



ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11856 MAYS CHAPEL RD., TIMONIUM, MD 21093

Thanksgiving Day, November 22nd, 2012

Be not anxious for your life.

**✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son
And of The Holy Ghost. Amen. ✠**

Today we celebrate the goodness of our God in providing to us the bounty of earth, sea, and sky; a God who shares his love with us, and calls us to share with others.

As we gather, many of us are in the midst of preparations for the Thanksgiving dinner. Guests are coming, so the house needs to be cleaned from top to bottom. Preparing the food is a job in itself: roast turkey – perhaps ham – with all the trimmings, delicious desserts, fine wines, good fellowship. There is a danger, however, that we make ourselves so busy with our preparations that we fail to pause and give thanks to God for the bounty he has provided.

For some, perhaps, this year the celebration will be somewhat muted and brittle because of the shadow created by the lingering vestiges of the worldwide economic collapse. For others, concerns about health issues, or fears for the safety of loved ones serving abroad may rob the joy from the holiday.

Incongruously, into this scenario comes today's gospel reading, with Jesus saying, "Don't worry about how you will live," a tough thing to do when we see our comfort and security in jeopardy.

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus encourages us to live life to the full by being in the moment. He is not advocating a thoughtless or improvident attitude to life. Rather, he is forbidding a care-worn, worried fear which saps our energy and makes us powerless to act. It was the teaching of the great Rabbis to meet life with prudence and serenity. In that tradition, Jesus is teaching us to live in faith. We can trust that God, who created all things to serve us, will also feed and clothe us, the crowning glory of his creation, whom he created to serve him.

To live in the present is to live for eternity. That is the point about treasures on earth vs. treasures in heaven – live now, and let the things we invest our lives in now pay dividends for eternity. Those things should be relationships. It is about a focus on people: a life spent in sharing the joys, sorrows, opportunities, the high moments of happiness and the low moments of heartache together. With that perspective of living now, for eternity, comes a promise: "Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him

and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.”

Jesus says that the road to fullness comes through living one day at a time. Don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own

worries. Living in the future just leads to worry and to false hopes. Living in today is about living in God's eternal present, enjoying each moment of brightness, and sharing each moment of hurt. It is also about really being with people, connecting with them, making time meaningful; and living in thankfulness to God that we are able to share another moment, to take another good breath, to see and smell and taste; that we can live. That is living life to the full.

When we take a look at the world around us, it can be difficult to give thanks. Within our communities, children are falling victim to the dangers of alcohol and drugs. There appears to be an endless litany of scandal, dishonesty, and violence in the news. Our farmers must work harder to make the same living that they earned two or more decades ago. Within our churches, an aging population struggles to teach the faith to a younger one which all too often seems ambivalent or antagonistic. Many are still concerned about what the economic crisis will mean for our jobs, our homes and our future. What's more, there is a continuing threat of global terror, and nuclear apocalypse, which would jeopardize all biological life, and ecological disaster – thinning ozone, shrinking resources, exploding populations, and widespread famine. Apocalypse can threaten our personal world through divorce, depression, recession, unemployment, disease, and epidemics.

The stress and the emotion of a difficult situation can often get the better of us, and

we can lose sight of the big picture. There are indeed many blessings in our lives, but we are either too busy or too distracted to see them. It can be hard not to worry about our lives, particularly if we think that our own abilities are responsible for our prosperity and health. We err terribly if we exalt ourselves and forget God.

If we put life into the proper perspective, we have every reason to not worry. After all, the material things we most often worry about are not ultimately what's important. Faith, hope, peace, love . . . the intangibles are what really make life worth living. God has provided for us so far, why should we doubt that he will continue to care for us?

As the musician Bobby McFerrin sang, “Don't worry, be happy.” Not because you ignore the realities of this troubled world, but because you have faith in the one who made the world. God, the author of life is bigger than all our problems. He will give us the means and the strength to sustain us in our tribulations. He will not abandon us any more than he abandoned his disciples in the first century. There will be trials to endure; and we are expected to do our part, trusting that He will provide for us. And, as we have been blessed, we are expected to be a blessing to others. Our strength is not alone but in community.

Our rock is Jesus Christ. Our hope is in Him . . . and our eternal inheritance. We have his promise . . . if we hold firm, we will reign with him. There is indeed much to give thanks for. Thanks be to God who d has given us all that we need – blessings not just of food and drink, warmth and shelter, but also of love, acceptance, forgiveness, hope, prayer, love, and joy.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Amen.