

Think on Those Things Philipians 4:4-9; Matthew 22:1-14;
Psalm 23 10-9-2011

So many times in life it seems that we focus on the wrong things. Our minds become cluttered and crowded with worries that never come to life, or with problems that do not concern us, or with issues that we just seem unable to let go. Our prejudices and fears seem to escalate and we cannot see those around us as the children of God.

It often seems that we spend little to no time on thinking about all the things that are good in life. In our present economic and political environment, more and more of us have lost the ability to think about the things that Paul considered important to have a full life and to be true followers of Christ.

Along with having fuller lives, we also find a nice measure of peace when we can shift our thoughts from all the changefulness of life and look at those things that are true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise. Our attitudes toward life and people change when we begin to look for the enduring good that surrounds us. Many can use an attitude adjustment and we need to heed the words in the Letter to the Philipians and the Gospel of Matthew.

The guests invited to the wedding feast, who all thought up reasons why they could not attend, are us at our worst. We have all been invited to the banquet set before us, through the life and teachings of Christ, and, yet, many of us refuse the invitation offering weak excuses as to why we cannot be kind, generous, hospitable, loving and forgiving. It's this or that that prevents us from being devoted followers of Christ. Most often we resist the invitation because something we should do requires that we see life in a new way and set aside our own selfish needs and desires for the needs of others. Often we are just lazy and do not or cannot review our own behaviors that taint the world around us.

We get back what it is we hand out—sooner or later it seems to all come round.

The good thing is that we all are somewhat malleable creatures, we can change and adapt if we want to and if we see that change will make things better for us and our world. We need only regain our focus on those things that are true and just and commendable.

Too often, as we sit in this beautiful place, a place that is God's house, a place where we feel closest to the Divine presence, we are distracted by things that are not worthy of thought. Motorcycles rumble by, children become enthusiastic, someone sings a tad off key or flat or too loud, the leaves are blowing around, the shadows form interesting shapes on the walls, someone has on an unusual outfit, the pew is a little hard and we are off into a world of our own thoughts instead of keeping our focus on why it is we are here. Some of us even might nod off from time to time—understandable—from time to time.

But, it is up to each of us to remember that we come to this place looking for a clue or two on how to become better people. If we cannot or will not focus on the message that comes to us in this place, through word, music or prayer, we do not move one inch forward in becoming better imitations of the one we claim to follow. We sit in our own place and space refusing to grow into someone better. The choice is always ours in how we will lead our lives and how we will be examples of our faith to others. And, do not be fooled others are always watching the way we react to life and respond to its challenges as individuals and as a part of the body of Christ..

When we think on those things that are worthy of our time and our thought, we find that we become better. When we decide to keep our focus on what is the most important to us, as we try to grow into more Christ-like people, we can make great advances. When we fritter our time and thought process away by being

distracted by those things that do not matter, we end up the losers. When we look up and down and all around to discover excuses as to why we refuse to see and take part in the banquet of the life and teachings of Christ, we are empty people.

If we are fortunate we wake up to all we have lost while focusing on the shallowness of life and we begin to discover the beauty of its depth. We begin to hear and to understand the “wonderful words of life” we have before us. Then, and only then, do we allow ourselves to think on those things that matter the very most to us, our God, and our fellow humans.

Amen