

Gospel - Luke 12:22-34

²²[Jesus] 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. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider 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! ²⁵And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷Consider 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. ²⁸But 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! ²⁹And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

³²“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

INTRO - In my church in Florida there was a lady whose name was Paula. At one time she was very active. But she started staying home at first to take care of her mom. Then she had health issues, some minor like a cold, but she became worried about worse problems, though there was no definite diagnosis. She worried about her car, and her house. I went to visit her. She remained a lady of faith, but she never returned active again. Life was scary.

What do you worry about? Do you worry about your health? Your job? Your family? Our country? Your church?

I. I ask you that because Jesus calls us Not to be anxious, not to worry.

A. Listen to the call of Jesus in today’s Gospel lesson.

1. In verse 22, Jesus teaches, **do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.** Don’t be anxious. Don’t worry!

2. In verse 32 Jesus teaches us not to be afraid. ³²“**Fear not, little flock,**

3. But, we do worry, don’t we? We are afraid, aren’t we?

4. We may not worry so much about having enough food, or clothing, or maybe we do. But we do worry about our life, in numerous ways.

B. Do you know that worry is doubt?

1. When we worry about our possessions, our lives, our families, our jobs, our health, in a way we are not trusting God to be in control, to care for us, to provide.

2. Actually, we do understand that worry is lack of trust, but we sometimes forget how dangerous this anxiety and doubt is.

3. God saves us as we receive His grace by trusting in Him, by believing in Him. But worry does not trust God. If our worry grows stronger, our faith grows weaker. Do you see how dangerous this can be?

II. Think, when we are young we don't worry where our food or clothes come from. In a healthy family parents love their children. Children love their parents. So children trust their parents. We know that our dad, our parents provide for us. When we grow older, when we have to take care of ourselves, we can lose that child-like trust. Faith can decrease. Worry, anxiety can grow.

A. Today Jesus teaches we can trust our Heavenly Father BECAUSE he takes care of us.

1. In Jesus' day people did worry about food. They did worry about clothing.

2. Jesus teaches that God provides. He cares for the birds, and we are more valuable than they are. He provides beautiful clothing for the flowers, and we are more valuable than they are. Our Heavenly Father provides for us!

3. God's provision shows His love. He provides because He loves us. We can trust Him.

B. But God provides more than the possessions we need. Jesus says, ³²**"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you THE KINGDOM."**

1. Our Heavenly Father wants us to have more than just the food and clothing and things of this world. He wants us to have His kingdom, eternal life in heaven, the spiritual blessings of heaven in this life.

2. Our Heavenly Father sent His Son. That Son has provided eternity for us. That Son, suffered agony on the cross. That son rose again. That son has won eternal life in heaven for us. In love, God provides.

3. The fact that God sent His Son shows how much he loves us. The fact that Jesus died and rose, and calls us to forgiveness, shows how much he loves us. The great love of God is reason to trust our Lord, in poverty or wealth, sickness and health, in life or death!

III. So, WHY are we afraid? We forget to trust God. We don't trust Him to provide for us, to give us what we need every day, to give us His kingdom.

Let me tell you about another lady whose name was Val. She joined St. John in Palmer in 1958 and lived alone when I met her. She was in worship every Sunday. One day she came to church and had a large lump on her neck. I asked her about it. She said, Pastor, I have cancer. I went to visit her and told her, "Val, I'm sorry about your cancer." Her reply, "Why are you sorry Pastor? I get to go see my Lord!" She trusted her Lord, and had PEACE, even facing death.

A. Because our Heavenly Father provides, we can trust Him.

1. Because He provides what we need, food, clothing, house and home, family, we do not have to be anxious, or worry.

2. Because our Heavenly Father provides His Son, we do not have to fear life.

3. Because our Heavenly Father gives us the kingdom, We have His love eternally.

B. Satan is leading our world away from God. Our world is full of doubt, and sin.

1. That sin infects our hearts too, and even children of God do worry, have anxiety.

2. When people ignore, or forget that God is there to provide, we try to trust ourselves and our own failures cause worry and anxiety. Just look at the world around us.

3. But, our heavenly Father is there. He does provide. He does give His Son.

C. In Philippians 4 God calls us, **⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

1. In world full of worry and anxiety, would you not like peace of God which passes all understanding?

2. When we have God we have peace. When we have Jesus we have peace.

3. There is an old bumper sticker which you have perhaps seen. N O God, N O peace. KNOW God, KNOW peace!

CONCLUSION - Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem called "If." Perhaps you know it. The poem begins with the following words. "If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs, and blaming it on you . . . "

In a world of fear and anxiety we can keep our head. We can have peace, because Our Heavenly Father loves us, because He gave His Son. **the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

"IF" BY RUDYARD KIPLING

If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs, and blaming it on you,

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,

But make allowance for their doubting, too;

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,

Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,

Or being hated, don't give way to hating,

And yet don't look too good nor talk too wise...

If you can dream and not make dreams your master,

If you can think, and not make thoughts your aim,

If you can meet with triumph and disaster,

And treat those two imposters just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken

Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,

Or watch the things you gave your life to, Broken,

And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings,
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,'
And lose, and start again at your beginninas,
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the will which says to them: "Hold on!"
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings--nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And--which is more--you'll be a Man, my Son!