

Notes and Reflections for 12th Sunday Ordinary- A

Matthew 10:26-33 -“Jesus said to the Twelve: "Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.”

This passage (Matt 10:26-33) calling for courage under fire of persecution (Matt 10:21-22 mentions “Brother will hand over brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved.”) is closely paralleled in Luke 12:2–9. Yet in Luke it is not until 21:16-18 that clear warnings of coming persecutions are mentioned by Jesus, clear persecutions are warned “16You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death.17 You will be hated by all because of my name, 18 but not a **hair on your head** will be destroyed”

Compare to the slightly different emphasis of Luke (spiritual courage is more about sacrifice of voluntary poverty than about external persecution) Strength as willing sacrifice!

Luke 12:22-34 “He said to [his] disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life & what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. **Notice the ravens:** they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. How much more important are you than birds! Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your life-span? If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest? **Notice how the flowers grow.** They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? As for you, do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not worry anymore. **All the nations of the world seek for these things**, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides. Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your belongings and give alms. Provide money bags for yourselves **that do not wear out**, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that **no thief can reach nor moth destroy**. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

Spiritual Battle is keeping one’s own soul in grace; keeping a clear conscience

Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world.”

John 17:14 “because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world.”

Be on Guard not to become like the enemy you oppose!

Jesus said "Look out, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (Matthew 16:6)

Have you heard the phrase "*There are worse things in life, than death*"? This concept is brought to mind by Jesus' saying "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." While not putting down proper care of the body, Jesus is saying the 'soul'- 'heart' needs extra vigilance and protection when encountering evil. Think of it as a corruption of the soul; or experiencing spiritual death-it is not bodily harm so much as soul-harm.

Matthew 12:43-45 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a person it roams through arid regions searching for rest but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my home from which I came.' But upon returning, it finds it empty, swept clean, and put in order. Then it goes and brings back with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they move in and dwell there; and the last condition of that person is worse than the first. Thus it will be with this evil generation."

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) "***He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you.***"(Beyond Good and Evil, Aphorism 146)

George Washington's Battlefield Ethic of US Noble Honor during War

"Should any American soldier be so base and infamous as to injure any [prisoner]. . . I do most earnestly enjoin you to bring him to such severe and exemplary punishment as the enormity of the crime may require. Should it extend to death itself, it will not be disproportional to its guilt at such a time and in such a cause... for by such conduct they bring shame, disgrace and ruin to themselves and their country."

– George Washington, charge to the Northern Expeditionary Force, Sept. 14, 1775

An incident after the Battle of Trenton, New Jersey on December 26, 1776, where some US soldiers prepared captured German mercenaries fighting with British for summary execution, George Washington issued this order, "*Treat them with humanity, and let them have no reason to complain of our copying the brutal example of the British Army in their treatment of our unfortunate brethren who have fallen into their hands.***"

George Washington, the first Commander in Chief of the U.S.A. set the precedent that this society is to lead even our enemies by "benignant sympathy of our example". In all respects the prisoners were to be treated no worse than American soldiers; and in some respects, better. Through this approach, Washington sought to shame his British adversaries, and to demonstrate the moral superiority of the American cause."

Proverbs 24:17 "Do not rejoice when your enemies fall, and when they stumble, do not let your heart exult" on to verse 19 "Do not be provoked at evildoers, do not envy the wicked"

Mathew 5:46 "For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?"

Romans 12:17-18 "Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.

Romans 12:21 "Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good."