

**“Do not worry about tomorrow.”**

*In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Once upon a time, a fellow by the name of Arthur Gordon had a problem that wouldn't go away. So, he called a trusted friend and went over to see him. After talking for a while, Gordon saw his problem in a whole, new light. Grateful for his friend's help, Gordon said:*

**“Ken, you have a deep, inner calmness & wisdom. Where'd you get these?”**

*Ken thought for a moment, as if debating with himself whether to answer the probing question. Then, he opened a desk drawer, pulled out a cardboard box, and gently set it on the desk. He said:*

**“If I have the qualities you say you say I do, they come from what's inside this box.”**

*Then, without removing the lid, he began:*

*“Back in the 1920's, I was the Wall Street 'Wonder Boy.' Everything I touched turned to gold. I made money fast, lots of it. And I spent it fast and hard.  
I married my beautiful wife, not because I loved her, but because she helped my image. Back then, I was incapable of loving anyone... except myself.  
Then came the Wall Street crash. I went from being a multi-millionaire to being... a pauper. My response was predictable. I went off, alone, to a deserted beach cottage and ...began to drink.  
After 3 days of heavy drinking, I decided to end it all. I'd simply swim out into the ocean as far as I could. The rest would take care of itself.  
Early the next morning, I got up and went down to the beach. It was a good morning for my plan. The weather was stormy and the waves were big. When I reached the water's edge, I looked down and saw something in the sand. It was white and sparkling. I bent over & picked it up. It's what you see in this box.”*

*With that Ken removed the lid of the box. Inside was a beautiful, delicate seashell. It was so delicate that, in some places, it was almost like tissue paper.*

*“As I stood on the beach holding the shell, I couldn't understand how it had survived the storm. How could it have been scooped by the waves, swept along by the storm, and slammed into the beach without breaking?  
Then, suddenly, the answer came to me. It was because the shell had NOT fought against the sea and the waves. It had simply floated along with them and accepted them as facts of life.  
“That shell,” said Ken, “gave me a whole new insight into how to live. Instead of getting angry at life's bad breaks and, instead of worrying myself sick about life's problems, I should simply float along with them and accept them as facts of life.  
All the anger and worry in the world won't change them, anyway!  
When I left the beach, I took the shell with me. I've had it ever since.”*

*“What's the shelled called?” asked Gordon.  
Ken smiled and said, “It's called an angels wing.”*

*I like that story because it makes the same 2 points Jesus makes in today's Gospel, just read to you.*

**1<sup>st</sup>**, it illustrates Jesus' point that we can't serve 2 masters. We can't serve both God & money.

*Ken had decided to serve money. And so, it became his master and he became its slave. It so enslaved him that he didn't have room in his heart for anything else.*

**2<sup>nd</sup>**, it illustrates Jesus' point that we shouldn't worry ourselves sick about material things.

*"Oh, ye of little faith," says Jesus. "Don't worry.... Your heavenly Father knows that you need (these things). But seek ye first, the kingdom of God... and all these (other) things will be given you besides."*

*The point Jesus makes to his disciples is the same point the shell made to Ken. The shell was no match for the ocean and the storm. So, it didn't worry about them. It didn't grow angry because of them. It simply accepted them as facts of life, unpleasant though they were.*

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*None of us in this church today (or w/i the sound of my voice thru cyber-space) are Wall Street millionaires. And none of us are absolute slaves to money, as was Ken. **BUT**, all of us, to some extent, try to serve 2 masters. It's only natural. We want the best of both worlds.*

*In today's Gospel, however, Jesus says we CAN'T serve 2 masters. We shouldn't try to fool ourselves into thinking we can. **Also**, probably, none of us lost our complete, life's saving in one day, as Ken did. **BUT**, all of us, to some extent, have suffered other kinds of great setbacks. And, all of us, to some extent, have experienced worry and anger because of them.*

*In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that all the worry and anger in the world won't change these setbacks in the least. And so, instead worrying ourselves sick and getting angry, we should accept them, painful as they are, as facts of life.*

*We should do more.*

*We should realize that our Heavenly Father can use our setbacks and turn them into something good. He can change what seems to be a cross at the time into a blessing in disguise.*

*Paul makes this same point in his letter to the Romans:*

*"We know that all things work for good... for those who love God." Romans 8:28*

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*And so, today's Gospel carries an important message for us. It tells us about life's setbacks. And it invites us to step back and accept them graciously, trusting that, in the long run, God will turn them into blessings for us, as he did for Ken... the Wall Street 'Wonder Kid.'*

*I close with this prayer:*

*Lord, keep us from worrying about setbacks. Help us to see them, not as stumbling blocks, but as stepping stones in our journey to you. Help us see that, although our tears flow at night, your joy will fill our hearts in the morning. Help us to have a 'good' Lenten Journey.*

*And, may Almighty God, our Abba, bless you...the Father & the Son & the Holy Spirit. Amen.*