

Jesus Teaches About the Fathers Love -- Luke 12:22-34

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“Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on.” Verse 22. The “therefore” implies a reason based on what has gone before. Why take no thought for these things? —Because “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15). It is evident that the most anxious thought should be bestowed on that which constitutes the chief part of life, and that excludes the things that are merely physical. When Jesus said, “He who does not believe the Son shall not see life” (John 3:36), he showed that he who lives only in this short life does not live at all. He knows nothing of life. Only the immortal life is worthy of being called life. It alone is life indeed. When one looks at the matter in this light, it is easy to see that food and raiment are very small items in life.

“Do not worry” but “Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?” (Luke 12:24). Here, again, the Lord chides worry and useless anxiety, while teaching implicit trust in God. He uses an illustration, which makes impossible the idea of idly waiting for something to turn up. The birds do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, as did the rich man who trusted in his possessions and forgot God, yet God feeds them, while the rich man’s anxiety profited him nothing. But God does not feed the birds while they sit on a limb of a tree with mouths open waiting for him to bring the food along. The Psalmist, in praising God for his wonderful care for the dumb creatures, says of them: “These all wait for You, that You may give *them* their food in due season. *What* You give them they gather in” (Ps. 104:27, 28). They gather what God provides for them, and are content with that which suffices for the present. Since men are of far greater value than the birds, there is every reason to think that God will take far greater care of them than of the birds. Therefore men have far less cause for anxious care and worry than the birds have. If God does not forget the birds, how much more will He remember man whom He made in his own image? The fact that Christ commended us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” is proof that God designs for to give us each day the food that is necessary for that day.

IN the same line, but stronger, is the reference to the flowers. Jesus said: “Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe* you, O *you* of little faith?” (Luke 12:27, 28).

THERE is nothing frailer than the flowers of the field; and upon nothing else has God lavished a greater wealth of beauty. In the early spring the California plains are fairly dazzling with the brightness of myriads of flowers of different variety; yet in one day I have seen a plot of flowers so trodden down by men and cattle that no one would imagine that a flower had ever bloomed on the spot. What should we learn from this? —The infinite wealth of the resources of God. He can

afford to clothe nature lavishly. And since it is in creation that the power and divinity of God are made known to us (Rom. 1:20), he designs that from this we should learn to trust him. We may thank God for the birds and the flowers, not simply because they please our senses, but because they are object lessons of God's tenderness. He, who does not look at them in this light, does not derive from them half the comfort that he ought.

“Beneath His watchful eye,
His saints securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard his children well.”

From all this, the practical, common-sense question is asked, “And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do *the* least, why are you anxious for the rest?” (Luke 12:25, 26). This is in effect, “Do not worry about that which you cannot affect.” All the worrying in the world never accomplished a single thing, how foolish then to indulge in it, especially since it is an implied denial of God's care for us.

“But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:31, 32). That is the one thing of worth. “We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which *are* not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). How foolish, then, for men to waste valuable time worrying about that which is but for a moment, and neglect that which is for eternity. Yet the worldlying is far wiser than the professed Christian who plans chiefly for this world. The former has not had his eyes opened to see the world to come, and he plans as far ahead as he sees; but the latter has had opened before him an eternal inheritance, yet he plans only for the present. Truly, the children of this world are wiser in their generations than the children of light.

BUT although the kingdom of God is the one thing of worth, we are not to have anxious care and worry even for that. We are to seek it, yet with loving trust in the heavenly Father, who provides everything. We are commanded: “Do not fear,” because it is His good-pleasure to give the kingdom. And right here, to strengthen this assurance, comes in God's care for us in this present life. Surely He, who cares so kindly for our temporal wants, will not neglect the greatest of all. Thus even the lilies become to us a pledge of God's love, and of His faithfulness to give us eternal riches; for the lilies are a pledge that God will care for our temporal wants far more than for theirs; and if He will do that which is least, He surely will do that which is greatest. And so we can say, with the psalmist, “For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands” (Ps. 92:4).

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