

June 25, 2017 Mt. 10:26-33 & Jer. 20: 10-13

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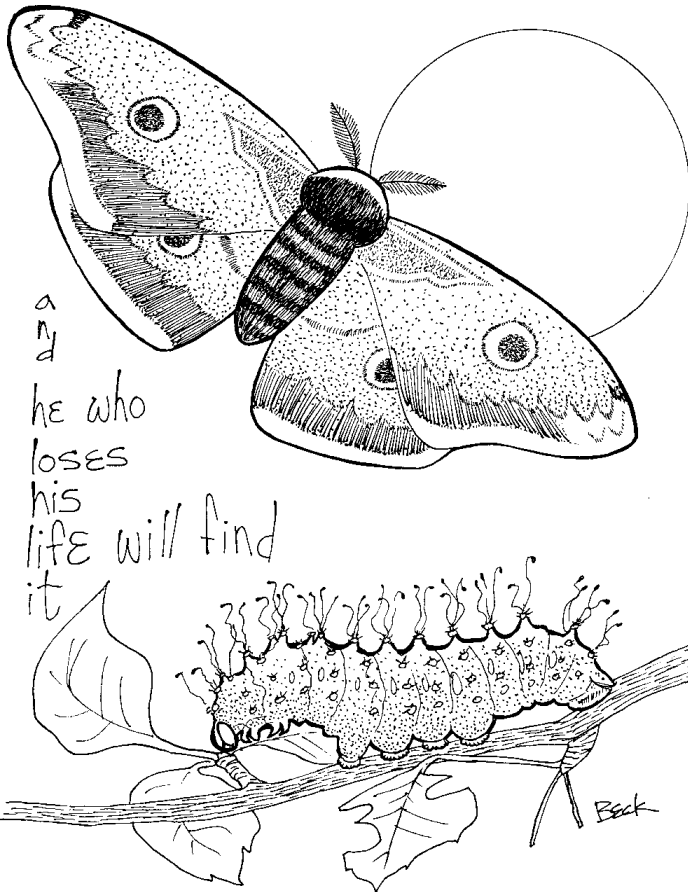
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Stone, Naomi. [A Safe Place](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Biblical Anxiety](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)



ENTERING THE SCENE

Like the caterpillar in this drawing we are munching our way toward eternity. Every bite brings it closer and closer to the time when it will spin a cocoon and begin the process that will eventuate in a new form, that of the butterfly. Matthew, in this collection of teachings gives us bites of wisdom as we too move closer to the time when we will enter the transfiguring phase of our physical lives. Once again we hear “don’t be afraid”. Don’t let anyone or anything try to convince you that this physical life is all you get. God’s process will bring each of us into our eternal life. When we seem to be losing life, we might really be gaining **LIFE**.

Mt. 10:24-39

26 So do not be **afraid** of them. There is nothing **concealed** that will not be **disclosed**, or **hidden** that will not be **made known**. 27 What I tell you in the **dark**, speak in the **daylight**; what is **whispered** in your ear, **proclaim** from the roofs. 28 Do not be **afraid** of those who kill the **body** but cannot **kill** the **soul**. Rather, be **afraid** of the One who can **destroy** both **soul** and **body** in hell. 29 Are not two **sparrows** sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will **fall to the ground** apart from the will

of your Father. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all **numbered**. 31 So don’t be **afraid**; you are worth more than many **sparrows**. 32 Whoever **acknowledges** me before men, I will also **acknowledge** him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever **disowns** me before men, I will **disown** him before my Father in heaven.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Three times in this short piece we are told not to be afraid. Is there anything in this scripture that helps me to be not afraid?

PRAYER: We live in times where fear is all around us. Every news cast gives us more reasons to be afraid. Investigations of all kinds swirl around us like dervishes. Human life seems expendable- hardly worth the proverbial penny. Brother Jesus we need the courage that you give us in order to keep on keeping on. We acknowledge your truth that our lives are in your hands. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

AFRAID: The word afraid is used four times in just a few sentences. Jesus is always telling you not to be afraid, but now he tells you what to fear.

How does knowing what to fear help me?

CONCEALED / HIDDEN: Things that are hidden or concealed have the power to take us by surprise.

How does this teaching help to warn me so as to not be taken by surprise?

DISCLOSED / MADE KNOWN / NUMBERED: Jesus puts in strong words what he wants to teach the disciples. Nothing is left unnoticed or hidden.

Is this a comforting thing for me? If not, why not?

DARK / DAYLIGHT: Jesus teaches the disciples in their ‘darkness’ and instructs them to speak in the ‘light’.

When will the disciples’ “darkness” dispel, so that they can speak in the “daylight”?

WHISPERED / PROCLAIM: Something whispered is only for the ear of the one who hears it. Something that is proclaimed is for all the ears that can hear.

When will the disciples “hear” so that they can proclaim what they have heard?

BODY / SOUL: The physical body was thought to be the only reality. A person did whatever they could to keep the body alive. The concept of soul was much more difficult grasp and therefore took second place when facing danger.
Is this thinking still prevalent today? If so, in what ways do I experience/ see it?

KILL / DESTROY / FALL TO THE GROUND / CROSS: The 'wisdom' of the world worked to destroy Jesus' wisdom, and Jesus knew that this would eventually happen to the disciples as well.
If I would have been there that day, do I think I would have had the courage to continue on with Jesus?

SPARROWS: A sparrow was the offering of the poor person at the temple sacrifices. A couple of them would have been worth about a penny.
If God cares enough to notice such a simple creature, can I be strengthened by knowing how much more God cares for me?

ACKNOWLEDGE / DISOWN: This text is full of words that set up contrasts. It is one of the more either/or teachings in the gospel.
Do I 'acknowledge' the truths in it, or would I like to 'disown' them?



PARALLEL TEXTS: Mt. 10:26-33 // Lk. 12:2-9; Mt. 10:27 // Mk. 4:22; Lk. 8:17; 1 Tm. 5:25; Mt. 10: 28 // 1 Pt. 3:14; Rev. 2:10; Mt. 10:32 // Lk. 12:8f; 9:26; Mk. 8:38; 2 Tim. 2:13; Rev. 3:5;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Jer. 20:10-13; [Ps. 69: 8-10, 14, 17, 33-35](#); Rom. 5:12-15; Mt. 10:26-33;
Revised Common Lectionary: Gn. 21: 8-21; Ps. 86: 1-10, 16-17; Rom. 6:1-11; Mt. 10:24-39;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

Mk. 8:38. For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Lk. 9:26. For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Going out to another in love means risk - the risks of self-disclosure, rejection, misunderstanding. It means grief, too, from the temporary separations, psychological or physical, to the final separation of death. Whoever insists on personal security and safety as the nonnegotiable conditions of life will not be willing to pay love's price or find love's enrichments. Whoever shuts himself or herself up in the cocoon of self-protective defenses, keeping others always at a safe distance and holding on tightly to personal possessions and privacy, will find the price of love far too high and will remain forever a prisoner of fear.
- John Powell S.J., *The Secret of Staying in Love*

"Have courage," we often say to one another. Courage is a spiritual virtue. The word courage comes from the Latin word *cor*, which means "heart. A courageous act is an act coming from the heart. A courageous word is a word arising from the heart. The heart, however, is not just the place where our emotions are located. The heart is the centre of our being, the centre of all thoughts, feelings, passions, and decisions. Henri Nouwen

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen. - Winston Churchill

To be a virtue, fortitude or courage must point beyond itself to its source, guide, and goal: LOVE. For courage to point beyond itself we must love that good more than self; we must value the good more than we value freedom from suffering. [Fr. Jonah Wharff 5/9/16](#)

We can walk without fear, full of hope and courage and strength to do His will, waiting for the endless good which He is always giving as fast as He can get us able to take it in. George Macdonald

Greek deities and otherworldly places make several appearances in the New Testament. "Gehenna" became the term used most often in the New Testament for the fiery underworld abode that came to be known as "hell,"¹¹ but two other Greek words are used to reference this place of unquenchable fire as well. The first is Hades (Gk. δ8ρ|), the Greek god of the underworld, whose name became synonymous with the abode of the dead. The second is Tartarus (Gk. Τδπιαποq; 2 Pet. 2:4), the deep dungeon of torment beneath Hades reserved for the vilest of criminals, where they are punished for eternity. Famous residents of Tartarus in Greek mythology

include Tantalus, who sacrificed his son, Pelops, and served him at a banquet to the gods, who punished him by standing him in a pool (whose water he could never drink) beneath an abundant fruit tree (whose fruit he could never eat), giving us the word "tantalize"; and Sisyphus, who tricked Death into chaining himself in Tartarus, for which he was punished by being eternally forced to roll a boulder up a hill, only to watch it roll back down and have to begin again. It is the idea of Tartarus that became the popular image of hell as a place of eternal punishment in the Christian tradition. Pg. 194-5. Cargill, Robert R. The Cities that Built the Bible. NY, Harper One. 2016

If Christians believe not just in a general providence, but also include in this a particular providence, for even "the hairs of your head are all numbered", what does this imply for atoms, molecules, and all of matter: We cannot avoid this question if the preaching of Jesus and scientific research are not to part company. Unless this belief and the scientific way of looking at things are to stand side-by-side without any contact with each other, then this question confronts us with considerable challenges in conceptual terms. Belief in creation and the approach of natural science can best complement each other, without each trying to speak and decide on behalf of the other. But such a complementarity presupposes some intensive thinking.

Schonborn, Cardinal Christoph. Chance or Purpose. San Francisco. Ignatius Press. 2007. Pgs. 76-7.

If we want to use the biblical teachings about the kingdom of God in the renewal of moral theology, we need to recognize the kingdom of God as the horizon against which we live our Christian lives. It is not something we bring about; rather, God brings it about. In the meantime we await it with hope for the fullness of that kingdom and try to act in a way that is appropriate to its claims. The kingdom is the horizon against which Christian life is to be lived, and it is the goal toward which all must point. Pg. 39. Harrington, Daniel –Keenan, James Jesus and Virtue Ethics. NY. Sheed & Ward Book. 2002.

Christ came as the *word* to do for us what our mother tongue does, namely, to shape us in such a way that we can move beyond the fear, darkness, and chaos that prevent us from entering the world of love, thought, and self-expression.

Rolheiser, Ronald. Against an Infinite Horizon. NY. Crossroad Pub. 2001 Pg. 209

In Irenaeus: Against the Heresies (last of 2nd century) preface to Book 1 we find: "We will also offer suggestions, to the best of our limited capacity, for refuting this doctrine, by showing how utterly absurd, inconsistent, and incongruous with the truth their statements are. Not that we are accustomed to writing books, or practiced in the art of rhetoric; but it is love that prompts us to acquaint you and all your people with the teachings which up till now have been kept secret, which, however, by the grace of God have at last come to light. "For nothing is covered that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be known."

Ehrman, Bart. After the New Testament. NY. Oxford Univ. Press. 1998.. Page 198.

Living in a fear-based culture inevitably affects your state of mind and the decisions you make. As a citizen you may become more compliant, more willing to surrender your rights for vague promises of safety. As an employee you are less demanding, less willing to take risks. And in your personal life you are more security oriented, and thus less open to new possibilities. Fear narrows your vision, shuts down intuition as well as common-sense reflection, and promotes violent actions. Phillip Moffit (Joga Journal 3-4/03)

I've been absolutely terrified every moment of my life, and I've never let it keep me from doing a single thing I wanted to do.

Georgia O'Keefe

GOSPEL OF THOMAS

5 Jesus said, "Know what is in front of your face and what is concealed from you will be revealed to you. For there is nothing concealed which will not be manifest. 6 His disciples asked him, "Do you want us to fast, and how shall we pray, and shall we give alms, and what food regulations shall we keep?" Jesus said, do not lie, and do not do what you hate, because all is revealed before Heaven. For nothing is hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing is covered that shall remain without being revealed."

16 Jesus said, "People might think I have come to throw peace on the world, and they do not know that I have come to throw dissolution on the earth: fire, sword, war. For there shall be five in a house: three shall be against two and two against three, the father against the son and the son against the father, and they shall stand as solitary ones."

55 Jesus said, "He who does not hate his father and his mother cannot be my disciple, and (he who) does not hate his brothers and sisters and (does not) carry his cross in my way will not be worthy of me."

101 "He who does not hate his (father) and his mother in my way will not be able to be my (disciple), and he who does (not) love his father and his mother in my way, will not be able to be my (disciple), for my mother...but (my) true (mother) gave me life."

5:2-4 For the Lord said, "You will be as lambs in the midst of wolves." But Peter answered him, "Suppose, then, the wolves tear the lambs?" Jesus answered Peter, "Let not the lambs fear the wolves after their death; and you, fear not those who kill you and can do no more to you. But fear him who, after your death, has power over soul and body, to cast them into the hell of fire."

Throckmorton, Burton, Jr. Ed. Gospel Parallels. NY. Thomas Nelson Pub. 1949. . Pg. 42.

Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 654, Logion 4: Jesus said, everything that is not before you, and what is hid from you will be revealed to you.

For there is nothing hid which will not be revealed; nor buried, which will not be raised. . Pg. 44.

Throckmorton, Burton, Jr. Ed. Gospel Parallels. NY. Thomas Nelson Pub. 1949

Not only does love's weakness, with inexhaustible strength, overcome its opposite, and triumph through that opposition; the lover's own selfhood is itself affirmed and realized in its very self-negation....Now I am more truly and securely "I" than before I died to self in love,;

for I have learned to “be”, without “having,” have learned that in giving up what I have I am free to simply be, to love with truthfulness and realism without the illusions that possessions conjure up. Lewis, Alan E. Between Cross and Resurrection. Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans. 2001.

To follow the vocation does not mean happiness; but once it has been heard, there is no happiness for those who do not follow.
C. S. Lewis

Threats of violence are everywhere on our news, our television dramas and the movies we entertain ourselves with. Cancer, drive by shootings, anthrax, gangs, high cholesterol, obesity, cancer, toxic waste, weapons of mass destruction, cancer, terrorists, Enron— you name it. It’s frightening. It’s everywhere we turn. Combine this with the clamor to buy this and buy that as an antidote to the fear. The air we breathe is laced with toxins of fear. We need to make a deliberate decision to opt out of the world of fear. Limit the amount of toxic air we breathe. Limit all media. Examine our spending habits and the reasons we buy. Cultivate the peace of Christ Let it rule in our hearts and push out the fear that lives there now. Be transformed. Rev. Fritz Mellberg

“What would Jesus Do?” remains a problematic question because it implies that it is Jesus’ role to enter into our world and become the solution to our problems, when we are meant to live as bravely and as fully in our world and time as Jesus lived in his. Pg. 78. Gomes, Peter J. The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus. NY. Harper Collins. 2007.

When it seems humanly impossible to do more in a difficult situation, surrender yourself to the inner silence and thereafter wait for a sign of obvious guidance or for a renewal of inner strength.- Paul Brunton, "Meditations for People in Crisis"

"With courage you will dare to take risks, have the strength to be compassionate and the wisdom to be humble. Courage is the foundation of integrity." - Keshavan Nair

Spiritual courage is following the deepest desires of our hearts at the risk of losing fame and popularity. It asks of us the willingness to lose our temporal lives in order to gain eternal life. Henri Nouwen

Above all, avoid falsehood, every kind of falsehood especially falseness to yourself. Watch over your own deceitfulness and look into it every hour, every minute. Avoid being scornful, both to others and to yourself. What seems to you bad within you will grow purer from the very fact of your observing it in yourself. Avoid fear, too, though fear is only the consequence of every sort of falsehood. Never be frightened at your own faint-heartedness in attaining love. Don’t be frightened overmuch even at your evil actions.... I predict that just when you see with horror that in spite of all your efforts you are getting farther from your goal instead of nearer to it—at that very moment I predict that you will reach it and behold clearly the miraculous power of the Lord who has been all the time loving and mysteriously guiding you. Fyodor Dostoevsky

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Without Batting an Eye

This story of courage comes to us from the Orient.

When his advancing army stormed into a small town the general called his scouts before him. "Where are the citizens of this village?" he demanded.

"They have all fled in fear," the scouts replied.

"Is there no one left to pay tribute?" the general shouted.

"No one but the priest. He remains in the temple."

Quickly the general marched to the temple, burst through the doors and demanded to see the priest. After a search, the priest was found reading quietly in his study. The general, angry that the cleric refused to greet him as conqueror, shouted, "Don't you know that you are looking at one who can run you through without batting an eye?"

"Don't you know," the priest replied, "that you are looking at one who can be run through without batting an eye?"

For a moment the soldier stared in disbelief at the priest. Then, slowly, a smile danced on his lips. He bowed low and left the temple.

William R. White. Stories for the Journey. Augsburg Pub. House, Minneapolis, MN. 1988. **WITHOUT BATTING AN EYE**: Page 95.