The Generous Eye

On Treasures in Heaven, the Two Masters, and Trust as the Antidote to Darkness

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Trust as Antidote to Darkness

Let me give you the single sentence that pulls together everything we are going to walk through in this chapter. *Trusting God is the antidote to the darkness that can overtake us.* Hold that sentence as we move through the text, because everything in Matthew 6 returns to it.

Sometimes that darkness can be so gripping that you feel there is no way out. No escape, not for me. I cannot even see which direction to go in. That is what the darkness sounds like when it gets a real grip on a person's interior. And every one of us has been there, in one season or another. Anxiety. Fear of inadequacy. The conviction that the resources will run out. The conviction that one's voice is not worth raising. The conviction that there is no help coming and never will be. That is the darkness. And the antidote is not the elimination of the circumstances that produced it. The antidote is trust. Trust in the One whose generosity is wider than the scarcity our anxiety has been pressing into us.

This chapter is going to walk through Matthew 6: the section of the Sermon on the Mount that focuses on treasures, eyes, masters, and anxiety. Each of those four topics turns out to be one face of the same diagnosis. We are creatures whose hearts follow our treasures, whose vision follows our generosity, whose service follows our deepest loyalty, and whose peace follows our

trust. And the antidote to the darkness we keep finding ourselves in is the redirection of all four of these things toward the Father who clothes the lilies and feeds the sparrows.

Surpassing the Righteousness of the Pharisees

The whole Sermon on the Mount has been building toward Matthew 6 from one specific verse at the end of Matthew 5. Listen:

"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. That is the launching-line for everything Jesus is going to say from that point on. And it is easy to take potshots at the scribes and Pharisees, because the New Testament gives us a fairly damning portrait of them. They claimed to represent God's interests, but their actions toward those in greatest need were not the spreading of justice. They were the spreading of an ideology that often repressed the very people the law had been given to protect.

But here is what I want every reader of this chapter to hold honestly. Every one of us has found ourselves in the place of the scribe and the Pharisee, whether religiously or in some adjacent register. Everything is spiritual, by the way. Every category of human community has its versions of spiritual superiority. Whether it is the religious version (we hold the right scriptures the right way and you do not), or the version that some have started calling cancel culture (we have decided you are beyond the pale and the community will now perform the work of writing you off), both versions are the same pattern in different clothing. Cancel culture, by the way, has always existed. It is just more visible now because social media makes it observable in real time. But the underlying pattern (make someone else evil so that we can feel righteous, by

virtue of what we believe and how loudly we have said it) is the precise pattern of the scribes and Pharisees Jesus was warning against.

So we have to be very, very careful in a culture that gives every voice a platform. That our voices are always seasoned with the salt and the light that God has called us to be seasoned with. The city set on a hill is not a city of any one of us alone. It is people who bring their light together. And when at times I am exposed to your light and you are exposed to mine, we have something worked out of our lives that none of us could have worked out alone. It is hard to see where the darkness exists in us individually. It is easy to see where it exists in someone else. So we simply bring what God has given us, trusting that the collective light is the city he is building.

The Pattern Repeated

And here is the pattern Jesus uses across the entire Sermon on the Mount, which I have noted in earlier chapters. Traditional righteousness, exposed cycle, kingdom-pathway out. Three parts. Repeated again and again. And we are going to see the same three parts operating in Matthew 6 as we work through it.

The clearest example, as I have noted before, is in Matthew 5:21–24:

> You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire. (Matthew 5:21–22)

Traditional righteousness: thou shalt not murder. Excellent traditional wisdom. Just don’t take their life. Anything short of that is presumably fine. But Jesus exposes the spiral that leads to murder. First anger. Then derisive terms: Raca, vain fellow, empty one, you have no value.

Then escalation, you fool, the conviction that the brother is worthless enough to merit removal. And once you have devalued your brother to the point of believing he has no human value worth preserving, you will eventually act on the devaluation by taking his life. And you will feel justified in it.

We even have things we call just wars. Now, do I believe there are times when the weak and the defenseless need to be defended? Absolutely. But we had better be careful how we use words like justice, because the justice of men is not the justice of God. The justice of men says: You did this, here is the penalty, this is what I get because you did this to me. Eye for eye. Tooth for tooth. That is traditional retributive justice. But the justice of God is different. God's justice is: I am going to set everything right, including by bringing into righteousness the very person whose action created the wrong. Is it possible that in the kingdom of God, the unrighteous could be made righteous? That is the justice of God.

And here is the substance underneath that. God's justice is restorative, not principally punitive. It says: your wound by that person, and that person's wound by some prior person, and that prior person's wound from some earlier generation, all of those cannot be untangled by retribution. We cannot untangle generational hurt. We cannot untangle the sins of the fathers landing on the children. Moses had said the sins of the fathers would pass down to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 20:5). But Ezekiel, after Israel had learned a thing or two from the prophetic seasons of judgment, declared something new:

> "What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live," says the Lord God, "you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel . . . The soul who sins shall die." (Ezekiel 18:2–4)

The proverb no longer holds. Each soul stands directly before the Lord on its own terms. The intergenerational chain has been broken. Only the wicked, and only those who persist in their wickedness, those are the ones to whom the proverb's judgment still applies. Everyone else gets the justice of God, which is deliverance, forgiveness, reconciliation. That is powerful. Where would any of us be without it? That is why those of us who remember our own past darkness weep when we remember it. We were not pulled out by retribution. We were pulled out by mercy.

The Mute Who Begins to Speak

And let me draw out one more diagnostic image before we move into Matthew 6 directly. Trust is the way out of darkness. And the way out of darkness is also, very often, the way out of muteness.

Listen to what happened to Zechariah at the temple. When the angel appeared to him and announced that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son in their old age, and that the son would prepare the way of the Messiah:

> Then the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John . . . But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time." (Luke 1:13, 20)

Zechariah did not believe. And he became mute. His unwillingness to trust the promise had the immediate consequence of taking away his speech. And he remained mute through the entire pregnancy and through the birth of his son. And then look at what happened on the eighth day, when the child was to be named:

> So they made signs to his father, what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, “His name is John.” So they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. (Luke 1:62–64)

The moment Zechariah acted on the promise, naming the son the angel had instructed him to name, his speech returned. Trust restored the voice. The act of believing the promise loosed the tongue that had been silenced by the refusal to believe.

And the same Luke 1 records that everyone else who received the promises in faith was filled with the Spirit and began to speak and testify. Mary’s Magnificat. Elizabeth’s blessing of Mary. Zechariah’s Benedictus once his tongue was loosed. The angels’ announcement to the shepherds. Simeon’s Nunc Dimittis. Anna’s prophetic witness in the temple. Luke 1 and 2 are saturated with people whose trust released their voices into prophetic speech.

Do you want your voice to be heard in this world? Do you feel that your voice needs to be heard for righteousness and justice in this world? The way that gets freed up is by trusting the promises of God. The muteness that comes from anxiety, from inadequacy, from the conviction that we have nothing to say worth saying: that muteness is dissolved by the simple act of believing what the Father has promised, and then opening the mouth.

Treasures on Earth, Treasures in Heaven

Now we move into Matthew 6 itself. And from verse 19 to the end of the chapter, verse 34, Jesus uses the same three-part pattern. Traditional righteousness. Exposed cycle. Kingdom-pathway. Watch how it unfolds. Here is the traditional-righteousness opening:

> Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither

> moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19–21)

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Hold that line, because it diagnoses what is really happening when we accumulate. *We are not just storing up goods. We are relocating our hearts.* The heart follows the treasure with perfect reliability. Wherever we have invested our resources (whether physical, temporal, emotional, or relational) *that is where our affections and our anxieties have also taken up residence*.

And the heart is the chapter's deepest concern. Back in Matthew 5, the Beatitudes had said blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8). Jesus had warned in the same chapter that adultery is committed in the heart before it is ever committed in the body (Matthew 5:28). The whole Sermon on the Mount keeps returning to the heart as the center of human formation. And in Matthew 6:21, Jesus tells us exactly how the heart gets formed: by what we treasure.

And what is a treasure in heaven? How do we store one up? This is not principally an accounting metaphor about deferred celestial compensation for our good earthly behavior. It is concrete. It is the actions we extend that bring God's future kingdom into the present moment. Bringing justice today. Bringing peace on earth and goodwill among people. Bringing joy to the world. Bringing justice to those who have no justice. Those actions, those labors of love, are the treasures that get stored in heaven. They are not consumed by moth or rust. They are not vulnerable to theft. They accumulate as the substance of the kingdom that is already partly present and will one day be fully consummated. Earth-treasures decay. Kingdom-treasures compound. That is the contrast Jesus is naming.

And we see exactly this trajectory in Matthew 19, where Jesus encounters the rich young ruler:

> Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" . . . Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Matthew 19:16, 21–22)

Go. Sell. Give to the poor. And you will have treasure in heaven. Four powerful verbs. The point is not the literal renunciation of all property; we will see in a moment that this is not an indictment of property itself. The point is the indictment of property-love that has displaced kingdom-love. The young man had organized his interior around his possessions. His heart had followed his treasure, and his heart was now in a place from which he could not extract it. He went away sorrowful. He could not afford to follow Jesus, because the cost of leaving his treasure-anchor was higher than he was willing to pay. That is the diagnostic. And it is the diagnostic Jesus is naming for all of us in Matthew 6.

The Generous Eye

And the next image Jesus uses is *the eye*, which turns out to be perhaps the most striking single metaphor in the entire chapter:

> The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (Matthew 6:22–23)

The lamp of the body is the eye. Most translations render this as if your eye is good or if your eye is sound or if your eye is single. But the Greek word here (haplous) actually carries the

sense of generous. And many modern scholars now translate the verse: if your eye is generous. That translation captures something the older renderings sometimes miss. The eye that is generous fills the whole body with light. The eye that is grudging, that scarcity-eye that sees everything in terms of what might be taken away, fills the whole body with darkness. And then comes the warning: if therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness.

Hold that. The eye is the lamp. When the eye is generous (when we look at the world with open-handed expectation that there is enough, that the Father provides, that the resources will be sufficient) light fills us. When the eye is grudging, when we look at every encounter as a potential threat to our supply, darkness fills us. And the darkness in such a person is profound, because the very faculty that was supposed to bring light into us has itself become the source of the darkness.

I noticed this connection while watching a fantasy series recently: a story in which the three protagonists enter a dark wilderness, and in the darkness, their greatest fears and concerns are magnified. That is where they get captured. The thing that gets your attention will eventually get you. If your eye is focused on the generous blessings of the kingdom, your hands will be open. You will never think there is a scarcity in this world. You will never think I must reserve this because I might not have enough. You will see people in need for your time, your resources, or whatever, and your hand will be open to them, because you see that this is a generous God we serve, and a kingdom of abundance, and the kingdom means to bring those who have not into the place where they also have.

God, help us to open up our hands and our hearts. That is what the eye-passage is about. The eye determines whether the hand opens or closes. And the hand determines whether others receive what they need.

The Evil Eye in the Year of Jubilee

And let me anchor this *eye-image* in one more Old Testament passage, because it shows that the generous-eye / evil-eye contrast was already deeply embedded in the Jewish moral imagination. *Deuteronomy 15*, where the Sabbath year of release is being commanded:

> Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it become sin among you. You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. (Deuteronomy 15:9–10)

Your eye be evil against your poor brother. That is the exact phrase Jesus is invoking in Matthew 6:23. And the Deuteronomy context makes it concrete. The year of release was approaching. The Sabbath year, every seven years, when all debts were to be forgiven. And the temptation was: I will withhold the loan from my needy brother now, because in less than a year I would be obligated to forgive the loan entirely, and I would lose the principal. The grudging eye was calculating the loss it might absorb if it gave generously. And God's command, through Moses, was: do not let your eye be evil. Give freely. And the Lord will bless you in all your works.

And we should note historically, the Jubilee was never fully implemented in Israel. There is no clear biblical record of Israel actually executing the Sabbath-year debt-cancellation as commanded. The Levitical command remained on the books. The application across the generations of Israel's national life consistently fell short. And the prophets repeatedly returned to this failure as one of the deepest indicators of Israel's covenantal infidelity. The very release-

mechanism God had built into the covenant, to prevent the gradual concentration of wealth and the permanent enslavement of the poor, was the one piece of the covenant Israel could never quite bring itself to implement.

That is the historical track-record of the evil eye when it gets the upper hand. It does not seek the brother's flourishing; it calculates its own preservation. And the consequence, over generations, is exactly what the prophets diagnosed: concentrated wealth, impoverished landless masses, debt-enslavement that became hereditary, and a covenant community drifting further and further from the generous-eye vision God had built into its founding documents.

Jesus is now restoring the diagnostic. Your eye is evil if you are calculating loss instead of opening your hand. Your eye is generous if you are seeing the kingdom's abundance and acting from it. And the body (that is, the entire interior life of the person) follows the eye.

Two Masters

And the third image in Matthew 6's death-spiral is *the two masters*:

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

No one can serve two masters. That is the line. And we should be careful about the word hate here, because it can mislead modern English readers. In the New Testament context, hate often carries the sense of relative preference rather than active hostility. When Luke records Jesus saying if anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:26), Matthew's parallel translates the same teaching as he who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me (Matthew 10:37). Same teaching. Different vocabulary. The hate in the

master-passage is the preference of the kingdom over the alternative, with all that the preference implies for the practical ordering of one's loyalties.

And the alternative master is mammon. The Aramaic word mamon refers to wealth, riches, the accumulated material substance that promises security. And the two masters are mutually exclusive. Not because wealth is itself evil. Wealth is a tool that can be used kingdom-wise. But mammon-as-master (wealth that has been elevated to the place of ultimate trust, the place where our security and identity and significance have come to rest) mammon-as-master is a competing god. And we cannot serve two of them at the same time. One of them will rule, and the other will be subordinated.

And the test for which is ruling in any given life is not principally what we say. It is what we do when the two masters' demands diverge. When God says give and mammon says keep, which voice do we obey? When God says open the hand and mammon says calculate the loss, which voice wins? When God says trust and mammon says secure, which response do we actually make? That is the diagnostic. And every honest believer has to face it again and again across the long arc of a life.

Ask me how I know. Ask me how I know, because I am holding on to my job with a death grip. And for some reason, I cannot trust God to let it go, even though I know it is killing me. What is wrong with me? The darkness is great in my own mind when I look at this question honestly. Why is it that we think: oh, we have to do that next thing? Oh, I have to respond in less than a certain number of seconds, or my boss will think I am dilly-dallying at the office? What is so crazy that causes us to live this possessed life? Mammon has its grip on me. And the grip does not loosen by my willpower alone. It loosens only as I keep returning to the kingdom-pathway that Jesus is about to give us in verse 25.

The Look, the Consider, the Seek

And here is the kingdom-pathway:

> Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25–34)

There are three key verbs in this passage, and they are the pathway out of the death-spiral. Look. Consider. Seek. Look at the birds of the air (Matthew 6:26). Consider the lilies of the field (Matthew 6:28). Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Three deliberate redirections of attention. Away from the anxious calculations of mammon-mind. Toward the abundant evidence of the Father's care for what he has made. And then, having had our attention redirected, toward the kingdom-pursuit that reorders all of our other pursuits.

Look at the birds. They do not sow. They do not reap. They do not gather into barns. And the Father feeds them. Consider the lilies. They do not toil. They do not spin. And the Father clothes them more beautifully than Solomon was clothed in his royal glory. And then look at yourself. Are you not of more value than the birds? Are you not, in the Father's economy, of considerably more worth than the lilies in the field? If he clothes the grass that is here today and gone tomorrow, will he not much more clothe you?

And the application is direct. Do not worry, saying: what shall we eat, what shall we drink, what shall we wear. Those are the questions that have ordered the lives of the Gentiles: That is, of the surrounding world-systems whose anxiety is structurally built into their entire mode of being. Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. He is not surprised by the legitimate needs you carry. He has not forgotten them. And the answer is not to multiply your anxious calculations. The answer is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Seek First the Kingdom

Seek first the kingdom of God. That is the pivot. Not as the only thing we seek, but as the first thing. The seeking establishes the order. And the order changes what gets added. When the kingdom is sought first, all these things are added in their proper proportion. When the kingdom is sought last, the things crowd in to fill the vacuum that the kingdom would have filled, and we end up with the things and without the kingdom.

And the seeking is concrete. We invest the resources we have (material, temporal, relational) in the actions that bring God's reign of justice into the world. Not all of us have substantial material possessions to deploy. But every one of us has been given twenty-four hours in a day. Every one of us has been given words to speak, words that may turn out to be bread for

someone who needs them. Every one of us has been given relationships into which the kingdom's substance can be poured. The seeking-first is the daily, deliberate orientation of these resources toward what the Father is doing in the world, rather than toward the accumulation that mammon keeps trying to redirect them into.

Last Friday I was at a local recovery home in our area, leading a Bible study with the men there at seven o'clock in the morning. And one of the men there got inspired by something I said and began to riff off of it and feed it back to me. I left there lifted up, full, fed. Words I had offered out of what I thought was my own insufficient supply had come back to me as bread. That is exactly the pattern Ecclesiastes described:

"Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth" (Ecclesiastes 11:1–2).

Cast your bread on the waters. It comes back to you on every wave. The kingdom's economy operates on a different principle from the world's. In the world, what you give away is gone. In the kingdom, what you give away returns to you multiplied, in forms you could not have predicted at the moment of the giving. The seven o'clock Friday morning Bible study turned out to be feeding me more than it was feeding the men in the home. That is the kingdom-pattern. And it scales. Every act of generous giving operates on the same return-multiplier.

The Vapor of Earthly Treasures

And let me make this honest with my own life, because the chapter requires honesty. I work for a major retail corporation. In the last year, the company's stock-market valuation has dropped by roughly two-thirds. From around fifty-five billion to roughly thirty billion in market cap, over the course of a single year. Twenty-five billion in lost shareholder value.

Do you know what that means concretely for me? Lost value in my own retirement portfolio. I did not have cash sitting in a vault under my bed. I had it in the same vehicles every other employee at a major American corporation has it in, stock-linked retirement plans whose value rises and falls with the company's market position. When the company went down, my retirement went down with it. Virtually, in a moment. All of a sudden, the comfortable retirement scenario got pushed a little further out. Another year. Another two years. Whatever the recalculation ends up being.

And that is how the world actually works. Thieves tunnel through and steal. In our local area, people have begun running scams in which they impersonate delivery drivers (UPS, FedEx, the various commercial delivery uniforms) and then break into homes while occupants are distracted. Listen, our stuff is not safe. Our bank accounts are not safe. We are one recession away from devalued dollars. We are one depression away from confiscated homes. How did we go through 2007 and 2008, when millions of Americans lost their homes, and very few of the banking executives whose decisions had produced the crisis lost their jobs? Because there is an injustice in the system. It is broken.

But in the kingdom of God, we are not sweating that stuff. We are giving. We are not looking out at the world's brokenness as something we need to protect ourselves against. We are seeing it as the very field into which the kingdom-substance needs to be poured.

What an Assembly Can Do

And here is a story that anchors all of this in concrete community-life. Back in 2007 and 2008, during the worst of the financial crisis, this church put many, many people to work who had lost their jobs during that downturn. Tens of thousands of dollars were put out in 2007 and

2008, by individual believers in our assembly, by people who had material resources extending them to people who did not. And we somehow made it through.

The way that happened was that a foundational older brother in our tradition had this conviction in his heart, that we should have an open hand toward the people in this assembly who were out of jobs. And we lived into that conviction across the worst years of that crisis. Houses were not lost in our assembly during 2007–2008, not because the economic forces did not threaten them, but because the community had organized itself around the conviction that we would not let one of our own be taken down by a financial downturn we could collectively absorb.

That is what the kingdom looks like when it operates in a local body of believers. That is what seek first the kingdom means in concrete community-life. And it scales. Every assembly that organizes itself around the same conviction, that we will not let the surrounding economic forces dictate which of our members survive and which do not, becomes a small visible city set on a hill. The light of that arrangement shines outward into a culture that does not know how to do this for its own members. And the light is part of how the kingdom comes.

Let’s not have a scarcity mindset. Let’s plant. Let’s not consider the wind, as Ecclesiastes 11 warns:

“He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap” (Ecclesiastes 11:4).

If we wait for the perfect conditions before we sow, we will never sow. The wind is always blowing somewhere. The clouds are always threatening from some quarter. And the temptation is always to wait until the conditions improve before we open the hand. But the kingdom does not wait for the conditions. It sows in whatever conditions the day actually gives

us. Cast the bread. Throw the seed. Trust that the multiplication is the Father's work, not ours, and that he is faithful across every economic season.

Sufficient for the Day

And Jesus's final word in this passage is the line that should be inscribed somewhere visible in every Christian's interior:

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:34).

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Each day has enough trouble in itself. You do not need to import tomorrow's anxiety into today. Tomorrow will worry about its own things when it arrives. The discipline of Christian life is the daily, deliberate refusal to live in tomorrow's projected catastrophes today. The Father is sufficient for today. The Father will be sufficient for tomorrow when tomorrow arrives. And the bridge between today and tomorrow is the same bridge the Father has been carrying us across since the day we first trusted him, the bridge of daily provision sufficient for the day.

Just this past Thursday, I received a text message with a picture of my grandson: almost nine pounds, twenty-one inches, healthy and strong. And before three o'clock that same afternoon, he was in the ICU with low oxygen levels. Healthy and strong in the morning. Critically ill by mid-afternoon. That is how quickly the contours of any day can shift.

If we allow our lives to be tied to the ups and downs that arrive across the span of a single day, we will live perpetually exhausted. Every town has its ups and downs, the old Disney film said. Sometimes the ups outnumber the downs. But not Nottingham. And I submit to you that all of us live in Nottingham. The downs will sometimes outnumber the ups in this present age. But in the kingdom of God, our calculus for what is up and what is down is completely upended, so

that the ups outnumber the downs by a different reckoning than the ledger of the world is keeping. Let's live into that. Let's be people with an open hand and an open heart, generous to a fault, hospitable. That is the kingdom of God in a nutshell.

Trust as the Antidote

And the chapter returns to where it began. Trusting God is the antidote to the darkness that can overtake us. Anxiety is the darkness, in concentrated form. The grudging eye is the darkness, in concentrated form. The two-masters arrangement, with mammon as the silent partner who is actually running the operation, is the darkness, in concentrated form. And every one of these manifestations of darkness has the same antidote, the redirection of trust toward the Father who clothes the lilies and feeds the sparrows and knows what we need before we ask.

Look at the birds. Consider the lilies. Seek first the kingdom. Three verbs that, taken together, constitute the daily practice of moving from the darkness into the light. Look, redirect attention to the abundant evidence of the Father's care. Consider, let the redirection become contemplative, allowing the truth of what you have looked at to settle into the deeper interior. Seek, having looked and considered, now reorient your active pursuits around the kingdom that the looking and considering have made visible to you. Three verbs. Repeated daily. Across a lifetime. Until the eye that was grudging has become generous, and the heart that followed mammon has come to rest in the kingdom, and the voice that was mute with anxiety has been loosed into the kingdom's praise.

The generous eye is the lamp. The light dispels the darkness. The whole body fills with light when the eye has been generous, and the city on the hill is made up of generous-eyed people, gathered into a community whose collective light becomes the answer to a world whose own darkness has been suffocating it for too long. Let us be that city. Let us bring our individual

lights together until the collective light is unmistakable. And let us, every one of us, live with the open hand and the open heart that mark us, however slowly and imperfectly, as people whose treasure has been finally relocated to where the heart has always wanted to be.