

Rev. Danny Mackey  
Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity  
September 25, 2022  
Matthew 6:24–34  
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Muncie, Ind.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

*“You cannot serve God and money.”*

Two masters. Two powers contending for you, for your attention, for your life.

On one side is the world, with all its stuff. Power and might and money and fame—Mammon, in the Greek. Mammon is a hard master. If you’ve got power...well, someone else is always gathering more and undercutting you. So mammon says you’ve got to do more, fight more. If you’ve got might...well, age comes and someone younger, stronger, smarter, better looking comes along and your might is broken. Money...greedy mammon always demands more. No matter how hard you work, it’s never enough. Fortunes rise and fall. And you can’t take it with you. And fame...well, the ones we praise today are the jokes of tomorrow and forgotten by next year. Mammon will make you work, sweat, and bleed and give you nothing in return.

On the other side is your Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks to you today, calling out to you, teaching you with His most precious Word. He warns you away from the dangers of mammon. Do not serve mammon, because...

*“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 mammon.”*

Mammon is a cruel, greedy master. Thoughts of power and might and money and fame will control you—whether you have any of those things or not. They won’t fill your emptiness. So Jesus Christ warns you against mammon...and directs you to Himself.

*“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.”*

Who is your master? Jesus Christ is. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is your master. And He tells you not to be anxious. There’s no need. Why? Because He’s got you.

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

Why, yes. Yes, it is! Life is more than mammon. More than just stuff. Power and might and money and fame. Have any of those things truly made people happy? They don’t hurt.

Not all the time, anyway. But the people controlled by those things aren't happy. They're ruled by them. Will they make your friendships stronger, better? Will your wife or children love you more? Will they make you love yourself more? More importantly, can those things get you to heaven, make you right with God? Well, no. No, they can't. Not in the end. And, in the meantime, you won't know if others are with you because they really like you—maybe just because you've got money or fame or whatever.

Your Master Jesus directs you to how the heavenly Father regards you.

*"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?"*

Why, yes. Yes, you are! You are of more value, of greater worth than the birds of the air. The heavenly Father didn't send a bird to redeem the birds of the earth. Instead, He sent His Son in the flesh of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, who was born of woman and became man. Are you not of more value than the birds?

*"And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"*

Or how about an inch to your height? It's impossible. Anxiety and worry can do nothing for you. Those who say otherwise are trying to use your worry and anxiety to get something from you. They prey on others in their weakness. Doubt and uncertainty aren't good. Just like anger and hate and other negative emotions. They do you no good. They can only harm you and lead you to harm others.

So your Master Jesus puts things into perspective.

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

You're more than stuff, right? More than flesh and bone? You've got a soul, right? You exist and have your being. Is your next meal the only thing there is? Of course it isn't! That's a blessing meant to serve you, not to rule over you. And how about your clothing? Also a blessing for you, but not meant to rule you.

Think, though, about what makes you anxious. What does your anxiety focus on? I bet it's stuff, things, cash, what others think about you. How about student loans or what job you're going to get? Grades or relationships? What people say about you? Isn't your life more than those things?

Of course it is! It is because you're a child of God. You were purchased and won by Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Buried with Him in the waters of Holy Baptism. Fed with

His body and blood. Your baptismal gown—which is actually Jesus’ righteousness—clothes you. The sacred meal—which is actually Jesus’ body and blood—feeds you. Nothing is more valuable and precious than God’s own Son. And you, you are just as valuable to the heavenly Father. After all, He paid for you with His Son. That’s how valuable you are.

All so that you might be His forever. All the mammon and stuff of this world will get broken and fall apart and decay—and on the Last Day be burned away. But you will live eternally with your Master Jesus Christ. You are valuable. You are important. You are worth more than this world and all its wealth and treasure. You are the true treasure of God. That’s how your Master Jesus loves you.

Your Master’s words “Do not be anxious” are both a warning and a comfort. He’s warning you about the world and its efforts to enslave you. And He’s comforting you with the knowledge that you belong to Him, that He is your Master.

And He is a good Master. He is much greater than this world. After all, He created it—and He created you! Formed you in your mother’s womb. He knows everything about you and works everything for your ultimate good. He wants the best for you. He wants you to have Him and eternal life with Him. So, not only isn’t He a little and weak god—rather, He’s the Lord God Almighty—but He also cares about you. He cares for you. No fear, no worry, no lack, no illness, no sign of age, no struggle, no hardship you face in this life can change the fact that your Master Jesus Christ died for you, that He has risen for you, and that He gives you eternal life. This is His promise. He will keep it.

This is why your Master says to you...

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*

The kingdom of God is His righteousness. It’s not a place, but where your Master Jesus reigns. It is where He rules so that you are freed from anxieties of power and might and money and fame. It is where He reigns so that you receive comfort for your souls, preserving you to everlasting life. And His reign is in His righteousness.

If you know where you’re going—and that you’re going to get there—then you can weather any obstacle or difficulty. If you know that the bad guys are going to get theirs in the end, you can put up with the abuse. If you know that you will have overflowing blessings forever, you can live without in the meantime. You can be content. You know how

all things are going to end—your Master Jesus has told you—and so your free to be content. What a blessing!

All because you have Christ's righteousness. It is for His sake that the heavenly Father gives you what you have. He gives you as much as you need. Like a wise father, He gives you that which you need so you will be kept in the faith. So that you might have His greatest gift of eternal life. It's already been paid for with His Son, with your Master Jesus Christ dying on the cross. You have His forgiveness, which is mightier and more powerful than anything in this world. You have His favor, more precious than money and greater than any earthly fame. Therefore, you are free. Free from worry and mammon. Free to live in His righteousness without fear.

In Jesus' name.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your heart and mind in Christ + Jesus.