

Beauty in balance

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When Jesus talks about making wealth our “master,” sometimes he is speaking to the peasants who may not have bread to eat, and at other times he is speaking to the collaborators with the Roman Empire who are able to accumulate wealth for themselves. Somehow he addresses both groups simultaneously and leads them all toward the justice and peace of the kingdom of God.

Jesus’

example of the lilies reminds us that there is an order in the apparent chaos of creation. There is something organized about birds being fed by bugs and seeds and worms, a pattern in the blooming of lilies and the sprouting and dying of grasses. The falling rain and the rising sun are part of cycles of existence. And we are too.

All of these

processes of life exist in relationship with other processes. When Jesus says, “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or what you will wear,” he doesn’t say don’t eat, don’t drink, don’t dress yourself (or your children). He doesn’t say don’t “do”; he says, “Don’t worry.” Jesus invites us to see in a different way and to act differently because of it.

Let us consider the

lilies and King Solomon. King Solomon dressed like a king, with “glory” in the form of expensive and precious fabrics, gems and metals. We can easily think of him as beautiful and extravagant, and stunning. But Jesus then draws our attention away from the king to the beauty of simplicity, the beauty in the ordinary.

We walk by lilies

without noticing their form, their color or their symmetry, or thinking about their dependence on the sun and soil. When we think about the life of a lily in this way, we are drawn to another kind of beauty—the beauty of relationship and interdependence.

Lilies exist in the

flow of the forces of life. They may not toil or spin, but they do turn their blossoms toward the sun, and draw moisture into themselves through their roots. This is a joyful striving.

Humans can do

this too. “Do not worry,” Jesus says, but he also says, “Strive.” Strive without worry. Strive for life today. Strive for the things that enhance the quality of life at the deepest level. See the beauty in what you have, not in what you don’t have. Choose life enhanced by simplicity and relationships

Consider the universe, where life

is choreographed; where rain, sun and soil come together to make a flower; where earth, water and breath come together to make a human being.