

Rector's Essay

Thanksgiving Week

By Jarrett Kerbel (11/27/26)

What is the best gift I can give you for Thanksgiving? The gift of scripture, of course. Consider reading the following Gospel passage at your Thanksgiving table before or after your prayer.

As you may have noticed, I am a relentless advocate for personal immersion in scripture. In other words, I believe our with-God life prospers and deepens when we read, study and pray-with the Bible daily. By filling our memory and imagination with Biblical language and story we fully engage God's wisdom, vision, and presence in our day to day lives.

I can guarantee you a few things: 1. If you are ever in need of a Bible, just ask and I will give you one. 2. If you are ever in need of a Book of Common Prayer, just ask and I will give you one. 3. If you ever want to learn how to pray Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline, just let me know and I will sit down and show you how easy it is. 4. Finally, if you ever want to study the Bible or get started as a Bible reader, just ask and I will always help you out.

Here is a scripture for your Thanksgiving reflection from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew Chapter 6 in the Message version. We will revisit this passage next Fall for Stewardship Season where I will propose that we do nothing but study this teaching from Jesus.

24 "You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.

25-26 "If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.

27-29 "Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? All this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

30-33 "If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with *getting*, so you can respond to God's *giving*. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

34 "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes." **Matthew 6: 24-34**