

Daily Readings

Please note: On this Thanksgiving weekend, we focus on passages dealing with our devotion to God. What masters do we serve? More food is consumed on Thanksgiving in the United States than any other day of the year. The day after Thanksgiving is the highest retail day of the year. As we count our blessings this week, what part does God play? These passages focus on our reliance on the material things of this world. The daily readings allow us to dig deeper.

Monday November 22 – Read I Timothy 6:6-19. Timothy is the Apostle Paul’s young protégé. These letters are meant for Timothy’s development in understanding the ways of Christ. In this passage Paul warns Timothy about the danger of loving money. Notice Paul says it is **“love of money”** that is the **“root of evil.”** How much does money rule your life? On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you measure your love of money? What part will money play in your holiday celebrations?

Tuesday November 23 – Read Luke 16:10-16. In this passage, Jesus makes the statement, **“No one can serve two masters.”** Who or what are the masters in your life? What are the demands of these masters? Does your faith in Christ make a difference? Do you need to re-order your life?

Wednesday November 24 – Read Matthew 6:9-15. In teaching his disciples to pray, Jesus used the “Lord’s Prayer” as the model. Verse 11 reads, **“Give us this day our daily bread.”** As you pray the prayer of Jesus what does daily bread include for you and your family? Do you want for anything?

Thursday November 25 – Read Luke 19:1-10. Zaccheus was a rich man who had gained his wealth through scrupulous dishonest tax collecting. His hunger for salvation drives him to reorder his life, stating, **“But when I truly saw and met Jesus, money no longer mattered to me.”** How much does money matter to you? On this Thanksgiving week, are we thankful first for the things from God?

Friday November 26 – Read Matthew 23:13-26. Often we think of the imperative to give a radical 10% of income to God’s work as an Old Testament command. These passages are a scathing criticisms of the religious leaders. In verse 23, Jesus condemns the Pharisees for their trite manner of giving without tending to the needs of others. Jesus calls us to tithe as part of our commitment to God. Jesus knows we will need to reorder our lives in order to make this radical generosity possible. The generosity alone does not substitute for a whole life dedicated to Christ’s work. It forces us to have faith in God for everything. What one thing can you do today to reorder your life?

Invite someone to worship this week. You will be glad you did.

God is doing great things through the ministries of Trietsch.



STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, November 21, 2010

I Give Him Thanks

Luke 12:22-34 — The Word from the Bible (New Revised Standard Version)

He said to his disciples, ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, 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, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

‘Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Scriptural Basis — Luke 12:22-34

Anxiety is the enemy of faith. Our fears and worries erode away at the confidence that comes in believing in the work of Jesus Christ. This teaching is found also in Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). In both passages, Jesus instructs his followers to not be anxious about the basic needs of life. By putting trust in God, we can live freely for others without concern about the unpredictable nature of life. God will provide in every circumstance, just as he does for all of creation. As he cares for ravens and lilies, so he will provide for the needs of his people.

When Luke adds that they should avoid anxiety because they are not able to do as small a thing as that, he may mean that they cannot add a cubit (about eighteen inches) to their “stature” (one possible meaning of the Greek word). Adding to one’s span of life (another possible meaning of the same word) is hardly a small thing. In other words, worry has only limited value. As we look back over the span of our lives, how much has anxiety and worry served us. How many meals have we missed? Have any of us gone without clothing or shelter?

In 12:32-34, Jesus’ reference to the little flock is unique. Taking up a common Old Testament figure he describes

the disciples as the sheep of God. This suggests that we in our relationship to God. Like sheep who accept the guidance of the shepherd, we are ready to accept the divine care of God. In contrast to Matthew, Luke suggests that the faithful ought to play an ascetic role — ***Sell your possessions, and give alms.***

The First Thanksgiving

In early autumn of 1621, the 53 surviving Pilgrims joined with about 90 Indians and celebrated their successful harvest, as was the English custom. That 1621 celebration is remembered as the “First Thanksgiving in Plymouth.” The Pilgrims did not call this harvest festival a “Thanksgiving,” although they did give thanks to God. To them, a Day of Thanksgiving was purely religious. The first recorded religious Day of Thanksgiving was held in 1623 in response to a providential rainfall.

William Bradford, Governor of Plymouth Colony, called the people together with the following proclamation. Although the validity of this proclamation is questioned, it is widely accepted as the first call to give thanks.

Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience; now, I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November ye 29th of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three, and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor, and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings.

Thanksgiving by Charles Swindoll

Just the word “thanksgiving” prompts the spirit of humility. Genuine gratitude to God for His mercy, His abundance, His protection, His smile of favor. At this holiday, as at no other, we count our blessings and we run out of time before we exhaust the list. And best of all, life simplifies itself. At Thanksgiving, we come back to the soil and the sun and the rain which combine their efforts to produce the miracle of life, resulting in food for our stomachs and shelter for our bodies ... direct gifts from our God of grace.

Thanksgiving – A Challenge

Thanksgiving has become, for much of our culture, the beginning of the Christmas season. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of the Son of God. Yet, our society has made it a time of extravagant excess.

While Thanksgiving should be a time of truly counting our blessings, it has become over-eating on Thursday and over-spending on Friday. Let’s start a counter culture of truly making Thanksgiving a time of remembering and gratitude. This Thanksgiving, let’s give away to those who are hungry as much as we spend on the meal we will consume. On black Friday, the biggest retail day of the year, let’s stay home. Or if the “SALE” is just too tempting, make an offering on Sunday matching what we spend on Friday.

Let’s remember whose birthday it really is. It’s not our birthday; it’s Jesus’ birthday. The greater challenge is for us this season is not only to match what we spend this week, but match ever dollar spent on our Christmas gifts, parties, and vacations. This is radical. Such generosity is almost as radical as the words of Jesus. If we gave away as much as we spent during Christmas we would need to reorder and reprioritize our lives. This is just the change that Jesus wants for all of us – change that brings real life.

Prayer Focus

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our sanctuary. We believe prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God. We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. ***Remember... someone is praying for you.***

The prayers and verses below are to encourage you in your prayers this week. Happy Thanksgiving.

Psalm 136

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

His love endures forever.

to him who alone does great wonders,

His love endures forever.

who by his understanding made the heavens,

His love endures forever.

who spread out the earth upon the waters,

His love endures forever.

who made the great lights—

His love endures forever.

the sun to govern the day,

His love endures forever.

the moon and stars to govern the night;

His love endures forever.

to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt

His love endures forever.

and brought Israel out from among them

His love endures forever.

with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;

His love endures forever.

to him who divided the Red Sea[a] asunder

His love endures forever.

and brought Israel through the midst of it,

His love endures forever.

but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea;

His love endures forever.

to him who led his people through the wilderness;

His love endures forever.

to him who struck down great kings,

His love endures forever.

and killed mighty kings—

His love endures forever.

Sihon king of the Amorites

His love endures forever.

and Og king of Bashan—

His love endures forever.

and gave their land as an inheritance,

His love endures forever.

an inheritance to his servant Israel.

His love endures forever.

He remembered us in our low estate

His love endures forever.

and freed us from our enemies.

His love endures forever.

He gives food to every creature.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of heaven.

His love endures forever.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

by Samuel F. Pugh

O God, when I have food,

help me to remember the hungry;

When I have work,

help me to remember the jobless;

When I have a home,

help me to remember those who have no home at all;

When I am without pain,

help me to remember those who suffer,

And remembering,

help me to destroy my complacency;

bestir my compassion,

and be concerned enough to help;

By word and deed,

those who cry out for what we take for granted.

Amen.