

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Matthew 6:24-34  
September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Pawleys Island, SC  
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Fort Myers, FL  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Seek Ye First His Kingdom

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Sermon Text:**

“Be not therefore anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or, ‘What shall we drink?’ or, ‘Wherewithal shall we be clothed?’ For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast given us body and soul, and hitherto bountifully provided for us all the necessaries of life; and we beseech Thee, strengthen, confirm, and uphold our faith, that trusting fully in Thee, and seeking before all things Thy Kingdom, we may avoid all undue anxiety and greed of the Gentiles, and by Thy grace overcome every affliction; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mammon is defined as our earthly possessions. Our Lord + Jesus even gives us some examples in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew: food and clothing. Mammon is all that we need to support this physical body and life. Clothing and shoes, house and home, fields and cattle, money and riches, and the like. Mammon is not evil in its nature. It is good for us to be clothed and fed and have a roof over our head. These things are not evil in themselves. But we make them evil by our lust and desire for them. Mammon is evil because of what it does to our soul. We cannot serve God and mammon, our Lord says. We will either love the one or hate the other. We will either despise the one or hold to the other. In other words, mammon is evil because it becomes for us a god; it replaces for us the One True God, our Triune Lord God, Who actually supplies us with all that we need to support this earthly life.

There is something more important than mammon for us to seek after. Our Lord tells us we are to seek after righteousness. Seek the Lord and all the spiritual things that He provides, and all the earthly possessions we can acquire in this world will be added to us. Not because this is some sort of quid pro quo with the Lord God; it is not as if we do one then the other will happen. No, rather, when we seek after righteousness, when we place our focus on the Lord God all these things are added to us because we find through faith in the Lord God that He is all we really need. Just think of all the things

our Lord has done for us, and even for all people.

He created us as man and woman. After we fell into sin, He promised us a Savior. To this end, He gave us His holy Word, the Scriptures, first through the Patriarchs, and then through the Prophets. The prophecy of the prophets came true when our Lord came down from Heaven and took upon Himself our flesh and became man for us. He has fulfilled the Law perfectly for us since we were, and are, unable to do so. He suffered and died on the tree of the holy cross in order that He might pay the penalty of our sins. He offered up His life as a ransom, and died on the cross, and was placed into a grave, all so that on the third day He might rise again from the dead and open up for us our own graves. He won for us forgiveness of our sins, eternal life with Him, and rescue and salvation from our enemies of sin, death, and the devil.

Then He before He ascended into Heaven to sit on the right hand of the Father until He comes again to judge the quick and the dead, He sent out His Apostles into the world, to preach and proclaim all these good things that He has done for us. He gave to the Apostles the blessed means of grace in order that He might draw all men to Himself. We Holy Baptism, the declaration of our Absolution from sins, and we have His Holy Supper, wherein He feeds us with His Body and Blood in bread and wine. He gave to us His Holy Ghost so that by these means He may create and strengthen faith within us. And He promises to us that when our last hour comes in this life, He will take us to live with Him in an eternal home in Heaven.

He has clothed us with righteousness through our faith in Him. He has fed us with His Word and the Sacraments. He has given us the riches of forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. What more, my dear friends, do we need?

We have all that we would ever need given to us by our loving and gracious Lord God, why then worry about the physical things? We cannot add a day to our life by worrying about these things. We cannot add a cubit to our stature through the worry of obtaining earthly possessions. Seeking after mammon only leads us into doubt and despair. This is why mammon is evil, for it takes us away from trusting and relying on the Lord God. It replaces the true God for a false one.

Our Lord + Jesus gives us examples in today's pericope. "Behold the birds of the heaven." They do not worry about from where they are going to get food. The heavenly Father knows their need and daily and richly supplies them with all they need for their lives. He supplies bugs and worms, and even roadkill for them to fill their bellies to the full. He does this every day of their lives. Are not we of much more value than they? They were created by the Lord speaking the Word, "Let there be." We were created from the dust of the earth with the Lord God's own hands, and He even breathed into our very own nostrils the breath of life. He gave His own breath to bring us to life. We are much more of value than they.

Not only did He create us in this way, but He sent to us the Son of God to be one of us, in order that He might redeem us from sin and death, and the power of the devil. This is how much the Lord God cares for us. He does this for us even when we disregard Him and chase after mammon. He still supplies our earthly needs, even as He does all the people in the world. But He desires for us so much more. He desires that we live with Him in Heaven for all eternity. He desires that we seek Him where He is to be found in the Word and Sacrament distributed to us when we come to this holy place and gather with other Christians and receive the gifts that He offers us through the Liturgy. Here in the Church, He nourishes and feeds us with life-giving sustenance. Here in the Church, He clothes us with the righteousness of the Son of God.

He has clothed us with much more than He has ever clothed the lilies of the field. In our Lord's description of the lilies, He gives us a picture of what chasing after mammon does to our souls. For

when we seek after mammon, and disregard the Lord God, we are like the lilies of the field. Notice that they are grown as lilies but cast into the fire as “grass of the field.” They have lost all of their glory and luster. Those who seek after mammon are like the grass of the field which are today, and tomorrow are cast into the eternal fire of Hell. Those who seek after righteousness are like the lilies of the field whose raiment is more glorious than the raiment of Solomon in all his glory.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not seek after mammon which today is and tomorrow is gone. Let us not seek after that which does not provide us with eternal things. But rather, let us seek after the Kingdom of the Lord God, and His righteousness. His Kingdom and His righteousness are found here in this place. They are found here in the Church. They are found through His means of grace. For through the Word and the Sacrament—through the preaching of the Gospel, and the Lord + Jesus giving Himself to us through means—He creates faith in us by the working of the Holy Ghost. He gives us faith to trust solely in Him. He gives us faith to seek all good things that we need to support this body and life from Him. For in and through Him we are not just given earthly possessions which come and go like the grass of the field, but we are also given spiritual possessions which are eternally ours.

Let us give our Lord God thanks and praise for bringing us to the waters of Holy Baptism, so that He might bring us into His holy family of the Church. Let us give Him thanks that He forgives us our sins through the mouth of the pastor, who declares to us that our sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake. And let us give our Lord thanks and praise that He sustain us in the true faith and teaches us to not worry about where the things of this life will come from, for He continues to preach into our ears the Gospel of the Son of God, our Lord + Jesus, and all the great things He has done for us. He has given us His Body and Blood as a meal in bread and wine, which sustains our faith in this life, until He calls us to our eternal home in Heaven.

All these things have been added unto us, therefore, let us not worry about what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed, for our heavenly Father knows that we have need of all these things and richly and daily provides them to us in our daily need. The day is filled with evil, and sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Let us not combat this evil by seeking after mammon, but rather trust in the Lord God to rescue us from the daily evil we endure by opening up our ears to hear that He has already defeated evil, and will take us from this vale of tears to an eternal home in Heaven, where we will no longer endure evil, and will enjoy the eternal feast that the Lamb has prepared for us. Thanks be to the Lord God for all His good gifts! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*