



Daily Reflections

August 27, 2018

Scripture

Matthew 23: 13-22

Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.

You lock the Kingdom of heaven before men.

You do not enter yourselves,

nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.

You traverse sea and land to make one convert,

and when that happens you make him a child of Gehenna

twice as much as yourselves.

"Woe to you, blind guides, who say,

'If one swears by the temple, it means nothing,

but if one swears by the gold of the temple, one is obligated.'

Blind fools, which is greater, the gold,

or the temple that made the gold sacred?

And you say, 'If one swears by the altar, it means nothing,

but if one swears by the gift on the altar, one is obligated.'

You blind ones, which is greater, the gift,

or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

One who swears by the altar swears by it and all that is upon it;

one who swears by the temple swears by it

and by him who dwells in it;

one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God

and by him who is seated on it."

Our Scripture Reflection

Jesus takes the self-consumed, self-righteous and arrogant religious leaders to task because of their hypocrisy. They neither understand nor carry out a ministry of humble service. If only they could have shrunk their egos and learned from Jesus, the Messiah. Then they would have been right before God.

Food for your Journey

Life is a task. The religious person differs from the apparently irreligious only by experiencing his existence not simply as a task, but as a mission. This means that he is also aware of the Taskmaster, the source of his mission. For thousands of years that source has been called God

True service is always an act of showing another person love. It is easy to forget this, even in a religious community like my own, where service is at the core of every member's commitment. Whenever we let our work become an end in itself, we lose sight of the love that gives it a deeper purpose, and gradually it becomes a mindless, mechanical chore. With love, the most mundane task can take on meaning. Without it, the noblest task can become drudgery.

--Johann Christoph Arnold, *Seeking Peace* (Farmington: The Plough Publishing House, 1998), 174.

A Prayer from the Heart

Heavenly Father, How we thank You for the wonderful example of true humility that is seen in the life and ministry of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who despite being God incarnate, lived His life in humble submission to You, learning to be both submissive and obedient by the things that He suffered.

Help me not to do anything out of selfish ambition or foolish vanity, but rather may I develop the Grace to regard the needs and desires of others as being more important than my own. Teach me I pray, to live as Christ lived. Amen