to show that human beings are even more important in the sight of God (vv. 25-31). This is a reference to the first reading. *"Even if mothers forget their infant children, I will not forget you, says the Lord."* (Isaiah. 49:15 NABRE) Jesus even asks us to admit that worrying does not solve anything (v. 27). When our goal is to live for God and God alone, all else will be satisfied (v. 33). The God who created us knows our every need. Don't be anxious about tomorrow (v. 34). If we love Him, we should trust Him. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** What do you think is the primary concern of the Gospel regarding possessions and money? How does the Lord's Prayer relate to the Gospel readings?

Pray About It!

Monday

Read Matt 6:24-34. What are you worried about? Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Tuesday

Read Luke 16:13. Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Wednesday

Read Luke 12:22. Spend ten minutes in silent prayer.

Thursday

Read 1 Cor. 4:1-2. Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Friday

Attend Mass and receive the Eucharist. Pay special attention to the Lord's Prayer during Mass.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Church teaches that Faith in God means trusting in God and relying on God for everything.

227 It means trusting God in every circumstance, even in adversity. A prayer of St. Teresa of Jesus wonderfully expresses this trust: *Let nothing trouble you / Let nothing frighten you
Everything passes / God never changes
Patience / Obtains all Whoever has God / Wants for nothing/ God alone is enough.*

Resources: Matthew, Daniel J. Harrington; Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 871- 872; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2014*, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.ND. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 68-71; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts* --John A. Stroman, Thunder From the Mountain (Nashville: Upper Room, 1990), 37. St. Teresa of Jesus, Poesías 30, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. III, tr. by K. Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1985), 386 no. 9, tr. by John Wall.

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2014