

Borrowing Trouble

Isaiah 49:8-16; I Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 6:24-34; Psalm 131 5-25-08

This is quite a rambling, roaming sort of meditation this morning because I have been rambling and roaming during the past two weeks. I arrived home on Friday, late in the afternoon, and my mind has not quite caught up with the reality of life in the slow lane. So, bear with me and I hope there is something of value you can take away from my musings.

Often I will find myself engaged in a conversation with a friend or relative or even myself that consists of speculation about what may lie in the future. Sometimes these conversations are lighthearted and funny and full of promise. Other times they can be dark and deep and they have an overwhelming sense of hopelessness.

I am not a great believer in the theory of “self-fulfilling prophecy,” but every now and then something has crossed my mind that has, indeed, happened to me a short time later. Like the one time years ago when I had been driving through some construction sites and dared to think that I might get a flat tire from a stray nail or two. A day or so later, I did. Understanding this, on my recent trip to Wisconsin and back with my youngest daughter, Megan, I kept only positive thoughts about my now eleven year old vehicle and its ability to negotiate the 2200 plus miles. I ignored the funny little ca-chingy-ca-chingy sound that seems to come from somewhere under the hood. I also kept from reflecting on the money I had earmarked for gas never daring to think we might come up short. We didn’t. This was a bold journey without the comforting umbrella of AAA over us. But, it was a beautiful trip as spring continues to move into summer across the land. During our sojourn I deliberately focused on one day at a time without having anxiety about what might come next.

In our beautiful reading from the Gospel of Matthew, part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us that we and our times are in God’s hands.

We might strive for many things, and all of us do, but life will unfold the way it will without much regard for the way we try to push it and pull it and cram it into a mold of our own. As Robert Burns put it, “The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley.” It seems that life takes its own course in spite of all the careful plans we might design. If we can keep our wits about us when things crumble and fall apart we will be able to find the humor in all our little human endeavors and we will be able to adapt. If we cannot find humor in life, we are sad creatures, indeed. Nothing is worse for me than to encounter a person with no true sense of humor. What a chore. People who take themselves so seriously that they have no lightness of being are terribly depressing for me. Life is meant to give us joy and not to drag us down.

Jesus was telling his followers this when he told them he had come to give them abundance of life. Not an abundance of material things, although some like to think this is what he was talking about, but an abundance of **life**—of the liveliness that moves us along through the day and allows us to rest at night knowing we have done a good job. He told them that they were not to **worry** about the material things of life that they may or may not have in their futures. This did not mean that they should not plan for the future. That is foolishness. But they were not to worry about what might befall them.

When we become too bound up in worry we become unable to move. We become stuck. We develop vapor lock of our brains, our emotions and even our bodies. We cannot see our way clear to new adventures and new people. We hide from the abundance our faith and our lives should bring us.

I come from a family of worriers. I think it must be some genetic thing. I am not sure where it came from. Not my mother, that is for sure, so, it must have come from my father's side of the family. I seem to have managed to escape the gene that causes this phenomenon. My sister, on the other hand, is a blue ribbon worrier. Even though most of the things she thinks will happen in a bad way do not, she still worries. Sometimes it can be exhausting to deal with for me. Other times I listen because her worries are real. But I know, when she can just take each day in itself as a unit and get through it, she finds she can handle the next day. If she doesn't focus on borrowing trouble from tomorrow, things remain in balance for her. I recently received an email that ended with this thought, "Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia!" I think I will share this with my sister when I speak to her again.

Can there be a more comforting thought than to remember, when it seems the world has turned away from us and our friends have forgotten us, that God remembers us? Sometimes that is all we feel we have to hold on to. We are a bit like the nation Israel in the book of Isaiah. Everything was going wrong for them yet their God did not forget those people.

During this holiday weekend, one which is devoted to memory, we need to pause a bit to remember all those men and women who were able to put thoughts of themselves aside to try and make the world a better place for all. I am certain they had worries about what might happen to them but somehow, they were able to keep from being locked into one place by their concerns and they managed to go on. They did not borrow trouble from tomorrow knowing they had enough to deal with in the immediate present.

Perhaps, they were able to do this because they arose each morning intent on protecting our freedom, while remembering the words of Jesus that tell us: "Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day." These are words that have come through the ages containing a simple living truth for us. Amen