

40 Days of Fitness

A daily devotional by Rev Garry Hardingham

DAY 36 – Who’s the Greatest Giver?

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Matthew 6:25-34

A mate of mine is very much into nuclear physics, not the evil bomb making stuff, but the fascinating, if not somewhat strange sub-atomic worlds of quarks and photons, gluons and bosons and all that stuff. He relates that the whole field of nuclear science and how nuclear physicists think is just fascinating as the stuff the muck about with. For my mate, nuclear physics is about trying to find the fundamental question of why and how we exist. But what is most fascinating with my mate is that he is a committed Christian and could care less about the actual argument or arguments about creation or the end times. He characterises his existence like this. I’m here, God made me, I know where I’m going and so I enjoy life and hum my way through it.

The reason he feels so chirpy and optimistic is that, despite all that science has discovered, nothing has disproved a fundamental tenant at the heart of Christianity: God created the universe in love and has given us to live amongst His creation.

I remember when I used to count golden bower birds on top of Mount Bartle-Frere sitting quietly in a small spot looking down at two different species of ant having a war over a dead piece of bug and thinking to myself, “I am the first human being ever to see this particular war being played out.” And then, looking out across the rain-forest and thinking, “How many of these little life moments are playing out right now?” And then imagining not just where I was, but across the globe. The complexity, diversity and sheer magnitude of being part of God’s creation just left me speechless and lost in the awe of creation. That a God would create such a world for us to inhabit was just too much to take in. And yet, it is so.

God made everything. The ultimate act of giving is God creating the universe. And there is a distinction between God, who exists before everything in the universe, and the created order. There is no *pantheism*, in which everything in the universe is God. Nor is there *panentheism*, in which everything in the universe is God, but God is not everything in the universe. i.e, that there is a little bit of God left over besides everything that is made that is in the universe.

What God created is perfect. It is the ultimate act of giving because God’s creative giving is not like Star Wars, there is no ontological dualism, that is, there is a kind of dualism in which there is a good force and a bad force, or one force with a good side and the bad side.

God’s giving and ongoing concern for creation and all the creatures that inhabit creation is freely given because God chooses to give. Not by force, or boredom, but as expression of God’s love. God gets nothing out of His giving. Nor does God need anything in return but our thankfulness and devotion.

PRAYER

Lord,
You gave freely.
You are the very model fo giving.
Not for Your sake, but for ours.
You have given us the gift of existence itself
And have offered us not just life,
But life in all its fullness.
May we cherish and hold sure to this gift.
In the name of Your Son, our Saviour. Amen.