works than these will he do, because I go to the Father.” (John 14:12)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater than these will he do, because I go to the Father.” (John 14:12)

“So, it is not the hearers who prove ourselves worthy of the stewardship with which He entrusts us, and we prove ourselves not to ME.” (Matthew 25:45) And to those not to ME.” (Matthew 25:45) And to those who have not charity, we have nothing; we are nothing. Whether our gifts to mankind be material, intellectual or spiritual (hopefully all three), we are all called to better the world.

Again, that favorite movie quote from “Kingdom of Heaven”: “What man IS a man who does not make the world better.”

What we overspend in self-absorption is essentially wasted. Death is the great equalizer, the inescapable thief of all material things we treasure, the greatest certainty of our existence. And it’s notable about both Amos’ and Jesus’ accounts that neither accuses his subjects of explicit sinfulness; their crimes are in simply ignoring God, who provided them all their good things, and being unconcerned with their neighbors who were in dire straits and desperate need. Jesus warns likewise in another Gospel: “…woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger.” (Luke 6:24-25), and John: “…did anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?” (1 John 3:16

Like the Israelites in Amos’ time, we, too, can become too comfortable, forgetting that God has given all to us not for us alone, but also for others as required in charity. We need be mindful of the scriptural truism: “In the day of prosperity, adversity is forgotten, and in the day of adversity, prosperity is not remembered.” (Sirach 11:25) … and, in our prosperity and complacency, God Himself is often forgotten. Thus the author of Proverbs penned: “…give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me [only] with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’…” (Proverbs 30:8-9)

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