



Rain or shine

Call me crazy but I genuinely love raking leaves — and so I don't let them pile up. Instead, I make time to go outside every couple of days to gather up what's fallen.

Monday afternoon was my idea of raker's heaven: The autumn air was still and warm, the angle of light made even the mundane feel holy. While I raked on Monday, I daydreamed about the rest of the week, picturing myself coming outside for a few minutes each afternoon to savor the gentle sweetness of the season while I engaged in my happy little task.

Tuesday vetoed my plans. Rain and wind had come in the night, carpeting the grass with wet, heavy leaves; yesterday's gloriously golden trees were now a study in bare, brown limbs. I was surprised by how dejected I felt by this unforeseen change, how cheated of the simple



Pastor's Perspective

By Rev. Karen Winkel

pleasure I had mapped out for myself for the coming weeks. As I brooded over my loss, John Lennon's keen observation came to mind: "Life is what happens when we're busy making other plans."

It is our nature to plan. There's pleasure in this to be sure; we anticipate happy happenings and create roadmaps to desired, satisfying outcomes. But given that none of us can peer very far into the future — or with much acuity — planning

comes with some serious drawbacks.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus wisely counseled his listeners to refrain from worrying about tomorrow. Instead, he urged his audience to plant themselves squarely in the present moment, trusting God to meet them in whatever each new day might bring.

It's not that worrying or planning are inherently bad; these are human impulses. What concerned Jesus is that making assumptions about tomorrow can easily cheat us of our lives today; worse, these habits can separate us from the God who is utterly reliable and who wants more for us than we could possibly ask or imagine.

When his disciples asked Jesus how to pray, Jesus' focus was squarely on the present: "Give us this day our daily bread."

Can you hear the implicit promise Jesus is asking us to make? As we offer these words we are vowing to be mindful of the ways God is present and caring for us today, as well as releasing the very human temptation to displace God by doing our own forecasting and planning — and placing our trust in our own efforts, rather than in God.

Even as we look back with immense gratitude for all that God has done, even as we look ahead to the future God is opening to us, all we truly have is today. Right here and right now is always where God meets us — rain or shine.

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