

## Don't Be Anxious (Luke 12:22-34)

Last time, we studied from first part of Luke 12, about "Don't be afraid." Let's review it briefly.

We don't really know what we have inside us, as much as we think we know. But when the light of God's Word illuminates our heart, it clearly shows what we have inside us.

We might find ourselves afraid of men, while trying to live before God, and we wonder why. In the light of God's Word, we realize that actually we have been caring more about the eyes of men than God's authority.

We know that we must seek God's kingdom, but in reality we might find ourselves seeking material abundance, and we wonder why. In the light of God's Word, we realize we have been putting the foundation of our lives on money and possessions, rather than on God.

Jesus is not telling this to his disciples in order to give them a hard time. Jesus doesn't tell us this in order to make us feel miserable and defeated. He tells us this so that through his Word, we will know what is inside us and repent, and turn back to God. He tells us this so that we can let God remove what we don't have to store up in our heart, and instead receive from Him the grace, truth and life and be filled with them.

Today, we will continue to study Luke 12.

## 1. Life is more than food

21-22

<sup>21</sup> "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." <sup>22</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.

Jesus spoke to the rich about their preoccupation with "getting ahead," and here He speaks to those who are anxious about "getting by." He says to them "Don't be anxious" because the principle is the same: "his life does not consist of his possessions (15)".

If we're captured by greed or worry, then we miss out on real life. For a poor person to be preoccupied with the accumulation of possessions is as

foolish as for a rich person to be so.

### 23-24

<sup>23</sup> Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!

When Satan challenged Jesus to command stones to become bread, Jesus' response was based upon the same principle which He is teaching here: "Man shall not live on bread alone."

Jesus was saying that life was sustained by more than just food. "Life" was to be defined in terms of more than mere physical existence. This "true life" was produced by the Word of God, not by physical food.

Worry about food and clothing, or material things is misdirected, failing to focus on what is most important.

### 25-29

<sup>25</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? <sup>26</sup> Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? <sup>27</sup> "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.

We cannot make ourselves full by worrying. Problems will not disappear by our worrying. We cannot solve our problems by worrying. We cannot turn our worry into joy by worrying.

Worrying can't accomplish anything -- anything at all. So why do we do it?

## 2. The mechanism of worry in our heart

What about the living condition of the very people who worry about "food" and "clothing" here, Luke 12? Look at v.33.

33

<sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

I think what Jesus wants to communicate with disciples is this. They are not nearly as hard off as they think, or as they wish us to think. They have possessions to sell. Therefore, strictly speaking, practically they have no reason to worry about food and clothing. That's why Jesus says to them:

29

<sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.

A person who really doesn't have anything to eat will not worry about what to eat for the next meal. He is hungry now. He doesn't even have anything to eat now, let alone next meal. If he gets food, no matter what it is, he will gladly eat it with gratitude.

Worrying is not really caused by our situation, but rather, it is essentially caused by our heart condition.

Do you know this? People can worry in any situation. No matter how good the situation is, we can still worry.

Dr. Maurice E. Wagner, a pastor and professional counselor, says in his book, "The Sensation of Being Somebody":

"Whenever our life situations do become exceedingly pleasant and we begin to feel in such an omnipotent position, we tend to fear that soon we will lose our happiness. We habitually tell ourselves whenever things go well, "This is too good to be true. It can't last." Some people go as far as to say, "I don't deserve all this luxury of happiness; I will pay for it somehow."<sup>1</sup>

People worry, not because the situation is bad. But they can worry in any situation. The problem of worrying is not a matter of situation, but a matter of heart.

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice E. Wagner, "The Sensation of Being Somebody", Harper Paperbacks, 1975. (p.59)

30-31

<sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

It is not that man's material needs are insignificant, or that they should be ignored. No doubt we should think carefully and plan wisely for our daily material needs. But here, Jesus is teaching us that it is wrong to worry about these things, for worry does not produce food or clothing. We have our material needs met by not worrying about them, but by seeking His kingdom as our priority.

Maurice E. Wagner explains the mechanism of worries as follows:

'Apparently we are affected by both the memory of having one time a total command of life and the trauma of losing that grandiose position.'<sup>2</sup>

What it means is: a baby cries when he is hungry. Then his mother comes and feeds him milk. The baby is satisfied. He experiences this: as soon as he cries, mother comes and his need is met. But when he grows older, his need will not be as simple as that. 'He discovers that he cannot command his world to be pleasant and make it happen.'<sup>3</sup>

'We are constantly seeking a state of sovereign control in situations wherein we can maintain our sense of satisfaction. As soon as circumstances begin to be pleasant consistently, we also begin to be anxious about the possibility of losing it all and being miserable.'<sup>4</sup>

As long as we set our heart on material things, the mechanism of worries will continue to operate in our heart.

### 3. We are God's children

Then, where should we set our heart on? Jesus said to his disciples, "Seek God's kingdom."

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<sup>2</sup> Wagner, (p.59)

<sup>3</sup> Wagner, (p.59)

<sup>4</sup> Wagner, (pp..59-60)

What is our position in Christ?

1 John 3:1

<sup>1</sup> How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ...

We are God's children.

Who knows our daily needs?

30

<sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.

“Your Father”. We are remembered by God as his children. God knows our needs and he wants to meet our needs, just as mother, when she hears her baby cry, will give him milk. But we must remember what it the main point. As we studied last Sunday, the point is not about our needs or satisfaction. But the point is our relationship with the Lord.

When we know who we are in God's kingdom and what God is like for us, if we set our heart on this fact, we come to know that we don't have to worry.

Jesus points out two illustrations from nature—the raven and the lily. They are, we might say, "witnesses in nature" to God's faithful provision of food and clothing for His creatures. The raven demonstrates God's provision of food, and the lilies of the field, God's provision of clothing. (24-28)

Jesus knew that his disciples had worries in their heart. Jesus is talking to them in order to remove their worries. Jesus shows what is in our heart through His Word. He does it, so that we can repent and turn back to God. Jesus removes disciples' worries through His Word, and instead he gives them faith. He is trying to fill their heart with Word of Life. So he says:

32

<sup>32</sup> "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Jesus has not just warned His disciples not to worry about their material

needs, He has promised them the kingdom and He has promised to provide for them until that day comes.

What is our position in Christ? We are Children of God, right? What is actually mean then? Eph. 1:11 says: "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, (NKJ)"

We are heir of His kingdom.

Think about this. If a man lost his right as an heir of God's kingdom, in order to gain some property on this earth, has he made a wise decision? Or has he made a foolish decision?

Jesus is talking to a little flock of his disciples who are among a crowd of many thousands. The Lord loves his disciples. And He will not give them sparingly. But He wants to give abundant life in God's kingdom, and he will give it gladly. Jesus is showing the error in the disciples' heart, and correcting them. But He is not angry, nor scolding them, nor punishing them. Jesus knew there was fear in their heart, there was worries in their heart. So he was reminding them of the truth they had forgotten about.

### 34

<sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What is treasure? Treasure is something precious, valuable and important for a person. Something we don't want to lose.

Where is your treasure? Is your treasure something on this earth, such as money, property, position, fame, honor or face? Or is it something in the kingdom of God, such as every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms, joy and peace, protection and victory, authority and glory as God's children?

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Worry about food and clothing, or material things is misdirected, failing to focus on what is most important.

Our worry represents fear, terror, which drives us and panics us. Our worry represents unbelief. But in the midst of our fear, Jesus speaks to us: "Fear not, little flock." For He cares for us with all his heart, and he is sharing his life

with us. You and I are part of that "little flock" now.

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." (Jh. 10:10-11)

Jesus never forgets about his little flock. Why? Because that is what he bought back at the cost of his own life. He cannot forget about it. He cannot desert it.

Jesus gives us life, and that is abundant life. Life is not about food. It is not about 70, 80 years on this earth. Life is for eternity. Jesus made us heirs of His kingdom through the cross, resurrection and pouring of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is with us, as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. That is, by the Holy Spirit, we call out to God, "Abba! My father!" as we would address a loving daddy. So, the Lord says "Don't be anxious."

Christmas is coming soon. Let's imagine the scene of Jesus' birth.

#### Luke 2:6-7

<sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

How did you feel when you visualize this scene? They couldn't stay in the inn. All they could do was to lay their new born baby in a manger. But I don't think many people associate this scene with poverty, misery or pity.

Christmas, the scene of Jesus' birth, gives us peace, calm, gentleness, comfort and hope. I think baby Jesus also felt the same way.

It is not important for a new born baby whether he was born in a well-equipped great hospital or in a stable. It doesn't matter for him whether he was laid on a completely white new gorgeous sheet or laid in a shabby manger. What matters to him are the eyes of people who rejoice at his birth, and hands of people who receive him as a precious gift. And he can sense he is safe, protected in their care. That's all he needs. And baby Jesus has it all.

No one remembers what it was like when you were born. Some people grew up without knowing their parents. And there are also some people who didn't have a happy childhood, but had a hard one.

But there is something Christians, you and me shouldn't forget. That is,

when we believed in Jesus, we were born as God's children. And we are protected in the eyes of the Father who rejoiced at our birth. We are held by the hands of our heavenly Father who receives us as His precious sons and daughters. We are cared in the rich fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Christmas, the scene of Jesus birth, reminds us of this. And as baby Jesus was sleeping in peace in Joseph and Mary's hands, we can also live with peace, calm, gentleness, comfort and hope, in the hands of our heavenly Father.