

Sunday, November 1

Luke 12:22-31 *Then Jesus 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 clothes." (v.22-23 NIV)*

This is quite a calling. Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, what you will wear. This verse asks us to give up our human instinct to constantly worry about everything: food, jobs, clothes, social status, housing, and (for me) college applications, tuition, and the list goes on. This verse speaks to me very closely. I will be leaving for college soon, and I can't seem to shake the plethora of fears that have worried my heart: How do I choose the right school? How will I pay for college? Where will I get a job when I'm done? What if I fail?

Verses like this one encourage us to sweep aside these fears in exchange for the security provided by the God who created the universe, who knows our every need before we know it (Matthew 6:8b). The God of the Bible provided manna for the Israelites, honey for John the Baptist. Surely He can provide for you and for me.

Nehemiah 5:1-19; Psalms 24, 29; Acts 20:7-12

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Truro - (Canterbury, England) The Rt Revd Timothy Thornton; Truro - St Germans - The Revd Christopher David Goldsmith.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield, The Very Rev. Andrew Hook, Provost; St. Stephen's Cathedral Church, Tabora, Tanzania, Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, Dean, Rev. Canon Rogers Kashimba, Sub-dean, and the Rev. Lucas Ngassa, Curate; The Parish of Christ The Redeemer, Areqipa, Peru, Rev'd Juan Marcos Ayala, Rector; Feast of Title, All Saints Episcopal Church, Morton; Sheryl L. Black, Whittington, Ordination to the Priesthood; Martha Bradley, Springfield, Ordination to the Diaconate.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Birthday of Bob Kohlase.

Monday, November 2

Psalm 56 *When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. (v.3)*

Where do you go for security? Where do you go when you are afraid, unsure? We manufacture innumerable "artificial saviors" in our lives. I know I've made some of my own. Sometimes when I'm scared, I run to the things of this world for comfort. I might seek security in approval from friends, or maybe the flawed notion that my works will somehow justify my actions. All of these things are not only temporary, but also incapable of filling up that hole in your heart that the safety of God brings.

Our God is the one who breathed the world into existence. He is the Creator of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. He is the Creator of you, and He knows your struggles. When you are afraid, there is no better place to run than the comfort and security offered by the one who is our fortress in whom we trust. That is faith: belief that He is more than enough to give us life, and life to the fullest.

Nehemiah 6:1-19; Psalms 57, 58; Revelation 10:1-11; Matthew 13:36-43

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Tuam, Killala & Achonry - (Armagh, Ireland) The Rt Revd Patrick William Rooke.

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord Jesus, come, set us free to worship without fear and guide us on the pathway of peace.

ST. MATTHEW'S: For all the faithful departed.

Tuesday, November 3

Matthew 13:44-52 *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”* (v.45-46)

That's quite a bold move. The man who found the hidden treasure sold everything he had so he could get his hands on it. That metaphor for dedicating your entire life to the Gospel is certainly a bold move, one that involves courage paired with unwavering trust. If that man was not one hundred percent sure that the treasure was worth it, he never would have sold everything he had to get it.

In order to grow, faith in Jesus must be paired with a willingness to follow him wherever he may lead. This is a difficult task (and one that we are not expected to complete alone). However, this dedication is absolutely worth it. A walk with Jesus, communion with the Creator, is the only way to achieve fulfillment in this life. I returned from a mission trip to Costa Rica a few days ago, and my belief in this idea has never been stronger. Let it be our prayer that the Church will live this calling in such a way that compels others to the love of Jesus.

Nehemiah 12:27-31a, 42b-47; Psalms 61, 62; Revelation 11:1-19

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Ukhahlamba - (Southern Africa) The Rt Revd Mazwi Tisani

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Pray for God's guidance and wisdom on this National Day.

ST. MATTHEW'S: Pray for the clergy of the Diocese of Springfield as they gather to pray and learn.

Wednesday, November 4

Matthew 13:53-58 *And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.* (v.58)

This is one of the harsher verses in the Bible, one that makes me sit back and think. In this passage, the people in Jesus' hometown did not respect him or his claims. Because of the lack of faith, Jesus did not do too many miracles in the town. That's quite a heartbreaker; imagine what those people could have experienced with Jesus if they just had a little faith.

Let it be our prayer that we are not like that town, where lack of faith led to lack of transformation. Let us be the people who have unwavering, even reckless faith. Jesus said that faith even the size of a mustard seed is enough to move mountains. Imagine if our faith were the size of a grapefruit. Take a moment to ponder the amazing things that could happen, the lives that could be changed, if we had faith in God and his ability to make all things new.

Nehemiah 13:4-22; Psalm 72; Revelation 12:1-12

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Ukwa - (Aba, Nigeria) The Rt Revd Samuel Kelechi Eze

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord Jesus, in our weakness you are strength; in our darkness you are light.

ST. MATTHEW'S: For those who teach and those who learn in our formation ministries.

Thursday, November 5

Psalms 71 *My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.* (v.8)

“Declaring your splendor all day long.” There is a verse in Proverbs 3:6 that I love: “In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Some translations say, “Acknowledge him in all your ways.” This idea that every moment of your day can be declaring or acknowledging the goodness of God is a beautiful mystery to me.

Paul declared in 1 Thessalonians that we are to “pray without ceasing.” Obviously, this does not mean that we are to pray every second of the day; that would be a physically impossible proposition. What it does mean, however, is that we can live our lives in a way that recognizes the existence of God in everything we do. This concept is difficult to put into words, but it is a fundamental piece of the puzzle that is a fulfilled life. A life that acknowledges God every step of the way is a life that will have a straight path; not a life without struggles, but never a life without guidance.

Ezra 7:1-26; Psalm 70; Revelation 14:1-13; Matthew 14:1-12

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Ukwa - (Aba, Nigeria) The Rt Revd Samuel Kelechi Eze

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Lord Jesus, in our weakness you are strength; in our darkness you are light.

ST. MATTHEW’S: For Tim Leighton, Postulant to the Diaconate; Matthew Dallman, Postulant to the Priesthood; their families.

Friday, November 6

Ezra 7:27-28, 8:21-36 *So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.* (v.23)

I think a theme has illuminated itself throughout the week: total faith and trust in God. In this passage, Ezra trusted that God would protect him from the robbers. Verse 31b reveals that his trust was indeed well placed: “The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way.”

Trust in God is absolutely essential to, well, everything in the Christian walk. In Acts, this idea is certainly solidified: “Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” Trust is not always easy, but its continuity can be grounded on past reliability. I strongly believe that changed lives are often the most tangible pieces of evidence for the existence of God. I have seen God work in my life, and in the lives of people around me, and I trust that He will open doors in my future. Surely, trusting in the God of the universe, of all mankind, of all things seen and unseen, is trust well placed.

Psalm 69; Revelation 15:1-8; Matthew 14:13-21

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Umuahia - (Aba, Nigeria) The Most Revd Dr Ikechi Nwachukwu Nwosu

DIOCESAN CYCLE: O Lord, may we live in your presence and glorify you in our daily lives.

ST. MATTHEW’S: That we may find the way of The Cross the way of life and peace.

Saturday, November 7

Ezra 9:1-15 *“I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift my face to you, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens.”* (v.6b)

A big theme throughout the Costa Rica mission trip devotions was the discrepancy between “repentance” and Gospel repentance. The first step of Gospel repentance is recognizing our sin, and the fact that we are sinners in need of a Savior. As this verse demonstrates, we are messed up people: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). If we

are honest with ourselves, we will discover that we really are more messed up than we think. I know I am.

The word “repent” in the original Greek actually means “to turn around.” Essentially, repentance involves changing your mind; total transformation of thought. Gospel repentance involves living in light of the mercy and grace of Jesus, and making an effort to not only stop your sin, but turn away from it. This repentance frees us from the weight of our sin that could otherwise bind us down. “But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Psalms 75, 76; Revelation 17:1-14; Matthew 14:22-36

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Umzimvubu - (Southern Africa) The Rt Revd Mlibo Ngewu

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Eternal God, take from us pride and vanity, boasting and forwardness, and give us true courage that shows itself by gentleness.

ST. MATTHEW’S: That our rest this day would prepare us for service in God’s house tomorrow.

by David Wohlever Sanchez

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