

“The Cosmic Soul: The Moment”
Matthew 6:25-34

The Golden Age Trap

If you had the chance to live in another time, what time period would it be? Where would you live? This could be a time in your own life or a legendary era in history.

In the movie *Midnight in Paris*, we meet Gil Pender, a screenwriter who is profoundly disillusioned with his present life. While visiting Paris, he discovers a mysterious car that transports him back to the 1920s at midnight. Suddenly, he is rubbing elbows with Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein. For a while, he loves this escape; he believes he has found the “Golden Age.”

But then he meets Adriana, a woman from the 1920s, and discovers she is just as miserable as he was! She longs to escape her time for the *Belle Époque* of the 1890s. When they travel back even further, they meet artists who believe the *real* Golden Age was the Renaissance. [Gil finally realizes the truth](#): nostalgia is a trap: <https://youtu.be/4J4yi8YNEkM>. If we spend our lives chasing someone else’s “Golden Age,” we fail to build anything in our own.

The Future Trap

If the past is a trap of nostalgia, the future is a trap of anxiety. The future triggers our deep-seated need for control.

James Conlon, in *Beauty, Wonder, and Belonging*, tells a haunting story from Baghdad at the onset of “Iraqi Freedom.” Bombs were falling, flashes of light filling the sky. Amidst the danger, a group of children continued to play a game. Kathy Kelly, a peace activist, urged the children to stop and go to bed for their safety. In a unified response, the children protested: “*But Miss, we may not be here in the morning.*”

Those children, living in the shadow of hardship, expressed the raw reality of the human condition. We worry because we realize we are not in control. We worry about cancer diagnoses, job security, social divisions, and global violence.

Jesus’ statement about worry is not an invitation to a reckless, irresponsible life. In fact, the Sermon on the Mount is a call to *greater* responsibility - to live out the values of love, justice, and peace. Jesus isn't saying “don't care”; He is saying “don't be paralyzed.” He is inviting us to navigate uncertainty by anchoring ourselves in the only thing that is real: **The Present Moment.**

Solomon vs. The Lily

Let's listen to Matthew 6:25-34

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? ²⁶ 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? ²⁷ And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?²⁸ And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰ 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? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³² For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

I love the comparison between King Solomon and a lily. In the biblical imagination, Solomon was the ultimate success story, but he was also a profoundly anxious man. His anxiety about his throne led to an insatiable appetite for accumulation. He believed that more wealth, more horses, and more power would make him secure. Instead, his lust for control brought his kingdom to its knees.

Solomon was "clothed" in things he had to struggle to get. The lily is clothed in a beauty that flows from its very nature. The lily doesn't "toil or spin" - it simply *is*. It trusts the soil, the sun, and the rain of the present moment.

As Alan Watts writes in *The Wisdom of Insecurity*, our ingenious brains are so good at making predictions about the future that the future assumes a "high degree of reality," causing the present to lose its value. We become ghosts haunting our own lives, worrying about a "tomorrow" that hasn't happened yet.

The Sacrament of Attention

The call to live in the moment is essential for the Cosmic Soul. We are not here to fix, control, or consume the universe. We are here to love it.

I invite you this week to take one task - washing the dishes, walking to the mailbox, or greeting a stranger - and let it become a "Sacrament of Attention." Do it with reverence. Let it become a prayer.

To bring this home, let's look at a living example of the "Cosmic Soul" in motion. This week marked the ending of the Buddhist monks "**Walk of Peace**" in our country which started in Texas and ended in DC. 2300 miles of one slow, intentional step at a time.

If you have seen them on the news or passed them on the road, you know they don't look like the rest of us. They weren't checking watches or rushing to reach the next city line before dark. They weren't trying to "get the journey over with" so they can finally start their mission. For them, **the walk was the mission.**

There is a profound lesson in their pace. We often live our lives as if we are trying to get the present moment "over with" so we can arrive at a better one later. We treat the "now" as a hurdle to be jumped. But the monks teach us that **peace is not a destination at the end of the road; peace is the way you put your foot down.**

When asked how they can possibly walk thousands of miles without being overwhelmed by the distance or the weather or the unknown, the message was always the same: *Do not look at the horizon. Look at the step.*

This is exactly what Jesus was calling us to when He told us to look at the birds and the lilies. The birds don't fly to *find* God; they fly *in* God. The lilies don't grow to *reach* the sacred; they grow *as* the sacred. And these monks didn't walk to *find* peace; they walked *with* peace.

Imagine what would happen to our anxiety if we stopped trying to "arrive" at a future version of ourselves. Imagine if we stopped looking back at our "Golden Age" and stopped sprinting toward a "Secure Future" that never stays still.

Imagine if we lived like those monks - treating every single step as Holy Ground. When you leave this worship today, I pray that you don't rush to the parking lot. Walk to your car with the reverence of a monk. When you sit down to eat your lunch, don't worry about the next step. Eat with the attention of a lily.

May you walk in the present moment. May you find that today's grace is exactly enough for today's step. And may you realize that the "Golden Age" isn't behind you or ahead of you—it is happening right now, shimmering beneath your feet. Amen.