



Daily Reflections

November 10, 2018

Scripture

Luke 16: 9-15

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth,
so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

The person who is trustworthy in very small matters
is also trustworthy in great ones;

and the person who is dishonest in very small matters
is also dishonest in great ones.

If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth,
who will trust you with true wealth?

If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another,
who will give you what is yours?

No servant can serve two masters.

He will either hate one and love the other,
or be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon."

The Pharisees, who loved money,
heard all these things and sneered at him.

And he said to them,

"You justify yourselves in the sight of others,
but God knows your hearts;

for what is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God."

Our Scripture Reflection

Jesus is not advocating dishonest and immoral behavior. After all, He is the sinless Savior of the world! He is calling His disciples to use the means at their disposal (wealth, possessions) in order to help others (make friends) so that when this life comes to an end we will have friends in Heaven. We are to use the talent, creativity, and energy that we use in our secular or worldly affairs in our Kingdom affairs.

Food for your Journey

Obstetrician Ignaz Semmelweis grappled with a puzzle involving childbed, or puerperal fever, an infection of the female genital tract that often killed women who had recently given birth. Working in a prominent Viennese hospital, Semmelweis noticed that women on one floor were contracting childbed fever at a dramatically lower rate than women on another floor. Women treated by midwives, he noticed, had fewer infections than those treated by medical students. Midwives were careful about cleanliness and were not allowed to do autopsies. But, Dr. Semmelweis observed, medical students did autopsies regularly and went to patients directly from the dissecting room without washing. The new mothers who were getting sick were being tended to by medical students just after they left the autopsy room. Noting that the students were not washing their hands, he hypothesized that neglect of hand washing might be responsible for the deaths of the new mothers. His hypothesis preceded Louis Pasteur's theory that the spread of bacteria caused disease, and the establishment of sterility as a primary requirement and common practice in treating patients.

To stop the spread of childbed fever, Dr. Semmelweis proposed something radical: He ordered all medical students working on the affected maternity ward to wash their hands in a solution of chlorinated lime before entering the ward. The rate of infection plummeted from 18 percent to 1.5 percent over several months.

You might think Ignaz Semmelweis would have been lauded as a hero. Instead, his brilliant observations and courageous actions stirred up such controversy that he lost his position at the hospital and ended his career in disgrace at Budapest. He was eventually committed to an insane asylum and died of a blood infection similar to the one he had prevented so successfully.

This courageous doctor was vindicated in 1879 when the great scientist Louis Pasteur personally defended Semmelweis' theories at a meeting of the Academy of Medicine in Paris.

Semmelweis couldn't fully explain how or why his remedies worked. He only knew, through experimentation and observation, that they did work and that lives could be saved if the proper measures were taken. The hows and why could wait until later.

--Dale A. Matthews, *The Faith Factor* (New York: Viking, 1998), 57-58.

Semmelweis was a person with a tag line: He could see what others were pathologically blind to.

A Prayer from the Heart

Heavenly Father, You have blessed me with the precious gifts of time, talent and treasure. I am so fortunate, Lord. Give me the wisdom, faith and compassion to use these gifts to give You glory. Amen