

## Written Copy: Luke 12:28-32 “Shouldn’t I Be Worried?”

9<sup>th</sup> Sunday @ Pentecost – Proper 14

Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### Text: Luke 12:28-32

<sup>28</sup> But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. <sup>30</sup> For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. <sup>32</sup> "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

### The text's intent

Have the proper perspective to what life is about, not about our stuff or our temporal wealth, but about the eternal wealth of the relationship God has established in our hearts through the Spirit's work in the Gospel to implant faith, by which we see and trust in the Father as the gracious provider of all things. Knowing and believing in Him this way serves to remove our anxiety about what is to come and what we need, realizing He will provide all that is needed for life now and eternal life to come. With that in mind we are empowered by the Spirit to live out our faith as stewards of all the gracious gifts God has given us.

### Focus Statement:

God comes to take our anxiety and worry away by opening our eyes by faith to see Him as the gracious Creator and provider of all things. He comes to us and establishes that faith relationship in our hearts. He provides the means for us to be His own precious flock through the work of Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection, which is made to be for me by faith. He does all this not because He has to but because of the promises He made out of love for us when we did not believe in Him. All that He provides for us is aimed at keeping us ready for His return and eternal life to come

### Function Statement:

#### Why it's important to know:

We have anxiety about today and tomorrow concerning not the temporal needs of food and clothes, we see ourselves as able to handle these, but those things we can't handle like our health, disasters that may befall us, the economy and rising prices, the world situation and threats of war.

#### What the hearer should do as a result:

We are called to remain ready with repentant hearts kept strong in faith through the Spirit's work in the Sacraments and our living out His call to be stewards of His gracious gifts given not for us to hoard but to manage.

### Subject Sentence: Life is About Our Faith in God as Creator/Provider

## Introduction

“Don’t worry, everything is going to be just fine.” How many times have you heard that from well-meaning friends, relatives, maybe even well-meaning pastors? How about “Don’t worry, God’s got you covered.” Or “God will never give you more than you can handle”, which is well meant but many times is wrong. (He does give you more than you can handle, but not more than He can walk you through). How effective are these platitudes in removing worry and anxiety from your life? How about Jesus’ commands to His disciples in our text such as **Luke 12:22 And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.** As well as **Luke 12:25-26 <sup>25</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>26</sup> If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?** We hear Jesus telling His disciples as well as us not to be anxious, and that being so won’t prolong our lives in the least. And in fact we know that excessive worry and stress can serve to shorten our lives. So why isn’t that we can’t just follow Jesus words and stop worrying? If only it were that easy.

I remember back in High School when I had my first test in government class. I wanted to stay home and study for it the night before. But my best friends, who were 2 years older, and had this teacher before, assured me not to worry about his tests. They said to me, “You sat in class and listened to him, right? You even took notes, right? His tests are a breeze. They’re multiple choice. And the right answer is obvious because the others are so ridiculously wrong.” So I listened to them and went out with them to a party. Only when I took that test the next day the wrong multiple-choice answers were not so obvious to me. In fact I failed that first test. I realized that I should’ve been more concerned and anxious about taking it. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that when I got to Seminary and was faced with my first Test in Greek Class, and found myself very anxious and worried about it, I couldn’t sleep and stayed up very late trying to study. And the end result? When I sat down to take the test everything was just a mixed-up jumble in my head. If what I needed to know was up there, it was inaccessible, and I failed that test. Being overly anxious didn’t add any hours on to my life, and it didn’t help my grade one bit either.

Now most of you are of the age you don’t have to worry about classroom tests or grades. In fact most of us here today don’t need to worry about what we are going to eat this afternoon or this week, or what we will be wearing. We have refrigerators and pantries stocked with food and closets full of clothes.

We do worry about other things. We worry about the kinds of tests that we can't study for, the kinds administered by our doctor concerning our health. And verse 22 alludes to more than just food and clothing. It deals with what Jesus mentioned as a petition to the Lord's Prayer: give us this day our daily bread. Luther rightly explained that daily bread is more than food, it includes all that we need to for our life on this earth. When Jesus says don't be anxious about our life, He is referring to those things that we can't stock up in a refrigerator or closet. He is referring to things that are out of our control to manage such as our health, our 401K or stock portfolio, the safety of ourselves or our loved ones on the road, the future of our country and the world, and what kind of world our kids and grandkids will have to live in. And then there is the faith relationship of our family members who no longer go to Church. And I know I'm just hitting the tip of the iceberg.

As the song goes "Don't worry, be happy" Or as reggae artist Bob Marley sang "Don't worry, 'bout a ting. Cause every little 'ting gonna be alright." Easier said than done. When your anxious and worried those songs don't help. And perhaps Bob Marley should've been a little more worried about some things, like the spot under his big toe that he attributed to a soccer injury but was actually and aggressive form of skin cancer that ended up taking his life.

### **Why Jesus Can Tell Us Not To Worry**

So how is it that Jesus can tell us not to worry, not to be anxious about our life, when there are so many things beyond our control to be anxious about? In our Gospel Lesson Jesus isn't giving us meaningless platitudes or commands that we are unable to keep. He is providing the answer for any and all anxiety we may be facing by reorienting our view of what life should really be about. Our life should be about our relationship to God the Father that we have through God the Son by God the Holy Spirit.

**Luke 12:24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!**

**Luke 12:27-28 <sup>27</sup> Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!**

Jesus is pointing us to how God cares for His creation, even those creatures that can't work to produce and gather food as we can, or do anything to add to their beauty. He even cares for the grass whose existence is only for a day. Jesus then asks us to consider how much more valuable and how much more loved are we than all of these. And right there is what He wants us to focus on, the greater love God the Father has for you and me.

In both of these verses Jesus is moving us to see God as the Creator of all things. The gracious and loving Creator who didn't create this universe and this world because He had to, but simply out of love for us. He cared so much about each facet of Creation that He spread out His formation of it through six meticulous days to impress upon us His care and concern for each and every part of it. And then, as the final touch, the pinnacle of His creating work, He made mankind in His own image. He made Adam and Eve and gave to them all of His creation, all the work He had so lovingly and carefully made as His gracious gift. He gave it to them not so they could do anything they wanted to with it, but for them to manage it, and care for it, in the same manner and with the same love that God had created it. Out of His great love that is beyond our understanding He gave Adam and Eve all they would need to live out their perfect existence forever.

If this was still the state of affairs in the world today, we would have no reason for worry or anxiety. But it's not. Adam and Eve fell into sin and the world fell into brokenness and was cursed by God because of what they had done. And because of that we have all those aforementioned things to worry and fret about, including the greatest worry, which is the wages of sin, which is death. But the Heavenly Father loved us, His broken creatures, too much to leave us to wallow in our sin, our anxieties and worries, and our brokenness. He came to us to set things right again. And did so through the best and most gracious gift ever.

**Luke 12:32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."**

It was and is the Heavenly Father's good pleasure to restore His kingdom among us, restore His gracious reign and rule which in our sin we cast aside. And He did that by sending Jesus to earth as one of us. As a human being Jesus could be the perfect little sheep that is required of the Father's flock. He lived the perfect life that God expected of mankind: treasuring God's Creation and using what He had been given to love and help others. Yet He took the punishment due us wayward sheep of being cast out of the Father's sheep pen when He was cast out of the city to suffer and die on the cross. He suffered the eternal death we earned and gives to us the forgiveness of sins that saves us from the punishment we deserve. Instead we receive what His perfect life earned: what His resurrection proclaims is ours: a life lived in His kingdom now, a place in the Father's sheep fold, that is ours stretching all the way to eternal life.

Forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life: all gracious gifts of love given by the Father through His Son and given to you by the Spirit in your baptism. It was there that the Father personally gave you His kingdom, where He established His reign and rule in your heart. It's where He gave you the faith to believe and trust in Him once again as the loving, gracious, providing God that He truly is. That faith is the power to believe that all His promises in Scripture are for you, even when they seem to be unlikely or impossible, including the very fact that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection declares you to be a member in good standing of His flock, a member of His kingdom, a child of the Heavenly Father, even though we often don't act like it. Even when we doubt and worry.

As the Spirit tells us in **Hebrews 11:1** **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.** It's the power to believe what seems impossible and unlikely to the human eye, what seems improbable according to what is going on around us. It's the power that was at work in Abram in **Genesis 15:6** **And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.** By the power of the faith God gave to Abram he trusted that God's promise of a son would come true, and because he believed he was considered to be in right standing with God. God declared him to be forgiven and restored as a precious child, member of the sheepfold. **Hebrews 11:11-12** **<sup>11</sup> By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup> Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.** Abraham and Sarah believed by faith that God could do the impossible in their lives, and He showed them their faith was indeed well placed.

## **How Lives of Faith Address Our Worries**

God has certainly shown you some of the same, hasn't He? When you've been worried about situations in your life that are beyond your control has God stepped in and taken care of them, perhaps in ways you never imagined or expected? Perhaps He did it in answer to your prayers. Perhaps He even did it when you hadn't prayed because you were caught in the throes of worry and anxiety. Just as Jesus tells us in **Luke 12:30** **For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.** Our loving Heavenly Father knows what we need, even those things we don't specifically ask for. No matter how impossible our need might seem we can trust what the Spirit tells us in **Luke 1:37** **For nothing will be impossible with God."**

Nothing may be impossible, but you and I know that there are those things we ask for and desire to happen, and they do not. Sometimes it can seem that our greatest fears are realized. So what of our faith then? What of God's provision then? Context is everything, and that verse from Luke chapter one is the angel's response to the virgin Mary asking how it will be possible for her to give birth to a child without knowing a man. In this case the impossible made possible happened as part of God's plan to save the world through the birth of the virgin Mary's child, Jesus Christ. In fact the miraculous birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah was also a part of this promise, as Jesus would be the descendant promised to Abraham who would bless all the peoples of the world through His work of salvation for all men. What this means is that God's miraculous work has a purpose and a plan behind it, one that is centered on His great love for you and for all men.

**Luke 12:31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.**

What is the deciding factor for God to act in miraculous ways? How can we be assured and not worry when sometimes what we seek for doesn't happen and is not answered? God answers out of His great love only doing what is the best for His kingdom, and your place in it. His main concern is that you remain a part of it: that you have faith in Jesus Christ and that you retain that faith in Jesus Christ no matter what happens in your life on this earth. We worry about what will make our lives easier and happier in this world. God cares and desires your happiness, but not at the expense of your walking away from your faith. Our Heavenly Father, who can see the whole picture of our life, as well as those around us who are touched by our life, allows whatever is necessary to keep you drawn close to Him in a faith relationship, even when it means that those things we are anxious and concerned about are not answered as we'd like them to be. So, what are the things that are added to you? Those things that serve to keep you continually seeking His kingdom, His reign and rule in your heart by faith.

## **Conclusion**

I recently read an article written by one of my Seminary Professors who had taken up bee keeping. He explained how it had changed how he looked at his backyard. His decisions on the landscaping changed from simple aesthetics to what would be best for these bees. He became more interested in plants as providing pollen than for simple beauty. He said a patch of clover in the midst of his lawn no longer sent him to the store to pick up pesticide, because he knew his bees needed them. Instead of focusing on a picture-perfect yard, he focused on food, water, and pollen sources that would most benefit these bees he was now caretaker of.

How much more so the reaction of our loving God to what is needed for our lives? Jesus tells us not to worry because the Heavenly Father is our loving and gracious provider of all that is needed. He provides all the daily bread things of food, clothing, shelter, family, and relationships. And all the earthly ways He provides have their focus on our place in His eternal kingdom. We need not be anxious because He promises to provide not just what is needed now but looking forward to eternal life to come. And He promises to withhold whatever would serve to remove His reign and rule from our hearts. We need not worry or fret. He is the God who works through the big things and the little things for our good, even tests we study for or don't study for. Through faith in His Son He takes our mistakes and makes good come from them. As Bob Marly sang "Don't worry, 'bout a ting. Cause every little 'ting gonna be alright." Why is that? **Luke 12:32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.** He has given you His kingdom in your baptism. And it is His good pleasure to keep you in that kingdom unto life everlasting. Amen