

Luke 12:32-40

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[0:00] You may be seated. We will be looking at our gospel text this morning, although we're not going to look at the whole thing.

! We're actually going to just look at the first, the first part. So if you have your Bibles with you, go ahead and open them up to Luke chapter 12, verse 32.

Once again, thank you for having me and my wife and our two kids here. It's good to see other kids here, so we feel right at home.

So this is great. Thank you. Let's go ahead and go to the Lord in prayer before we begin. Heavenly Father, thank you for this opportunity to worship you, to be reminded of what you have done for us. May our hearts and minds be focused on you, not on ourselves or on other things going on in our lives, though there be many.

[1:06] Help us to focus on Christ and what he's done for us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, if we were to jump right into our text for this morning, we would be entering into the tail end of a conversation.

So we can't do that. What has Jesus said up to this point? If you have your Bibles open, look at the very beginning of Luke chapter 12. Luke records this.

He says that so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were trampling one another. We're not told where Jesus is, but there's a huge crowd with him.

Now, typically in this kind of setting, Jesus will turn to the crowds and he'll give them some teaching. But notice what Luke says in verse 1. He says, Now, surely some in the crowd can hear Jesus talk to his disciples, but Jesus does not address the many thousands here.

He addresses his disciples. And then, as Jesus is talking to his disciples, a man in the crowd pipes up in verse 13.

[2:26] He can see Jesus, but he must not be able to hear what Jesus is saying, because what he asks Jesus has nothing to do with what Jesus has been teaching. He says, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

Jesus looks at this man and asks, Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you? Why does this person make such a demand on Jesus?

It seems so out of place. Well, I think he says it for the same reason in John 6.

The people follow Jesus. It says there that they follow him to get physical food. Why would they do that? Well, they just watched him feed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.

This man sees Jesus, and he sees what he can get from him. Jesus has come to fix his earthly problems.

[3:32] But Jesus sees the heart. Instead of doing what this man asks, Jesus takes his time to now address the crowds. In verse 15, he says, Take care and be on your guard against all covetousness.

For one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. He then tells a parable of a man who oriented his entire life around the accumulation and hoarding of material things.

But, after getting everything he thought he ever wanted, he dies. And he just leaves his stuff to someone else. He doesn't know who.

This, Jesus says, is what happens to everyone who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

The things they love are taken from them. Now you may think, okay, I understand the command to not be covetous. But what about the other things?

[4:44] The other things that I need? I need food. I need clothing. A car. A home. Furniture to put in that home. I need a lot of things.

Verse 22. Jesus turns back to his disciples and says, Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.

Why does Jesus move from coveting, which we know is bad, to anxiety? Those seem to be different things.

While they are different, they're actually more related than you might think at first. On this past Friday, while I was preparing for today, my computer charger stopped working.

At first, I was very anxious that I wasn't going to be able to get my work done. But it didn't take long until that anxiety became thoughts like, I hate my computer.

[5:53] Why can't I have a new one? Why can't I have enough money to get the newest version? Covetousness is downstream of anxiety.

I think we'll see why that is as we continue. Notice, what does Jesus say you are not to be anxious about? What you will eat. What you will wear.

What are you anxious about? What causes you fear? There's much to fear in life. There are wars. There are rumors of wars.

Perhaps the political landscape and where it is headed frightens you. What about having enough money to put gas in the car? Or to buy groceries?

What about a project at work that has a lot riding on it? I don't know all the specifics of what you all are prone to worry about. But for me, it's the small, everyday things that I obsess over.

[6:58] If you saw me on Friday while I was preparing, you would not have found me worrying about the possibility of nuclear warfare one day. That wasn't on my mind.

You would have found me worrying I wasn't going to be able to get my work done. That was my worry. You see, there's a reason Jesus tells you to pray for your daily bread.

Each day is riddled with troubles, worries, stress. But look at verse 32. Jesus says once again, Fear not.

Fear not. How can Jesus say this? Better yet, how can you even do that? That's all well and good, Jesus.

Fear not. But the problem is still in front of me. I still need to get my work done. I don't see how I'm going to do that. What if you lose your job?

[8:03] Perhaps in the past you have. Or maybe you have. That's no small issue. If you don't put food on the table, then you and your family won't survive. Wouldn't fear then be a tool in that moment to push you to do what's necessary?

Is Jesus telling you to just turn a blind eye to the things that worry you? Is God being insensitive to the stress you face? I don't think so.

Because look at what Jesus says next after charging you to not fear. He says, fear not, little flock. Little flock. I don't think Jesus is saying to not care about what you need to do.

I think he is rather giving you the proper perspective as to who you are. You are a little flock of sheep. Now why does Jesus think of you as sheep?

Sheep are not all that smart. They are not hunter-gatherers. They need a shepherd to bring them to water to drink and to green pastures to eat and to rest.

[9:15] Now sheep aren't just unskilled in providing for their own needs. They are unable to. They will die if the shepherd doesn't provide for them. A sheep would wander aimlessly without a shepherd.

So they must follow their shepherd wherever he leads them. And if he is a good shepherd, he will lead them to water, food, and rest. And when sheep lie down for rest, they are not thinking whether or not they will rest in a green place tomorrow.

That is up to the shepherd. He is in control. He cared for you today. Why won't he tomorrow? Now I don't know about you, but I'm not a huge fan of being called a sheep.

Sheep are weak. Sheep are helpless. They're too dumb to do things for themselves. I prefer to take matters into my own hands and pave my own way. But sheep don't actually know what they're doing.

It is foolish for sheep to take matters into their own hands. They don't know where the water is. They can't find green pastures for themselves.

[10:31] Those things are given to them by the shepherd. Now, you're not only sheep. Jesus continues in verse 32.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. You're not only sheep with a shepherd.

You're children with a good father. What do sheep and children have in common? Do young children wake up and start working at providing for themselves?

Do these babies wake up and dress themselves? Do they get dressed by themselves and drive themselves to work in order to bring home the bacon? No. Left to their own devices, children wouldn't make it in life very long.

They don't like that. They need their parents to care for them and provide them with the things that they need. Now, all of you are loving parents, so you understand this.

[11:40] Good parents delight in taking care of their children. That doesn't mean it's easy all the time. It doesn't mean you're just happy when you're doing it. But even when you're tired and you're angry, I'm pretty sure you do not or did not neglect your children.

You go to work to earn money so they can have food, clothing, go to school. You make them three meals a day with snacks.

You bathe them. You read to them. You put them down to bed. And you do it all again the next day. And what do parents do when their children are afraid?

My son, Sawyer, is two. He likes dogs, but from afar. They can't get too close. If a dog gets close to him, he's afraid of what it might do.

He doesn't know. It's also bigger than him. Now, if I'm there with him, I know he doesn't need to be afraid, especially when I know the dog.

[12:43] But does that mean that if he runs up to me in fear, I say, dude, just chill out. It's just a dog. No.

Of course I don't do that. I do not minimize his fear, though I know he doesn't need to fear. I comfort him. I help him see that he doesn't need to fear.

I'm his father. He can trust me. I know that that dog is not going to hurt him. Not when I'm around.

Fear not. You are sheep who have a good shepherd.

Do not lie awake at night tossing and turning. Lie down and sleep. Your shepherd watches over you. Fear not. You are children.

Who have a good father who will protect and provide for you. Are you afraid? Run to him. Fear not doesn't mean to live carelessly or lazily.

[13:44] Fear not means to realize that you are not in control. But your shepherd and father is. What are you worried about at this very moment?

God doesn't say, ignore it. He says, yes, I see what you see. I'm telling you right now, do not be afraid. I am your father.

I love you. Now, when Sawyer is afraid of something, I tell him to trust me. That I will take care of him. Now, would it be unwise, then, for him to cling to me and trust me?

That I'm watching over him? No. That's extremely wise of him to do. I'm his dad. Hiding behind your father is very wise. What are your fears, then, to the all-powerful, all-knowing God of the universe who is your father?

Will I have enough money to provide for myself and my family? Will I be able to get all these things done this week? What if whatever I'm working on, whatever I'm doing, fails? Your father is right here with you, and he's not shaking.

[14:59] Now, that does not mean he will always give you whatever you want. Above, in verses 30 and 31, we see that Jesus says God will provide for you.

But when talking about the everyday fears you have, why wouldn't Jesus say something like, don't worry, God's got this. He'll make sure you have all the food and money that you need.

Why doesn't he just say that? Instead, he says that your father's pleasure is to give you the kingdom. It's God's good pleasure.

Meaning, not only is it what God has decided to do, he delights in doing it. As your father, he absolutely loves to give good gifts to you.

And what is this gift he gives you? The kingdom. The kingdom. The kingdom. That's nice, God, but what I really need is a car that starts and an AC unit that works.

[16:05] But while your concerns this morning may vary, God has one concern for you. That you have his kingdom.

Now, to the Jews, when they talked back then about the kingdom of God, they had images of the Messiah coming and destroying the Romans or whatever enemy was set up before them. And that Messiah would set up Israel as the nation above all other nations. That was the kingdom. John, in his gospel, records for us that the people wanted to make Jesus king by force. They saw his miracles. They saw him producing all of that food for them. And they believed that he would be the one to defeat their enemies. Jesus could offer them freedom. He could offer them food. Think back to the man in Luke 12, 13. That man wanted Jesus to be his earthly judge.

[17 : 09] He wanted Jesus to deal with the problem he had with his brother. The Jews here are looking for Jesus to give a kingdom that they want.

A kingdom that gives them what they're anxious about. But that's not what Jesus means when he says that God gives you the kingdom.

Jesus is not interested in what the kingdoms of this world are interested in. In verse 30, Jesus says that the nations of the world seek after material possessions.

Now, not all these things are inherently bad. And God knows that we need many of these things. And he's happy to give them. But the kingdoms of this world, notice, seek, seek after these things. Now, what does it mean to seek after something? And just ask yourself, have you ever lost something? Something of great value to you? I'm sure all of us have. Now, if so, you want to find it. [18 : 17] So you start to search. And not half-heartedly either. If it is something you love greatly, it will consume your thoughts. You will look high and low to find it.

You will feel a sense of anguish until you do find it. But the kingdoms of this world set their face toward acquiring material possessions.

They are in anguish until they find them. Those things are the end goal. And the nations clamor over each other to possess them.

Jesus, on the other hand, says in verse 31, That you should seek God's kingdom instead. That kingdom is different from the kingdoms of this world.

Jesus will later tell Pilate, before he's crucified, That the kingdom of God, the kingdom that he gives you, is not of this world.

[19 : 26] Now, why are you to seek this kingdom? And why is God concerned with giving you this kingdom that is not of this world, When your anxieties and your fears have to do with the things in this world?

What is God's kingdom? When talking about any kingdom, we're not referring merely to a place like a castle or a city, Though that could be involved.

A kingdom involves authority, rule, reign. A ruler's kingdom is not just his throne, not just where he lives, But it is his dominion over the people and his dominion over the land.

That's the kingdom. What does God rule over? Everything. Everyone. Everyone. God's kingdom is his established rule and authority over the world.

Over you. Over me. The kingdoms of this world, they use their rule and authority to get what they need in this world. Their minds are fixed on those things.

[20 : 44] They rule in order to get them. So if God is a ruler over everything and everyone, What is his mind fixed on? What does he seek?

Perhaps we will see what God is interested in if we read the rest of the text. Let's read, starting in verse 33. Sell your possessions and give to the needy.

Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old. With 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 awesome. Okay. Is Jesus saying that Christians must give away everything they have in order to be true Christians?

You guys should be ashamed of yourselves driving here in your cars. Don't you know people don't have means of transportation? I don't think Jesus is saying that.

[21 : 52] There are multiple passages in scripture that command us to work hard, provide for ourselves, provide for our families. Jesus is not saying that. Jesus is not saying here that you must sell your possessions in order to gain the kingdom of God.

Rather, he is saying is because you have the kingdom of God that you can sell your possessions and help anyone in need.

Now, it still raises the question. Why is gaining the kingdom of God able to lead you to selling your possessions and giving to the needy?

Once again, what does God rule over? There is nothing outside of God's jurisdiction. Everything belongs to him.

But if that's the case, what Jesus says in our text this morning is actually kind of odd. He says that it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

[22 : 55] Well, what are you talking about? God already rules over everything. Why does he have to give you the kingdom? Well, God is king over the universe. That much is true.

But is everyone on earth his loyal subjects? God is king over the universe. God is king over the universe. The world is not made up of people who submit to God's reign. The world is an enemy camp set up against God's kingdom.

You and I were once in that enemy camp. But it was God's good pleasure to take us out of that camp and place us in his kingdom.

God is king over the universe. This is exactly why Jesus came. Do you remember what Jesus began to preach when he started his earthly ministry? He said, the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.

And Jesus could have come with the message, the kingdom of God is at hand. All you enemies of God are doomed. He could have taken vengeance on his enemies. In our sin, we infinitely offended God.

[24 : 07] And in his justice, he must destroy sin. But instead of raining fire upon us sinners, Jesus comes to be destroyed on the cross in our place.

All so that God could reconcile us to himself. All so that he could make his enemies his subjects.

In fact, more than his subjects. God has adopted you. He's made his enemies his children.

His beloved children. And he has given you his kingdom. Colossians 1.13 puts it, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son.

In whom we have redemption. The forgiveness of sins. And as Romans 8.32 tells us, He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.

[25 : 12] How will he not also with him graciously give us all things? What good are the things of this world if after you have accumulated them, you still remain in an eternal debt toward God?

But if you trust in Christ, God has given you faith in his son and eternal life through him. He gives you the kingdom.

A kingdom that doesn't fade in power and authority like the ones of this world. And if you have a kingdom that cannot fade, and you are no longer under the wrath of God, but you are his children, what do you lack?

What will you ever lack? He watches over you. You now serve the king of kings and lord of lords.

The God who creates and sustains the universe is your father. And he loves to give you good gifts.

[26 : 22] In fact, everything comes from him. So you don't need to hoard anything. He will give you everything you need. You don't need to hold tightly to the things of this world.

In fact, it would be wise if you don't hold tightly to them. Notice the frailty of material things. Jesus says, Now a money bag back then is just a purse or a wallet today.

Jesus says, have purses, have wallets that will not grow old. Debit cards that will not bend or break or ever be declined. Cash that cannot fall out of your pocket or be ruined by water.

Your goods grow old. They are quickly obsolete. Just look at the iPhone, right? And things break or are replaced with newer, better versions.

Your possessions can be taken away from you. The first century Jew did not have a home security system. So robbing someone was easier back then than it is now.

[27 : 37] Maybe you have been robbed before, but even if you haven't been, you've lost things.

You've lost things that mean a great deal to you. One day you have it and the next it's just gone.

You don't know where it went. Your possessions, whether valuable or ordinary, are not safe. And it doesn't take much for the things you love to be taken from you.

In Jesus' time, one possession that was highly regarded by people was clothing. And back then, most people didn't have closets full of clothes like most of us do today. If someone had a closet with many garments, that person was rich, was considered rich.

And these garments were also not just for clothing. The coat you owned served as your blanket at night. But garments were easily destroyed.

not by fire or some other catastrophe, by little larva from a moth.

[28 : 43] These tiny insects would chew holes through your garments, rendering them completely useless. A fragile moth that can be easily crushed in your hand has the power to destroy your possessions for good.

You can own stock in a very successful business. But nowadays, it just takes one off-the-cuff phrase from the CEO that the public doesn't like and your investment plummets.

This world is a terrible investment opportunity. But there is another kingdom that it is worth investing in. Jesus says to have treasure in heaven that does not fail.

What does it mean to have your treasure in heaven? Again, I do not think it means you don't own anything here on earth. That's why Jesus does not use the word possessions to refer to what you store in heaven.

He uses the word treasure. Possessions and treasures are related to each other, but they are different. I'm sure God has blessed you with many possessions.

[29 : 58] If you were to invite me over to your home, I would see many of your things. But what things would you want most to show me?

what possessions would get you talking about them? What things, if broken, would cause you to feel a great sense of loss?

Those things are no mere possessions. They are treasures. You value them over everything else you have.

The kingdoms of this world, they store up earthly possessions. Those things are in fact their treasures. What they value most.

Their lives revolve around attaining these things. It's all that's on their minds. And they're not concerned about giving things away. They want more for themselves.

[30 : 59] And what do you do when you have something you value? You guard it. Right? You hold on tight to it. But the treasures of this world will be taken away.

You, by contrast, are told to let go of these things, to not hold tightly to them. Now when you treasure something, do you ever notice how you get very protective over it?

Perhaps you don't let anyone else hold it or use it because it means too much to you. Now, I want to be clear, it's fine to have things that mean a lot to us.

That's okay. Things that we might, in a sense, treasure here on earth. That's fine. I think what Jesus is getting at here is deeper.

God will provide you with what you need. But do not make those things your ultimate treasure.

[32 : 06] Hold them, but hold them lightly. Verse 34, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Remember that covetousness and anxiety are closely related. And why is that? Well, why do you get anxious about the things you need and want?

Why do you get anxious? Jesus explains here that it's because those things do happen to be, naturally, our treasures. What we value.

And if material things are your treasure, what will you do to get those things? You may begin to be anxious that you don't have enough, but then your heart quickly turns to spending its entire energy on attaining what you need.

Now, your heart is your very being, everything that you are. It's fine to hold certain things dear, but what happens to you if that thing is lost or destroyed?

[33 : 14] How great is the sorrow? How strong is the anger? Jesus warns against treasuring things to the extent that you don't possess them, but they possess you.

The kingdom of this world are possessed by the things of this world. Now, most of them are fine and good things, things that you have, things that you need, but the problem is not in the material thing itself.

the problem is the heart of the person who treasures those things over the will of God.

Jesus, in his parable of the sower, warns about the one who hears the gospel, yet doesn't believe because the cares of this world choke the word that was preached.

the kingdom of God is not concerned with attaining physical things. It is concerned with people's hearts.

[34 : 24] Remember Jesus' earlier teaching, you cannot serve both God and money or material things. So which will it be?

Will you be owned by this world, by things that make great promises, but have no return on investment? Will you store up treasure that you have today but is gone tomorrow? If you have heard the gospel and believed, Jesus says that you now possess another kingdom. Now let that kingdom possess you. Submit to God's will and authority. Serve him first. Now that may involve giving something away. It may not, but it might. Jesus is not focused solely on whether or not you give away physical things. Rather, he wants you to be so detached from those things with your heart enraptured with God and his plan for your life to where if the time does come where you have to give it up, you do. [35 : 33] we cannot do this in our own strength. We love our stuff. I love my stuff. Left to ourselves, we are hopeless.

Our hearts, we're honest with ourselves, love this world and what it offers. People need new hearts. We need new hearts. things. Remember, the whole purpose of Jesus' ministry on earth, it was to give you a new heart. It wasn't to take away your things, it was to give you a new heart. If you are in Christ, you are a new person, a person who longs for another kingdom. And if you don't feel like you long for another kingdom, one, you're in good company, but also remember these two things.

First, you're still in the flesh. Your flesh that loves this world is at war with your spirit that longs for Christ. This will continue until you see Jesus face to face.

[36 : 44] Second, you may not feel like you're different. That's okay. Why did you come here this morning? Perhaps you didn't want to.

Perhaps you didn't wake up just gearing, ready to go, to church. But you came. That was not you. That was God drawing you to worship him this morning.

Remember, you did not earn the kingdom. Your father has given the kingdom to you. It is a gift that you do not deserve. The kingdom of God is not your responsibility.

God's gift to you. And so, do not fear whether you will have this or that in your life on earth.

You've been set free from the harsh demands that your old master put on you. So do not hold fast to those things that cannot bring you eternal comfort and peace.

[37 : 48] Set your face upon your shepherd, your father, your king. He has rescued you from your sin. He has delivered you from constantly needing things in this life to be satisfied.

And you now obtain an eternal treasure. It's okay to have possessions, but remember, you have a better possession. His name is Jesus Christ.

He doesn't come to serve your earthly desires. He comes to give you Himself, so that all earthly desires eventually, by His grace, become completely meaningless to you, all so that you may gain Christ.

But don't take my word for it. Consider the Christians in the book of Hebrews, and we will end with this. The writer says this about those in the book of Hebrews.

You had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

[39 : 02] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we praise you, we thank you so much for giving us the kingdom, a kingdom that will never be shaken, a new and better country, a new and better one than this one we're in now.

Help us, Lord, to live as citizens of that kingdom, not trusting in our own power or ability to get what we need to get or to even please you, but trusting in your grace, trusting in what Christ has done for us, and giving us new hearts that love you.

Strengthen us, give us the grace to love you, and when we fail, forgive us. And we pray, Lord, that now as we continue our worship, you would be glorified and honored through it.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.