

SoM
Lesson 7

Dallas Willard- "Jesus is not just nice, he is brilliant"

Read Matthew 6:25-ff.

How you can tell when it's going to be a rotten day:

You wake up face down on the pavement.

You call Suicide Prevention and they put you on hold.

You see a "60 Minutes" news team waiting in your office.

Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of the candles.

You turn on the news and they're showing emergency routes out of the city.

Your twin sister forgot your birthday.

Your car horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you follow a group of Hell's Angels on the freeway.

Your boss tells you not to bother to take off your coat.

The bird singing outside your window is a buzzard.

You wake up and your braces are locked together.

You call your answering service and they tell you it's none of your business.

Your income tax check bounces.

You put both contact lenses in the same eye.

Your wife says, "Good morning, Tim", and your name is George.

Here's a humbling statement- I came into this world with nothing and I'm leaving this world with nothing.

Back in Matthew 4, we find Jesus just before he begins his ministry led out to the desert for 40 days where the Devil comes and tempts him. One of the temptations is **vv. 2-4 "After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"**

God is the maker of the world. He decides what he wants and how he wants it. Humbling! We come again and again saying to God... do it my way. Give me what I want. I know how to obtain the good life. And God says... no. But I won't give up on you. I'll still provide for you... but I'll do it my way.

We cannot not have a Dutch uncle talk with God. But this is hard for us...right? It's like we think sometimes that we can run our lives better than God can.

Look at the birds... what I'm impressed with birds is that birds act like birds. Birds do what birds do. They don't hoard their food and store it up somewhere for next week or next winter.

People... people have a hard time being human. People want to be like God.

Cows act like cows. Cows go out into the pasture and they eat... grass. Cows produce milk and milk can be turned into butter (amen!).

People envy God's position. That is exactly what happened with Adam and Eve. They were tempted in that they could be wise like God. I can hear them now... we know God said no, but he must be holding something back that will make us equal to him.

It has always been a problem for humans to stay in their proper places. It has always been difficult for humans to be human. To be human is to recognize that God is God. What makes us human is not how much we can get materially in this world. If anything this is what makes us inhumane to one another.

Jesus wants us to be human. And when our hunger and thirst is for God and his kingdom it no longer matters how much or how little we have... we are simply happy to be who we are.

But there is competition between the gods. The gods of commercialism and consumerism have our attention. They have invaded our world. They have created in so many... a hunger for more stuff. One preacher calls it "stuffitis." He says it's a need-more-disease... Got more than we need, got more stuff than we know what to do with... but we just gotta have more or we'll die!

Jesus is trying to get us to recognize that our lives belong to the great owner of the universe... God.

Here's the good news this morning: when we get this message we can simply be who God intends us to be. When we see that God is our provider and that stuff doesn't matter, we are free. Free from worrying about our food, or clothing. We are free to be about the kingdom of God. When we have this kind of freedom the hallelujahs come flowing out of the heart.

Now there are some people who struggle with things other than food. For some they would rather starve to death than to look bad. Jesus says look at the lilies. God is the best fashion designer there is. Open your eyes and look around. If God clothes the lilies of the field he will certainly clothe you. But more than this... God also desires to clothe us spiritually with the personality, and character and the life of Jesus.

God can clothe us with humility, love, forgiveness, patients, kindness, long suffering. God can help us to look beautiful from the inside out.

Do you see what Jesus is saying? Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you. But remember... these things can also be taken away as well. Just like the sparrow that flies, it too shall die, and God will know when it falls to the ground. Just like the lilies of the field in all of their spectacular beauty- these too will fade and die and be burned. And we too will not always look the way we do today. We too will fade away.

This body is only a temple that will last a short time. The life God has given us is not tied to this body. The life we have is from God and one day, we will have our reward and we'll live with him in eternity forever.

Isn't this good news? Isn't this a message we can share with the world? That God is our provider here in the physical and that God will provide for us in the spiritual when this body will be no more.

May this be your prayer today:

- Wherever you lead me Lord, I will follow.
- Teach me Lord to wait and to trust you.
- Teach me Lord to lean on you and not lean on my money... may I not serve two masters.
- Teach me Lord to rely on you, and not on the world.
- Teach me Lord to realize that you are the most important being in my life.
- Teach me that it is in you that I live and move and have my being.
- Teach me to know that my life is rooted and grounded in your being and as long as I have that connection between my spirit and your holy spirit that there is nothing in this world that can separate me from your love.

May you walk with that confidence and run with that conviction, even if you can't physically walk and run like you used to. Even if your eyes can't see like they used to see. Even though this body is decaying day by day,

remember that there is another body... a spiritual body that shall live on in all eternity.

May this be your prayer:

- O Lord, wherever you lead, I will follow.
- But Lord we are going to need your help.
- So we put our trust in you.

We trust God today. We're not going to worry about tomorrow. There is no tomorrow. All we have is today. We're not going to worry about yesterday. All we have is today. The more we can get out of yesterday and tomorrow the more we can trust God today.

Prayer from pilgrim heart: Thomas Merton

My Lord, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I hope that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

NLT- Matt. 6:25-34 "That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? **27** Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

28 "And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, **29** yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. **30** And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

31 "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' **32** These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. **33** Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

34 "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.