

Greed

Presented by Pastor Scott Walters on 10/18/20
At Crossroads United Methodist Church
Waunakee, WI

Today we begin our conversation on “The Enemies of Gratitude.”

The more we can live into the idea that everything we are and everything we have is a gift from God, the more that can shape our lives – but it has been a strange year.

And it’s been hard to focus and to live our lives with gratitude. People are struggling health-wise and financially.

How do you do work and home and school life at the same time, in the same space?

And we find it difficult to live with a focus and a sense of gratitude.

Little enemies: like nostalgia, worry & entitlement.

Each tries to prevent us from receiving with gratitude, the gifts of God.

Today: GREED.

When we are driven by greed, it makes it almost impossible to appreciate that God is the giver of all good gifts.

Today, we are going to continue where we left off last Sunday in Matthew 22.

The religious leaders are out to get Jesus – and want to trap him with his own words.

Pharisees: loyalty to observing the Law

Herodians: Jews who had a strong loyalty to the Roman Empire and paying taxes to King Herod is good.

[Read Matthew 22:15-21]

“Tiberius Caesar, Augustus, son of the divine Augustus”

“Give to the Emperor the things that are the Emperor’s and to God the things that are God’s.”

Missing: “Keep for yourselves what is yours.”

Brian Erickson: “Jesus says, let Caesar have his little coins. But let the people of God decide today whom they serve. Ask yourself, ‘What belongs to God?’ Then find a way to put it back in God’s hands.”

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Jesus allows his hearers to make that determination of what is God's.

To what degree are we going to hold our possessions loosely enough
what we might offer them back to God to use in the world, or
to what degree are we going to cling tightly to those
things so that no one else can get them?

“Give to God what is God's.”

When we are focused on and driven by greed, it is hard to see that
everything is a gift from God.

Antidote:

I offer no easy answer as an antidote.

In spiritual matters, there are no easy fixes.

2 items (ways of life) to share with you: Trust & Generosity:

1] Do we trust that God will provide what we need today? Tomorrow?
NOT WHAT WE WANT!

2] The idea of generosity—

Are we able to share of ourselves OR Do we need to hold so
tightly to what we have?

We have to make sure that we have enough>

Trust & generosity are not easy fixes.

They are practices. They are spiritual disciplines.