

Luke 12:22-34

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[0:00] You can be turning to Luke chapter 12. Luke chapter 12. We're going to actually in just a moment reread what I preached on last week! Because what we're looking at today is really part of the same thought.

But we'll read that in just a minute. So we'll be looking at Luke chapter 12. And we'll start reading in verse 13 so that you're ready for that. Luke chapter 12.

Most people in this world are fearfully working towards some sort of security in their lives. They want their needs met.

And fear anything that might make them face what they feel would be catastrophic suffering. For some that means being part of the failing to launch group.

Their thinking is, I'm afraid to fail. So I will live tied to another and let them provide my security.

[1:19] For them anything that sounds like adulting provides anxiety. For some, security is stockpiling things.

If I have enough things, I will be secure. For these people, anything that prevents them from getting stuff or threatens them keeping their stuff provides anxiety.

For some, security is the saving and investing of money. If I can always have enough money for anything that can happen, I will be secure.

For them, anxiety... I'm sorry. For them, anything that threatens that stockpile of money provides anxiety.

Anxiety. Lack of security cripples us. What would happen to your anxiety if there was nothing that could take away your security?

[2:32] What if you found your security in something or someone that would never fail? Would you live your life differently?

Finally, let's look at Luke. Starting, well, in chapter 12, starting in verse 13. Someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

But he said to him, Man, who made me a judge or arbiter over you? And he said to them, Take care and be on guard against all covetousness.

For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. And he told them a parable, saying, The land of a rich man produced plentifully.

And he thought to himself, What shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I will do this. I will tear down my barns and will build larger ones.

[3:32] And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Many years. Relax.

Eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, Fool, this night your soul is required of you. And the things you have prepared, Whose will they be?

So is the one who lays up treasure for himself. And is not rich toward God. And he, Jesus, 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.

For life is more than food, And the body more than clothing. 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. And which of you, By being anxious, Can add a single hour, To his span of life.

[4:49] If then you are not able to do, As small a thing as this, Why are you anxious about the rest? 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. 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?

And do not seek what you are to eat, What you are to drink, Nor be worried. For all the nations of the world, Seek after these things, And your father knows, That you need them.

Instead, Seek his kingdom, And these things, Will be added to you. Fear not, Little flock, For it is your father's, Good pleasure, To give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions, Give to the needy, Provide yourselves, With money bags, That do not grow old, With a treasure in the heavens, That does not fail, Where no thief approaches, And no moth destroys, For where your treasure is, There will your heart be also.

[6:13] Let's pray. Father, I thank you for your word here, And as I told someone, Before the service, I'm preaching, This whole message to myself, Lord, As we look at this passage, I pray that you would be with us, May you minister to all of our hearts, May you make these truths, To ring true in our hearts, And I pray that you would be with us, We ask for your help, In Jesus' name, Amen.

I've been thankful for the, Worship, The first part of the service, And the centering on, The thoughts of who God is, It went so well with what we're looking at, Today.

I love how, This passage, We read the first part, And that's what we preached on last week, But I love how this passage turns, Because, After he's talked with, What was probably two men, Two brothers, And reproved them for their greed, Their covetousness, Jesus, In love for his disciples, Turns to them, And speaks to them, And you've probably heard before, What's the most, Common, Common, Command, In the New Testament, Do not be afraid, He turns to his disciples, And addresses them, In a way, That he just sees, To their heart, And he has such tender care, For them, That he wants them, To see, What their situation, Really is, And so, We've, We've looked at, What was last week, Last week was the reason, For what Jesus is about to teach, And he shows, He gives them this parable, And as he turns, In love towards these people, He says, I want you to be on guard, Against covetousness, And as early in the week, As I was working at this, I, I'm, I'm like puzzling, And thinking, Covetousness, And, And then his answer, Talks about anxiety, And, And it really struck me, A lot of anxiety, Is covetousness, I want, I want, I want, And so I saw that connection, And I thought, You know, Every time, I am anxious, I am breaking, One of the ten commandments, Now, All our sin, Can be indirectly, Routed back, To one of the commandments, But that, That was start to me, To think, You know, We think, Oh, You know, I, I'm pretty, All right, About some of the commandments, And yet to think, How often, I struggle with worry, And anxiety, In my own heart, And how I'm, Breaking, One of the very, Very plain commandments, But as Jesus, Thinks about his disciples, He thinks about these two men, That he's addressed, And he thinks about his disciples, He turns to them, And says, Do not be anxious, About your needs, Why does he suddenly talk about anxiety here, Think about the parable, Think about the rich man, Think about what the rich man said, When he had finished storing up,

[10:08] All his stuff, He said, Relax, Relax, Up to this point, Apparently, That rich man, And it's a parable, It's a story that, Jesus put together, It was a true to life story, But it was a story that, Jesus put together, To help people understand things, And this man, Came to the point, In his heart, In life, Where he thought, Because he was able, To tear down his barns, And build bigger, And kept everything for himself, That he would never have, Another worry in the world, That was what he was going for, You don't need to have any anxiety, For yourself man, Everything's taken care of, Your needs are met, For a long time, And the rich man's, Covetous actions, When he had a bumper crop, Were because he had been anxious, Where his food,

And clothes, And things, Would come from, And so now he thought, He didn't need to be anxious, And as I, I talked about the opening, Isn't that where so many of us are?

Life is about, How do I protect from, Everything being a catastrophe? How do I protect from, Suffering? How do I always have enough money, For my bills?

How do I always have my children safer? How do I always this, Or how do I always this? How do I protect, My situation from going south? What does it mean, To be anxious about our needs? Is worrying about, All the what ifs, Running around in our minds? What if the car breaks down, At the same time the roof leaks?

[12:12] I don't have money for both of those, And you hear that noise in the car, And you look at the roof, And it's not, And that, You know, It's the what ifs, Going round and round, What will I do?

You dread the possibility, Of the what ifs coming true, You dread the suffering, Isn't this where you go? Maybe I'm the only one, I told you, I know I'm preaching to myself, You're here to listen, What if the car breaks down, And the roof starts leaking, At the same time, And I can't fix it, And I can't get to work, And I can't make money, And I can't feed my family, And the roof rots, And my things inside are spoiled, And the roof caves in, And the house is uninhabitable, Uninhabitable, And I become a beggar, And a poverty stricken person, And I end up homeless, Under a bridge, Somewhere along 309, You ever done that?

I'm sorry, I'm revealing ugly things, About myself, But so often, We take the what ifs, And we run them through our minds, And we cast them to far ends, And we go, I don't know what I will do, And I worry, And so what do I do?

I crank up the vigilance, I try to make sure, Everything's working out alright, I mean I try to run around, And be ahead of everything, And maybe I'll take on more work, And now, Now, I'm not speaking about my own situation, But maybe in a situation, I've been working 45 hours a week, Now I'm working 55 hours a week, And I'm still like, I can't get ahead, What do I do?

Now I'm working 65 hours a week, And I crank up my vigilance, And I'm trying to make ends meet, We tend in worry, To make our decisions, Based on our what ifs, Instead of truth, Someone has a need, I'm going to walk around the situation, So they don't see that I'm here, Because I can't afford, To meet someone's need, Because what if, The car and the roof break, At the same time?

[14:53] I start making my decisions, Based on the what ifs, I begin to treat others, And service to others, As obstacles, To me being ready, And prepared, In case the what ifs come true, Can't give my tithe, Because I'm afraid, Of my taxes coming to do, And you know, We've given financial illustrations, But you can talk about kids, You can talk about, All kinds of things, And we have these what ifs, And we begin to treat others, According to the what ifs, Going in my mind, No I'm, I can't give to anybody, I need to keep my money for myself, Because these situations, Look close, These situations look real, We treat others,

In such a way, That we become angry, And hurtful, When others try to make sure, No I said that wrong, We become angry, And hurtful, Because we're doing, What we can, To try to make sure, The what ifs, Don't come true, No I can't help you, No I can't serve the church here, No I can't do this, And sometimes, It's just a matter of, Not doing things, But sometimes, It becomes mean, Back to what, Jesus faced, Beginning of the question, Master, Tell my brother, To share the inheritance with me, His heart, Became mean, Because of the what ifs, Going on in his heart, We're trying hard, To make sure, The what if doesn't happen, We're anxious, And we're worried, Well Jesus, In knowing that we're like that, And we could say, Knowing that the disciples, We're like that, But we're disciples, Knowing that we're like that, He, He tenderly, Wants to get them to see, The real situation, Verse 23, For life is more than food, And the body more than clothing, Now those are the two, Absolute bare necessities, If I am going to stay alive, If you're going to stay alive, You can stay alive without a car, You can stay alive without a bank account, You can stay alive without a house, You can stay alive without a sleeping bag, Or a tent, Or anything like that, But you can't stay alive without food, And clothing, And Jesus says, Life is more than making sure, That you have sufficient, Food and clothing, There's so much more to do,

Now you might be saying, Yeah, You're right, I've got to wash the dishes, I've got to do this, No, Jesus is not going there, We're going to see at the end, He has outward looking thoughts, He has thoughts towards the people around you, The people that you begin to draw away from, That you begin to be angry with, When you begin to think the what ifs could come true, He says there's more to life, Than food, And more to the body than clothing, There is service to God, And that's one of the things he gets at, There is service to others, And those are the things that are lost first, When we get wrapped up in the what ifs, And we become anxious, And we become covetous,

We first drop off service to anyone else, All our service goes to us, And so Jesus in his tenderness, Commands us or encourages us, It's a truth we need to remember, To consider the ravens, Verse 24 he says, Consider the ravens, They neither sow nor reap, They have neither storehouses nor a barn, And yet God feeds them, Now, we've heard Jesus talk about sparrows, Sweet little bird, Sings a nice song, It's kind of bland, But it's nice, You don't mind listening, To sparrows, But he doesn't talk about sparrows here, He talks about crows, Or he says ravens, For us it would be easiest to think about crows,

[19:58] Or blackbirds, Whatever you want to think, And they're not such a nice little bird, If you, If you have two or three crows, Outside your bedroom window, First thing in the morning, You might not be very happy, I mean, They just have this, And they're just, Incessant about it, I mean, They're worse than a rooster, At least a rooster keeps this nice cadence, But not the crow, He's miserable, And even worse than that, A crow is an unclean bird, Couldn't eat it, Weren't to touch it, If you touched it, You were unclean, And so he, Begins to paint this picture, With this bird, That, Oh sure it looks neat, But, Whose favorite bird, Besides Edgar Allan Poe,

Is the raven? God has given us a blessing, In our new house, That we have here, We didn't have, We could see a little bit, But we have a backyard, And, It has taught us so much, We have come, I've already mentioned this before, We've come to watch squirrels, And chipmunks, And birds, While we eat our lunch, And it's been, Very educational, Last fall, It was really interesting, To watch the chipmunks, And the squirrels, Pack away acorns, We have a couple of, Oak trees in our backyard, And to watch them run around, And dig their little holes, And stuff the acorn in, And you know, Do all this stuff, And they're so busy, And they're so watchful, And it's really interesting, And squirrels, And chipmunks, And many other animals, Store food, Some animals, Fatten themselves up, For the winter, But ravens, They don't, They live from one meal, To the next, The whole year through,

He doesn't have a barn, Anywhere, He doesn't have a storehouse, Anywhere, And so God, Literally provides, Every meal, That a raven eats, Now I find this amazing, They eat, Any kind of available, Bugs, And caterpillars, And seeds, You ever watch them, They'll pick stuff, Out of the garbage can, And you could have something, Stuck in a can, And they'll pick, What's in the can, Out of the can, Sometimes even using, Twigs and stuff like that, And they scavenge, And they find stuff, And so they, Are fed by God, Sometimes by what, You throw away, One of their main, Sources of food, Is carrion, Do you know what, Carrion is, If you drive down, The road, You often see these, Deer that have been hit, Sometimes it's a possum, Sometimes it's a raccoon, Or other animals, And, Sometimes you see, Buzzards there, But often you see, Crows there, What are they doing, They're pulling the guts out, Eating the guts, Eating the meat, Usually it's, Three or four days old, Looks totally unappetizing, But that's what they eat, And so, Remember it says, That God, Feeds the ravens, Sometimes they find stuff, On the branches, Seeds left, Different things, But sometimes they wait, For you to throw stuff out, Many times, They wait, Till you hit the skunk, Or the possum, With your car, And God feeds them, In such, Unusual ways, Every day,

Many millions of ravens, There are many millions, Of ravens, In the world, God has arranged, For their every meal, And provided it, And I looked up this morning, On average, There are 600,000, Ravens, Crows, Whatever you want to say, In Pennsylvania, I didn't know this, Actually there's an influx, In the fall, And they stay in the southern part, Of the state, By the millions, And then they leave, In the spring, But, 600,000, Normally, In Pennsylvania, That means, That right now, There are about, 9,000 crows, In Luzerne County, Now, Crows aren't the only ones, Who are like this, The chickadee, The bluebird, The red-headed, Whitpecker, The cardinal, All of them do the same thing,

[25:10] There are 447, Different types of birds, In Pennsylvania, And that makes up, I looked up, Are there more birds, Than people in Pennsylvania, Oh yes, 520,000,000 birds, In Pennsylvania, And average, And by the way, There's only 13 million, Of us, And God, Provides the food, For 520,000,000 birds, Three times a day, And not one of them, Sticks a seed in the tree, Or an acorn, In the ground, Everyone has to wait, and God does it all.

Now, Pennsylvania is only one state amongst the nation so you can 50 times that and our nation among 147 countries in the world.

How many billions of birds does God feed every day? And that's their normal life.

A crow doesn't wake up in the morning and go, oh, I've had to go shopping last week. He gets up. I wonder what God has for me today.

And off he goes. They never worry about their food and God always feeds them. And Jesus wants us to see that in everyday life, it is normal for all of his creation to depend on him for their very next meal.

[27:06] Regardless of whether we have stuff in our pantry or not, or even if we have a pantry, God means for us to rest and trust him for our next meal.

Now, he's not saying don't work. We till the ground. But all that depends on the weather and the soil and so many other things.

It's still the same thing. God provides our food. It's an argument from the lesser to the greater. If God provides the food for 520 million birds every day, many of them unclean, many of them we don't like, most all of them we don't see.

Do you think it's trouble for God to provide the food for 13 million people just in the state of Pennsylvania? So Jesus is telling these disciples, don't be anxious about your food.

God will provide your food. And he goes on to say in verses 25 and 26, and which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his lifespan?

[28:31] We can't. You can worry about everything in the world. And you won't add a second to your life. In fact, you worry about everything in the world, you are more likely to take away seconds, minutes, hours, and even days than you are to add to it.

You will never add anything to it. Worrying accomplishes nothing. We don't change a single thing. Have you thought about it?

Have you ever, ever changed anything by worrying about it? And it's another argument from the lesser to the greater.

If you can't add to your life by worrying, which Jesus is saying is a simple thing. I mean, even if you felt like you could get circumstances lined up better, and that would best your life.

You can't even do that. So if you can't add to your life an hour by being anxious, how can you expect to provide food by being anxious?

[29:40] How can you expect to change anything by being anxious? And then he goes on to the lilies. I've not counted how many lilies in Pennsylvania.

He says, consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory, I mean, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Flowers don't care at all about how they look. They don't think about it at all. Have you ever spent time looking long and close at a flower?

I would encourage you to do that. They're the most vibrant colors. Amazing. And they're often complicated sequences in flowers.

The sunflower, the seeds, are arranged in a Fibonacci sequence. Just amazing. It didn't think about that at all. Sometimes there's complicated repetitions.

[30:51] Sometimes there's symmetry. One flower, one petal, will mimic the other side. They didn't think about it. They're extremely delicate. In fact, Jesus makes much of that. But at no point does the flower put any thought into what goes into how it looks.

The beauty the flower has is provided by God. And Jesus says to his disciples, the clothing of the richest and most glorious king, King Solomon, cannot compare to the way God provides clothing for a flower.

And it's another argument from the lesser to the greater. And 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?

Now, just speaking briefly about the grass. Where did the grass come from? He's talking about how the flower dries up. How it's only here for a short time.

How its season of being here is insignificant. And it dries up. And it's so insignificant that in those days they would go out and gather up grass and that's what they would cook their meals on.

[32:13] If something so insignificant is clothed by God more beautifully than Solomon could clothe himself with all his riches, why do we worry about our clothing?

And I think the hint here is not just that we have clothing, but that we have nice. I'm not talking about designer, but appropriate clothing.

And so Jesus says to his disciples in verses 29 and 30, do not seek what you will eat or what you will wear or what you're to drink nor be worried for all the nations of the world seek these things, seek after these things, and your Father knows you have needed them.

I've appreciated the centrality on our Father's care for us today. This is exactly what Jesus is going to. Our Father cares for us.

We shouldn't seek what we will eat or what we will drink. That's the worry of the world. We don't... What about our need for houses or cars or furniture or money or taxes or insurance?

[33:32] 1 Timothy 6, 6-8, But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world, but if we have food and clothing with these we will be content.

Now, God often provides these things. I don't think there are any of us here who don't live in some sort of building, who don't have some sort of way of getting around.

God is so gracious and he gives, but he doesn't have to give. He gives what we need. He's promised to give what we need. And so, Jesus is saying here, then don't let that be a worry.

We can ask for the other things. We asked for a house and the Lord gave us a house here in Hazleton.

He didn't need to. He could have given us a tent. We could be living out in the corner of the parking lot, but he was very gracious to us. Philippians 4, 19, And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

[34:40] God knows your needs. In verse 31, Instead, seek his kingdom and these things will be added to you. And Jesus turns this corner.

So, he's laid down this very loving instruction, this very caring truth that we need to have in our minds always.

God cares for me more than the ravens. God will provide for me better than Solomon. And so, being free from those anxieties, my desire then should be to seek the kingdom.

Seek the ingathering of people to Christ. Seek the building up of the body of Christ. Seek the coming reign of Christ overall.

Seeking the kingdom is going to take you trusting that God will meet your needs and then you using what he provides to meet the needs of others.

[35:55] To further the work of the gospel. Build up the body of Christ until he returns. So, there's two aspects here. He's saying, don't worry about what you need, but serve me with what you have.

Why? Well, this man, remember this rich man, the parable, he collected all this stuff and when it was all said and done, he was removed from his treasures. And Jesus is saying, we shouldn't be anxious.

We should just depend on the Lord, provide. We should use what we have to serve others because in doing that, now we're building up riches in heaven.

We take what he has provided for us and we use it for others and we serve others and we serve the kingdom. And so, how to be rich toward God in verses 32, 33, and 34.

He says, fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Now, is he telling us that we all need to be absolutely dirt poor?

[37:04] No. He's saying, you need to have the mindset, the mentality that what God has given you is his. He says, I will take care of you.

You serve me with what you have. Does that mean you shouldn't have an inheritance? No. But that inheritance ought to be to serve the Lord. Does that mean you shouldn't have money in the bank?

No. But it does mean that that money in the bank needs to be at God's disposal. Does it mean you shouldn't have a house? No. You can certainly have a house, but that ought to be at the Lord's

disposal.

And as you serve the Lord in this life with what he's given you, trusting him to meet your needs, you're serving the kingdom. You're also building up treasure in heaven, being rich towards God. So he encourages us to sell and give. It will be safe. And he ends the section by saying, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

[38:13] Let's go back to that anxiety thing. What does your anxiety show about where your treasure is? That's been pretty convicting to me this week.

Worry about this, worry about that, worry about that. Where's my heart? Well, if I'm worrying about the things here, I'm not treasuring the things there.

If your treasure is here, then you will be covetous and anxious.

If your treasure is in heaven, your heart is in heaven. And you will not be tempted to be covetous or as tempted to be covetous and anxious.

And you will be rich toward God. And I'll close by just sharing this one thing. We as Christians struggle with anxiety.

[39:20] All of us do. To some degree or another. And so it's something that we must be on guard all of our lives. It shows where our heart is.

We should repent of where our heart is if it is anxious and if it's covetous and if it's built our focus on earthly things. So we as Christians will face this all of our lives.

And by this next statement, I'm not saying that all people who are anxious are not Christians. All of us as Christians fight anxiety. But if you're here and you've never chosen to trust Christ, your anxiety points to where your heart is and to where your treasure is.

and if your treasure is here and you've not trusted Christ, that separation from this life will not only mean a loss of what you had and a lack to gain of what you could have had in heaven, it'll mean a separation from God for all eternity.

And so let me encourage you if you don't know Christ to see the God that he is and trust him because he's provided salvation for us.

[40:41] Let's pray. Father, I thank you for these principles. And Lord, I pray that you would apply them to our hearts.

I pray that even this week and from this day going forward, whenever we feel anxiety creeping up in our hearts and mind, we check and see where our heart is, what we're treasuring.

May we remind ourselves of the truths of who God is and what he's promised. May we be people who trust in his sovereign care over us.

I pray that you would be with us. Lord, if there's one here who doesn't know you, I pray that you would open their eyes to their need of someone else paying for their sin.

And may their eyes be opened to the fact that Christ has provided that salvation. And may they repent and turn and trust him. We pray in Jesus' name.

[41:47] Amen.