

November 14, 2021
Stewardship Sunday

Matthew 6:25-33

“Living On Leftovers”

Just over ten days from now we will all be *intentionally eating more than we should* as a way of saying “*Thank-you*” for the blessings of life. How many of you strategize when you sit down to a Thanksgiving meal. It is impossible to eat a full portion of everything prepared for the meal for the day. And we don’t want to wind up unable to eat the thing we like better but it is at the far end of the table while the thing we like less is right in front of us. Dressing in the hand is worth a drumstick out of reach, eh? And it isn’t until after we have had samples of too many dishes on the table that someone reminds us there is dessert still in the kitchen.

Thanksgiving dinner is an amazing assortment of things *you* love, things *other people* love and things *no one* loves but they got into the menu and you just can’t get them out once they are in. This is the time of year we learn for ourselves what it means when they say, “Your eyes were too big for your stomach.”

I love this day. Not because I must develop a winning strategy at the table. I love this day because *families gather, blessings are remembered and hope always has a seat at the table.*

In our text today, Jesus tells us this skill set we see so clearly on Thanksgiving can lead us to a place we don’t want to go. The world in which we live has many offerings – and we must decide which of those offerings we will give our lives to and which we are willing to pass up. *We* want to balance all the offerings – including God – on our plate – and *Jesus tells us we must choose.*

You are right, Jesus didn’t talk about Thanksgiving in our text today. But the dynamic he is describing is something we recognize there. We focus on perceived needs and desires. “*I am passing on those salads to save room for pie.*” A reasonable strategy at Thanksgiving. But Jesus says if we approach life in general that way we will be let down.

An Air Force chaplain was quoted in my family while I was growing up. “*Be careful what you pray for.*” And like unto it my mother used to say, “Be careful

what you ask for – because you might get it.” No matter how many or how few choices there are on the table – we can only have *one place* to which we look for life. And, it seems, ***live in only one time.***

I have enjoyed time travel writings and film over the years. For Michiganders the featuring of the Grand Hotel in “Somewhere in Time” was amazing. As interesting as the notion may be – *our own time travel it often doesn’t work out very well.* You don’t engage in time travel? I do. I remember Christmas morning when my son was so excited by his gift, he jumped two feet in the air. I remember my wedding day and smile at all the things I did not know. I remember the phone call in the middle of the night telling me my father had died. I remember loved ones lying in a hospital bed and praying they would get better.

Our minds are incredible – and in those memories we travel back. *But we can’t live there.* And when we try, we lose rather than find life. We also try to travel ahead into the future. We imagine we can guess or see what will be...we are often too negative in our estimation and wind up in *the land of worry.*

The only life we live is today. The only moment we have is now. Jesus tells us the secret to living is to pursue with all our hearts what is pleasing to God. Do not worry. Do not worry. Do not worry. Jesus says it over and over again. And when we are able to embody his words we discover *calmed fears engender adventure, engaging life and accepting opportunity.* Seeking to live as God’s means living *now* believing **God can handle whatever was and whatever will be.**

The *true banquet* in life is living as God’s children...whether we have a little or whether we have a lot. True satisfaction is growing in the image of Christ who brings us home to God’s kingdom.

If we serve the material goods of this world – we will never feel we have enough. When we serve the one who gave us life – we will be content to dine on whatever leftovers God has for us. Today we celebrate that we are meant to manage what really belongs to God. Perhaps we can give up trying to eat little bits of everything in this life. Perhaps we can live in this moment - and discover God’s faithfulness. Faithfulness always more satisfying than any material banquet we can have. God who loves us is the one who supplies the feast. Let us enjoy and find satisfaction in living on God’s leftovers.