

Thanksgiving Sunday      October 11, 2015

Matthew 6: 25-34

I use to love, to hate this scripture passage, especially when it kept showing up on Thanksgiving Sunday every three years. As a younger person building a life, a career and a family, I was so focused on getting what I needed to accomplish these laudable goals, that “*don’t worry be happy*” just didn’t fly. Life was serious, I was serious and I was on a mission for **God**. Then, as I began accomplishing these life tasks I still found myself unhappy with this passage because now I was afraid of losing what I had gained or failing **God** as the Church overall continue to decline.

However, over time I began to practice an *attitude of gratitude*; that is “*A disposition to notice kindness and benevolence and to give back the goodness received.*” Things have changes and now I happily embrace the message.

Well, I think I do. Recently, I’ve been aware of how much or how little time I have left on this earth, and how fast time seems to fly as we get older. Some part of me once again wants to make sure I get the most out of what’s left to me. The larger part of me still gets **Jesus** message about an *attitude of gratitude* and calls me to calm down and get with the program.

Remember those times when you had a *change of heart*? When you suddenly or reluctantly or finally accepted something you had been resisting or someone you had been resenting. It usually involves an allowing of seemingly contradictory concepts: the dark side of things as well as the attractive side, the risk as well as the reward, the loss as well as the gain. Whenever we can appreciate the value of something or someone, while still knowing the limitations and failures we begin to experience the wisdom of gratitude and nondual consciousness. With a *change of heart* we learn to let go, to live with paradox, to forgive something or someone. With such a *change of heart* we experience the freedom **Jesus** suggests in our Gospel lesson today.

Now to generalize this wisdom of gratitude to the necessities of life; what we will eat, what we will drink and what we will wear, and allow the worries of the day to remain in each day, we need to learn to *forgive reality for being exactly what it is right now*.

If we don’t or if we won’t, we continue to live alone in a scarcity mindset not recognizing what **God** has to offer.

If we can't *forgive reality for being exactly what it is right now*, we can't get to that peaceful place where we just do the right thing and trust that things will work out one way or another. We can't get to the wisdom of gratitude or nondual consciousness to trust **God** that we will recognize and accept a way through our struggles no matter what.

You see, if we can't *forgive reality for being exactly what it is right now*, we can't forgive or truly trust the **Creator** of that reality either. At some deep unconscious level we find ourselves resisting or resenting **God** for the way things are. So we worry. But *worrying doesn't take away yesterday's resentments or tomorrow's troubles. It takes away today's peace.* So, we just can't faithfully engage **God's** New Day.

Remember the movie '*The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel for the Elderly and Beautiful*'? Seven European seniors with different difficulties, wind up at this hotel / cut rate seniors residence in Jampur India. All are unhappy or in a pinch of one sort or another. Not surprisingly, the hotel / seniors residence is not in the best of condition either.

The action begins and ends with a wisdom saying. The young manager explains that in India there is a saying, "*Everything will be alright in the end. So if it's not alright then it isn't the end.*" One of the seven seniors, the one blogging her experiences to her grown children back in London ends the action of the movie by reflecting, "*All we know about the future is that it will be different. Perhaps what we fear is that it will be the same. So we must celebrate the changes. Because as someone said, 'everything will be alright in the end, and if it's not alright, then, trust me, it is not yet the end.'*"

Friends, right now, in these uncertain times, we all need to relax a little. We need to loosed our grip and not be so preoccupied with *getting, getting* our fair share, *getting* what we still can, *getting* while we still can. We need to let go, and allow ourselves, *to forgive reality for being exactly what it is right now*. Then we can recognize **God's giving**, and receive what is required for **God's New Day**. *This is how we allow the worries of each day to remain there and so be filled with an attitude of gratitude this Thanksgiving.*

### *The Application of Today*

*Relax! Allow! Let go! Forgive! For a grateful Thanksgiving!*

Let's sing through two times, #701, **What Does the Lord Require of You.**

To help us recognize and reinforce our gratitude for a **God** who truly provides.

Amen.