Sermon on the Mount – Lesson 7
Matthew 6:19-34

Background

- v.19-21 is the background for our stewardship theme, "There Our Hearts Are," and we have been talking about these "treasures of heaven" in worship
- v. 22-23, you have perhaps heard the phrase, "the eye is the window to the soul." Light enters through the eye, but we also know we can give someone dirty looks, the evil eye, or even the stink eye. What is our attitude as we look out into the world?
- v.24 is related to v.19-21, recognizing how we can become slave/servant to our worldly treasures, or our stuff.
- Notice how the institution of slavery itself is never questioned. Slavery was a common accepted practice in the ancient world where the enslaved were often prisoners or "prizes" from war and those conquered.
- v.25-34, "do not worry." Easy for Jesus to say. Remember that Jesus is talking to this community of disciples (5:1) who comprise a new family (6:9). In this community, reflected in part by the early church of Matthew's day, people took care of one another and shared resources (see Acts 2:44-45). His vision is an idealized one – even birds and lilies are susceptible to drought or wildfire – but reflects the kingdom of heaven he proclaims. Once we achieve the kingdom for which we are striving, needs will be met.
- Do not worry about what you will eat. Remember, Jesus taught his disciples to pray for "our daily bread." Now, do we trust God to provide enough?
- Or what you will wear. Solomon's wealth, which was considerable, is of no more value than the gifts God provides.
- v.33-34 echo back to Jesus' temptation (Matt. 4) when he said to Satan, "One does not live by bread alone." The earthly treasures of v.19-21 will all rot and decay. Yes, food, clothes, and shelter are necessary, but they are not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is the kingdom of God. As for everything else, take life one worry at a time.

Reflection

- How do we strike a balance between meeting our daily needs (and wants) while also seeking and striving for God's kingdom?
- Are you a worrier? What are the things you worry about? How do you cope with your worries?

Summary

Some worries are legitimate. If you are struggling financially you may worry about your next meal or how you will get the car fixed so you can get to work. The community Jesus envisions is intended to help. Other times our worry comes from seeking the wrong treasures and part of our faith journey is working on our priorities. Jesus makes it clear that the kingdom should come first.