

No Need To Worry

A Sermon on Luke 12:22-34

Year C - Thanksgiving
24 - November - 2016

JJ¹

What do you worry about?

That's a question we don't like to ask, much less answer! Each one of us has an embarrassingly long list of worries. Even if it were just one thing on that list, we'd all admit we'd much rather have it be a big zero. While it would actually be beneficial for us personally and as a whole congregation to confess all our worries to one another so we could encourage, support and pray for one another, that isn't really practical right now and isn't why you came to God's house this morning. Anyways, we'd be here all day and miss the beautiful gluttony waiting for us at home!

Yet, consider how much worry has plagued your heart already this morning. Worry about the food you've prepared. Worry about the clothes you're wearing. Worry about what others will think when they see you. Worry about what you're giving in your offering. Worry about your family members traveling to see you. Worry about how the family will be together. Worry about the doctor visit next week. Worry about getting the test results. Worry about not embarrassing yourself. Worry about your marriage, your kids, your parents or other family members. Worry about your job. Worry

about our nation. Worry about the future of our congregation.

Maybe I just ticked a bunch of the boxes on your list of worries. If I somehow managed not to touch a one, well, you know what your list is. And yes, you do have a list, even if you don't recognize it. It may be smaller than others, but it's there. You know how I know? You're still on this side of heaven.

After just teaching the parable of the rich fool who was rich toward himself but not God, Jesus teaches us that neither being in need nor having plenty can keep us from worry. In all our lessons today we are taught that **God Cares For Our Needs**, and therefore there is **NO NEED TO WORRY**.

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. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes."

I think we'd all agree with Jesus that worrying is a bad thing and we shouldn't do it. We don't even need Jesus to tell us that worrying is a bad thing. Psychologists, physicians, chiropractors and the like will all tell you that worry and anxiety are the biggest stressors on your body

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

and mind and just about the worst thing for you.

Jesus says, “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” The answer is, of course, no one. No one can. Worrying can’t add one minute, but it can certainly take it’s toll on our lives, even take minutes, hours, days, even years off our life, whether literally or at least rob us of the enjoyment of life.

Now friends, having enough food and clothes isn’t a real issue for most of us. And Jesus isn’t downplaying the plight of those struggling to provide enough food and clothes for themselves and their loved ones. The real problem here is worry. Worrying betrays a weakness we all have this side of heaven. It betrays the fact that we still have a sinful nature and that we daily struggle against it, even with the simplest needs which God promises to provide for.

The problem we have is that we have a problem with the First Commandment. When we worry, we are doubting that God is God. When we worry, we are not trusting in God above all things.

One of the words translated as “worry” (12:39) in the Greek literally means “to lift yourself up.” And how fitting that is. When we worry, we’re pulling God down from his rightful place, and lifting ourselves up into his

place as if we can control what will happen with our future.

Although I’m sure you never actually think this, but realize that when you worry you’re basically saying, “Okay, if I just worry enough about this, it will put money in my bank account—or—fix my marriage—or—call someone to repentance—or—produce the test results I want to hear.” It’s just as silly and pointless as thinking that if we worry enough we can make the Packers win!

It’s pathetically laughable when you think about our worry. And yet acknowledging that we worry and that we ought not to do it is not going stop us from worrying.

Jesus continues to get at the heart of the matter by showing us how God does care for our needs. And to

do this he uses an argument from the lesser to the greater. “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! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? 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. 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!”

God’s beautiful creation confesses to us that God is faithful and takes care of our needs. Yet seeing this beautiful display doesn’t stop us from worrying either. Why? It’s because of what Jesus says at the end of verse 28: “O you of little faith!”

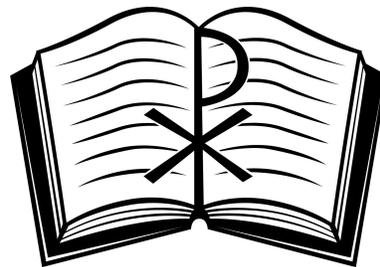
The real reason for our worry is because we doubt God and seek satisfaction, comfort and peace in all the wrong places! Understand that Jesus isn’t saying to his disciples or to you and me that we don’t have saving faith. He’s revealing that our faith in God as God and that he’ll keep his promises is weak. He’s revealing that in our weakness, we seek for satisfaction, comfort and peace in the places the sinful heart turns. That’s why Jesus says, “...the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.”

Even still, confessing that we seek to squash our worry in the wrong places doesn’t stop us worrying either. You see, friends, all we’ve done is confess the truth about our sin: we worry—we know we shouldn’t worry—God’s creation shows us we shouldn’t worry—we seek to calm our worry in the wrong places. Why can’t that stop us worrying? Because it’s the law.

Jesus first needs to preach the law to show us how we worry and foolish we

are in our worrying. He first needs to preach the law to prepare our hearts for his beautiful gospel—the gospel that cures us of all our worries!

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” We’ve heard a lot about this kingdom the last couple of weeks. Our King, Jesus, came into this world of worry to set us free from all worry. As Paul writes: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).



Jesus endured the poverty of this world, not even having a home to call his own. Yet Jesus lived a perfect life without worry. Then he endured the greatest poverty ever experienced. On the cross,

he thirsted, but did not worry. He was stripped of all his clothing so that unlike the flowers of the field, “he had no beauty that we should desire him” (Is. 53:2), but still did not worry. Then he truly lost everything good as he suffered for our evil and all our worry.

Friends, Jesus did all this because it was his Father’s good pleasure to bring you into his kingdom, all so that his Father would be your Father too! The kingdom of Jesus is ours, not because we worry, but because of Jesus’ cross and resurrection. We belong to God’s eternal kingdom because of God’s grace. And it is citizen-

ship in this kingdom of grace that conquers all our fears and forgives all our worries. Jesus' love for us gives us the faith to simply trust God and let God be God. And even when we do fail, we know we can turn to a faithful God who forgives us, even when we have been faithless through our worrying. Friends, we have **NO NEED TO WORRY** that God hasn't provided for our greatest need. He forgives you!

And what's more is that belonging to Christ's eternal kingdom, we're also able to view our earthly possessions in the proper way. God must give us what we need because he has promised to do so. And as we look at our possessions, we can see that most of us have received far more than what we need. It's with that abundance that Jesus teaches us: "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. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Friends, this Thanksgiving, set your hearts in Jesus' hands. Treasure your loving heavenly Father who gives you all that you need, especially by bringing you into his kingdom. Seek that kingdom first, knowing that God cares for all your needs. Rejoice, be glad and give thanks

that there is **NO NEED TO WORRY**. Amen.

SDG²

² SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for "To God Alone Be The Glory". This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn't about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.