

Nothing Is Too Good to be True

First preached by the Right Reverend Grant Lynn Ford at the Sunshine Cathedral on Sunday, July 7, 2002, and then reworked and preached on Sunday, July 13, 2008, at both morning services.

THE WRITTEN WORD

The First Reading

John Randolph Price

We are where we are today according to our belief system, but as the Masters have said for centuries, it's never too late to change our minds—to restore personal consciousness to its rightful place in the trinity of our being where *nothing is too good to be true*.

The Second Reading

The Secret Book of James:

When the Lord saw that we were distressed, he said, “This is why I say this to you that you may know yourselves. For the kingdom of heaven is like an ear of grain which sprouted in a field, and when it ripened, it scattered its fruit and, in turn, filled the field with ears for another year. You also: be eager to reap an ear of life for yourselves that you may be filled with the kingdom!”

The Gospel Reading

Matthew 13.1-9 (The Message)

¹⁻³[Jesus was sitting on a beach]. In no time at all a crowd gathered along the shoreline, forcing him to get into a boat. Using the boat as a pulpit, he addressed his congregation, telling stories.

3-8“*What do you make of this? A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.*

9“*Are you listening to this? Really listening?*”

THE PROCLAIMED WORD

Talk about being scattered! You know the people I'm talking about. Not you, of course...but *those* people, the ones who are just **sooo scattered**. They're too busy on the roadway of life to stop long enough to sow Truth in their lives. Oh, an affirmation once in awhile is a good thing, but real meditation takes too much time. Prayer? A whisper now and then, but deep, intentional prayer? No time on this highway. No wonder the birds can gobble up the seed, Jesus explains in our Gospel reading.

In 1973 Gary Kildall wrote the first popular operating system for personal computers, named CP/M. I remember it well. We used it in my first church in Hinsdale, Illinois, more than 25 years ago.

The story is alleged that IBM approached Kildall in 1980 about developing the operating system for IBM PCs. But the day IBM came calling, it is said that he chose to fly his new airplane instead. The frustrated IBM executives turned instead to Bill Gates, founder of a small software company called Microsoft, and his operating system named MS/DOS

Today, thirty-five years later Bill Gates is a rich man. Let me put it this way: If you took the worth of Bill Gates' stock in Microsoft and put it into one dollar bills and laid them down end to end, round trip—from New York to Seattle and back—you could make that journey more than 341 times! If you stacked those bills one top of the other, the stack would reach almost 1,490 miles into the skies! That's rich!

Don't worry too much about Kildall. He died a rich man, but not nearly as rich as Bill Gates. Now maybe Gary Kildall was busy doing what he *wanted* to do. But he also missed his opportunity. So it is with those who are just too scattered, too preoccupied with the action on the highway. They miss their opportunities; their life is *for the birds*, so to speak.

Then, says Jesus, some people are just **too shallow**. Oh, yes, they respond to the call of Truth with great enthusiasm. But there's no depth of commitment to spiritual growth. They like the show and the music and even the positive words of the sermon, but ten minutes later, it's all pretty much forgotten. The emotion of the moment has worn off, or some difficulty comes up...and the moment of Truth passes quickly into oblivion.

Finally, says Jesus, there are those who are just **too busy**. We can all identify with that at some time in our lives. There's a great demand for our attention, and some times it's easy to get involved in peripheral things, while sacrificing our own well-being.

“It is more important to know where you are going than to get there quickly..” says Mabel Newcombe. She goes on to say, “Do not mistake activity for achievement.”

“The feeling of being hurried is not usually the result of living a full life and having no time,” says Eric Hoffer, going on to say: “It is, on the contrary, born of a vague fear that we are wasting our life.”

Maybe too scattered? Worried about how you look, or what you'll be doing next? Listen to Jesus when he says in Matthew 6:30 (my translation): “You see, if God makes the smallest dandelion look beautiful—even though it's mowed down tomorrow—isn't God going to make you look good? Have a little faith!”

Maybe too shallow? Concerned about all the petty little things of life? Listen to Jesus as quoted in verse 31 and 32: “Stop planning dinner while you're eating lunch. Quit fussing over the small stuff, like people who don't know that God is the Source of everything good.”

Possibly too busy? Set some priorities. Listen to Jesus in verse 33: “Put first things first: let your desire be God’s Realm and God’s Good, and All Good will flow abundantly to you.”

I invite you today to be like the fourth group of people—the ‘**never too ready**’—those who are good, well-tilled soil, prepared to receive the seed and to bring forth a huge harvest.

Talk about successful living! Can you imagine your life being so fruitful that everything good about it would increase by thirty percent? Or sixty percent? Or a full one hundred percent?

And what is this seed that brings such a wonderful harvest? It’s not the Bible, as many sermons will say today. It’s good to remember that there was no New Testament at this point; Jesus was still alive on this planet, walking past harvest fields and in busy city streets.

A closer examination of the story’s explanation—as found beginning in Matthew 13:19—tells us the seed is the word, the *Logos*, in the Greek. As we earlier mentioned, Jesus is not talking about the Bible, or even about himself. The word *Logos* has several translations, but the most clear—in my humble opinion—is ‘the Divine Expression’.

When the Divine Expression—‘God-Thinking’—is sown into our lives—that Truth shared with us by Jesus—it does not “return empty-handed,” says Isaiah in chapter 55, verse 11. “Rather,” he says, “it accomplishes its intended purpose, flourishing just like the grain.”

When we sow Divine Truth in our lives, the harvest is amazing! The Hasidim describe it beautifully as a Cosmic Consciousness of Divine Truth. Listen to this Hasidic saying:

“When you walk across the fields with your mind pure and holy, then from all the stones, and all growing things, and all animals, the sparks of their soul come out and cling to you, and then they are purified and become a holy fire in you.”

Truth is realized by us as *thought*, which is the parent which gives birth to *word*. Charles Fillmore, founder of the Unity movement in New Thought, says: “Thoughts are seeds that, when dropped or planted in the subconscious mind, germinate, grow, and bring forth their fruit in due season. The more clearly we understand this truth the greater will be our ability to plant the seeds that bring forth desirable fruits. After sowing the plants must be tended. After using the law we must hold to its fulfillment. This is our part. God gives the increase.”

In our reading from the *Secret Gospel of James*—one of the books that didn’t make it into the collection called the Bible—Jesus says: “The kingdom of heaven is like an ear of grain which sprouted in a field, and when it ripened, it scattered its fruit and, in turn, filled the field with ears for another year. You also: be eager to reap an ear of life for yourselves that you may be filled with the kingdom!”

Charles Fillmore goes on to say: “You must work in divine order and not expect the harvest before the soil has been prepared or the seed sown. You have now the fruits of previous sowings. Change your thought seeds and reap what you desire. Some bring forth very quickly, others more slowly, but all in divine order.”

Of course, a dizzy consciousness will reap its own harvest. So will an unconcerned consciousness or a ‘too busy’ consciousness. You see, whatever seed we sow into our lives determines the harvest we will have. We always get back what we sow, but lots more of it!

What kind of harvest do you want? Are you too busy, too dizzy, or too unconcerned to care?

The Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 9:6, “Remember this basic maxim: sowing a puny bit of seeds brings a puny harvest; sowing plenty of seed brings a generous harvest.”

Sow puny, reap poverty; sow plenty, reap prosperity.

Fill your consciousness with Divine Thoughts. Read inspiring books. Study the world’s holy writings. Listen to people who have experienced the holy. Meditate. Pray. Be quiet at least once a day, holding yourself and others in the Light. In gratitude share the blessings you have received, and be blessed!

Here’s the harvest, promised in 2nd Corinthians 9:8: “God is able to be far more generous with you than you can be generous with God. And God will be generous so that you’ll have anything and everything you need...and you’ll be able to help others as well.”

Now that’s the harvest of a lifetime. And it can be yours. Now you just might be tempted to say, “Dean Ford, that promise is just too good to be true.” Well, remember our first reading by John Randolph Price: “We are where we are today according to our belief system, but...it’s never too late to change our minds... nothing is too good to be true... nothing is too good to be true... nothing is too good to be true.” And you know what? That’s the truth!

THE GIVING WORD

People are talking about a recession. So I want to share some life-changing words from Charles Fillmore: “Do not say that money is scarce; the very statement will scare money away from you. Do not say that times are hard with you; the very words will tighten your purse strings until Omnipotence itself cannot slip a dime into it. Begin now to talk plenty, think plenty, and give thanks for plenty.” So when the news pundits start with their ‘poverty talk’... talk plenty, think plenty, and give thanks for plenty.

THE FINAL WORD

Here’s a final word from Charles Fillmore: “In the great Mind of God there is no thought of lack, and such a thought has no rightful place in your mind. It is your birthright to be prosperous, regardless of who you are or where you may be.” And remember the words of John Randolph Price: “...*nothing* is too good to be true!”