

# Warnings against Worry

Sermon 40 in the Luke Series

## Luke 12:22-34

First, let us look at the outline for this passage – and then we will read it together.

### **DO NOT WORRY v. 22**

1. Life is more than food and clothing v. 23
2. God cares for the birds v. 24a  
God cares EVEN MORE for you! v. 24b
3. You can not add to your life by worrying v. 25  
Since worrying does not help – why worry? v. 26
4. God cares for the lilies v. 27
5. God cares for the grass v. 27  
God cares FOR YOU much more than He does lilies or grass v. 28

### **DO NOT WORRY v. 29**

6. Your Father knows your needs v. 30
7. Seek first the Kingdom of God v. 31
8. God will give the Kingdom to His children v. 32
9. Seek the real treasure found only in Heaven v. 33
10. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also v. 34

Now, I will admit, this is a rather unorthodox outline, but I thought it was the best way to show the connection of thoughts Christ makes in this extended passage.

## **READ 22-34**

This message is very much related to the one we had last week.

Last week, we saw Christ warn against COVETOUSNESS.

He ended his discourse on Covetousness with the story of the rich fool.

Just as the account of the rich fool capped the warning against covetousness, The account of the rich fool INTRODUCES these exhortations, pointed toward Disciples against worry.

The exhortations are summed up in “DON’T WORRY”, but they go beyond that.

Note – Christ is exhorting His disciples NOT TO BE OVERLY CONCERNED about the meeting of their physical needs – which was the ONLY CONCERN of the rich man.

## **Luke 12:15-21**

“Take heed and beware of covetousness,<sup>[b]</sup> for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ 18 So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.”’ 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’

21 “So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Christ uses this parable to be a conclusion to covetousness and a springboard into putting your mental energy into the things that can never be taken away.

*The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully*—That is a tremendous blessing. We are to sow and reap – but God takes care of the birds who don’t do any farming at all!

*I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.*

Nothing wrong with that – as long as that is not our primary goal.

Remember, the birds don’t have storehouses or barns, and God meets their needs.

*Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry* The rich man WASN’T WORRIED. Christ is exhorting HIS DISCIPLES not to worry – but the rich man wasn’t worried at all, because HE WAS TRUSTING IN HIS RICHES.

The truth is he had very much to be worried about. God was going to take his soul – but he was living life UNCONCERNED and trusting in the wrong things.

**21** -- *“So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

**34** -- *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

It’s very obvious we are to read the parable of the rich man as the closing of the warning to the crowd – and the beginning of the exhortation to His own disciples.

### **DO NOT WORRY v. 22**

Merimnate μερ-ι-μνα τε — is a present imperative.

In Greek – the present tense is the continuous tense.

This is talking about our way of life.

This is a tough one.

Which of us haven’t found ourselves WORRYING about material things?

Which of us haven’t found ourselves WONDERING what will happen?

Which of us haven’t LOST SLEEP because of material concerns?

When we fall into this pattern – we are living the life of LITTLE FAITH **v. 28.**

v. 28 – Greek word oligopistos *ol-ig-op'-is-tos* ολ-ιγ-οπ-ισ-τος

Oligos = little, small or puny Pistos = faith

It is definitely a REBUKE to be called “little faith”.

But, it should also be an encouragement.

Little faith is true faith – it isn’t NO FAITH.

Faith as small as a grain of mustard seed can move mountains.

You either have faith or you don’t.

If you do – it’s a matter of exercising your faith.

Little faith is a true disciple – who needs to believe and trust MORE.

Ill. In my years of ministry – over and over I have found sermons often have to be lived before they have to be preached.

That happened to me this week.

Many of you know Becky gave us a bit of a scare.

She went into the doctor for some pain she has been feeling.  
The next thing we know, they were taking her by ambulance to the hospital.

They feared she might be having a heart attack – but thankfully, she was not.  
Anyway – I was able to beat the ambulance to the hospital.  
And then I had to wait outside until they had her inside and settled.  
Thankfully, I had my sermon notes with me – and I’ll admit it was some sweet study looking over THIS PASSAGE at a time like that.

The passage took on new life.  
There was the natural fear and anxiety.  
But, there it was, in black and white, the ASSURANCE that GOD IS IN CONTROL.

And, when you boil it all down – that is what this passage is really all about.

Are we going to trust God – or not?

Most of us have our moments of LITTLE FAITH.  
But, how sad is it to live a LIFE of LITTLE FAITH?  
We need to be brought back to our spiritual senses.  
We need to go back to Christianity 101.

God is in control. We need not fear what man may do to us.

## **1. Life is more than food and clothing v. 23**

This comes across as more of a Proverb than an exhortation.  
Danker says, “*Living is more than having*”.

Can we be concerned with food and clothing?  
The answer is YES.  
These are necessities.  
But, remember where they come from.

In the Lord’s Prayer – we are taught to pray – “Give us this day our daily bread.”  
What is sufficient for today.  
What is sufficient for now.

**2. God cares for the birds v. 24a**  
**God cares EVEN MORE for you! 24b**

Korakas = Κορ-ο-κας

Literally “The crows” or “The ravens”.

They were UNCLEAN animals.

If God cares for the creatures – even these UNCLEAN creatures – how much more will He care for His children?

The birds are not intended to be an example of idleness or lack of planning. They are an example of LACK OF WORRY.

Luce “*They are not always worrying that the supply of worms may run out; yet they do not expect the worms to crawl down their beaks.*” ☺

**I thought that was a pretty cool way to put it.**

**3. You can not add to your life by worrying 25**  
**Since worrying does not help – why worry 26**

The Greek is unclear. It’s not a textual difficulty – it simply is a matter of interpretation.

Add one cubit to your height?

Add a small length of time to your life?

Cubit to height seems the more natural grammatical translation – but a small length of time to your life seems more natural to us.

Whichever is the literal meaning – the purpose is clear.

YOU CAN’T EVEN CHANGE THESE SMALL THINGS – so what good is worrying about the things that are OBVIOUSLY out of our control.

**4. God clothes the lilies v. 27**

In the history of the earth, there have been BEAUTIFUL fields of flowers that have sprung up – and finally faded and died. Yet no human eye ever even saw them.

To a human being – it was like they never existed. BUT they DID exist.

Maybe they were enjoyed by a few animals.

Certainly God was well aware of them.

## 5. God clothes the grass v. 27

**God cares FOR YOU much more than He does lilies or grass v. 28**

This reminder is also a rebuke.

This is where the “little faith” comes in.

**Ladies – your husband gives you a bouquet of flowers.**

They are wonderful and they are beautiful.

But, where are they going to end up?

In a week – as much as you loved them – you have to dispose of them.

Those flowers have such a short lifespan compared to ours.

But what is OUR lifespan in comparison to God’s?

## DO NOT WORRY v. 29

This time a different word is used.

This is the only time this word is used in the NT.

If we wanted to use an idiom instead of an exact translation, we could say, “*do not get all worked up*”.

Have you ever let that happen to you.

You became so anxious – that you were ALL WORKED UP???

Sometimes – we just need to take a TIMEOUT and ask ourselves – “Is God on the throne – or not???”

## 6. Your Father knows your needs v. 30

Why pray if God already knows what you need?

I have heard that question asked.

It is an odd question if you think about it.

Do you really think, in prayer, you are informing God of things He doesn’t know?  
That isn’t what prayer is all about.

Prayer is to LINE OURSELVES UP with God.

He has commanded that we pray.

When we pray – we are admitting that HE is in control and we are not.

It's sad indeed, when we come to believe that WE ARE IN CONTROL by the way that we pray. If we only push the right spiritual buttons, or say our incantations the right way, we will have what we desire.

THAT is a perversion of Christianity.

- 1) But, we can TRUST GOD, because HE DOES know what we need.
- 2) And we can TRUST GOD, because HE DOES CARE about our needs.
- 3) And even though it taxes our faith – we can TRUST GOD because HE HAS PROMISED TO MEET OUR NEEDS!

Do you believe that? Every Christian does.

When you have little faith – you KNOW it is true, but don't live like it is true.

## 7. Seek first the Kingdom of God v. 31

Anxiety will never be cured by getting more of what we already have.

### Matthew 6:19-34

#### Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

#### The Lamp of the Body

22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

#### You Cannot Serve God and Riches

24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

#### Do Not Worry

25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all

these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

## **8. God will give the Kingdom to His children v. 32**

Outwardly, God's people are a little flock.

A flock of sheep is practically helpless – and a small flock is really helpless.

BUT – when you have a GREAT SHEPHERD – the sheep are safe.

It is God's pleasure to give us the kingdom – and God performs all His holy will.

## **9. Seek the real treasure found only in Heaven v. 33**

I think it is vital to note – this is not an absolute command from Christ.

Christ is not demanding that we own nothing and sell everything.

But, are you WILLING to give anything and everything, if need be?

The early church in Jerusalem basically did just this as recorded by Luke in the Book of Acts.

Times were desperate.

There was persecution against the Christians.

People even sold their properties to help meet the needs of those who were suffering.

### **Acts 4:32-37**

*32 -- Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.*

*33 -- And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.*

*34 -- Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,*

*35 -- and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.*



36 -- And Joses,<sup>[d]</sup> who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus,

37 -- having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

## **But, this set the stage for Annanias and Sapphira**

### **Acts 5:1-4**

1-- But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

2 -- And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 -- But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? **4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.**"

They did not sin by keeping back part of the land.

In reality – they had been GENEROUS to give a large gift.

Had it been done with a pure heart – they would have been blessed.

### **But – they wanted to GIVE and STILL KEEP.**

They wanted everyone to THINK they were sacrificial givers, all the while having hearts that wanted to maintain their own world's goods.

Ananias and Sapphira tried to live with one foot firmly rooted in this world – and one foot in the kingdom of God.

It can't be done.

Their sin wasn't so much greed or covetousness – although that probably was a part of it.

Their sin was LYING to the Holy Spirit.

What are some of these moth-proof and thief-proof treasures?

Hendricksen lists a few for us:

A faithfulness that will never be removed (Ps. 89:33, 138:8)

A life that will never end (John 3:16)

A spring of water that will never cease to bubble up within the one who drinks of it (John 4:14)

A gift that will never be lost (John 6:37, 39)  
A hand out of which the Good Shepherd's sheep will never be snatched  
(John 10:28).  
A chain that will never be broken (Rom. 8:29, 30)  
A love from which we shall never be separated (Rom. 8:39)  
A calling that will never be revoked (Rom. 11:29)  
A foundation that will never be destroyed (2 Tim. 2:19)  
An inheritance that will never fade away (1 Peter 1:4, 5)

## **10. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also v. 34**

Your heart can not be in two places at one.  
One is loyal to the things one values most.

You spend your MONEY on the things that are important to you.  
You spend your TIME on the things that captivate your heart.

Christ uses the word "treasure" but you know He is talking about "priorities".  
What is most important to you?  
What do you value most?  
What should you value most?

PRAY

HYMN 79

Benediction: Luke 12:31