

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER



July 31, 2022

TREASURE

making worth of the fleeting

by Drew Downs

"See a penny, pick it up.
All day long, you'll have good luck."

I am almost embarrassed to admit I've spent my whole life abiding that ridiculous bit of fortune-telling. I pick up pennies from the sidewalk superstitiously. And because it aligns with other bits of wisdom, like "every penny counts" I just do it. I am honestly not sure if I'm doing it "just in case" or if it's a bit of "free money". Probably a bit of both.

Pennies make for a fascinating bit of reflection on treasure. Because they are, at once, a bit of trash (and therefore worthless) that is literally thrown away and forgotten. And yet they are also hoarded, saved, pinched, or otherwise accumulated to save for the impossible.

If we so easily assign such differing values to a penny, how much weight do we ascribe the stuff we truly treasure?

ORDINARY TIME

Summer 2022

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

We've been reflecting on vacation the last few weeks. And last week, I brought up the idea of Sabbath. Particularly as it relates to the psychological process of relaxing on vacation.

This week, I want to invite us to dream.

What was your favorite vacation?
What did you do? Describe it!

Where have you always wanted to go?

What have you always wanted to do?

Name an experience you never thought you'd have!

Who would you take with you on the ultimate vacation?

What can we do to make our lives here look a little more like our vacation lives?

Who can we recruit into this conspiracy to make "real life" into a vacation?

What would it be like to truly get enough rest?

With love,
Drew

ORDINARY TIME

Summer 2022

FOR SUNDAY

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 31, 2022

Collect

Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern it always by your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading

From Luke 12:13-21

"Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

Reflection

A while back I took a sales call. I usually don't. But they were persistent and I thought I'd need to take it or else they would never stop calling.

The salesman was following up for someone who had stopped by a month earlier to try and sell us new windows. I had a positive experience with him. And said that we aren't looking to buy, but don't mind collecting information for when we might be interested.

When I did take the phone call, I tried to politely explain that we weren't buying now and didn't plan to buy in the next few years. He became quite pushy and asked what we *did* plan to work on.

ORDINARY TIME

I refused (it is none of his business) and I had tried to politely get out of the conversation. I even told him so. He was incredulous: "why won't you answer my question?"

Simple questions are never just that question. He wasn't asking me because he was curious, he wanted me to provide him with a new clue so he could find something else to sell me.

The man asking Jesus to settle the dispute isn't just asking for a simple response. He wants something. The fact that *we* might side with him and want what is *his* to come to him does not mean it is any less a question of his *desire* to receive a share of the inheritance.

We are likely to code this as a question of fairness. And it is. But it is also *more than that*. It is also about possessions. And what we think we gain from possessing them.

We might not fully understand why Jesus gives the man a "not my job" response. But we can be sure that his teaching about possessions is a caution to the man and his brother.

That *neither of them* is righteous in inheriting wealth. Whether he gets his share has no bearing on his place in following Jesus. *But* when we place the pursuit of possessions above our pursuit of the Kin-dom, we are putting ourselves off of the path.

This is the ongoing struggle that we've seen throughout the gospel this summer. We are called to follow Jesus. And from time to time, things show up in our path that *seem* reasonable or fair. The question always comes back to "how does this help me follow Jesus?"

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