

Luke 12:22 - 31 (PM)

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[0 : 00] Well good evening, I want to add my welcome. My name is Aaron Roberts if you don't know me and I just want to start off by praying. Father would you open our hearts to receive your word this evening in Christ's name. Amen.

So as you know we're slowly going through this one chapter of Luke's gospel looking at these awesome words of Jesus. Jesus, the whole chapter of Luke 12 is loaded with Jesus saying do not be afraid.

He says a lot, do not be afraid, do not be afraid, do not fear, do not fear, do not fear. In every case the peace and the courage that God wants us to experience does not come down to us dipping into our own resources.

God doesn't say do not fear because you're pretty loaded, you've got lots of money. God doesn't say, Jesus doesn't say do not fear, do not be afraid because you have this really great plan for your life.

No, the freedom from worry that God wants us to have, it's to come from the knowledge that God is with us. So what does our passage tonight add to that?

[1 : 19] Let's dive into it. Luke 12, 22 to 31. So it talks about fear, but it talks about a certain type of fear. It talks about anxiety. It reminds you of verse 22.

Do not be anxious about your life. Do not be anxious about your life. Now, I wonder, how does that commandment from Jesus sit with you?

Of all the commandments of Christ, this I think is one of the hardest to obey. For some of you, you hear this and it doesn't help you at all.

In fact, it makes you feel guilty. So before you were just anxious, Jesus says, don't be anxious and know you're anxious and you feel bad about being anxious. You have a lot of trouble turning that anxiety off.

So I just want to say at the outset that the anxiety that Christ is talking about here, it's not the kind of anxiety that you might be thinking of.

[2 : 25] It's not the kind of anxiety that has a biological root. It's not the kind of anxiety that's rooted in trauma. Jesus is not saying that having anxiety disorder is sinful.

The anxiety Christ is talking about in verse 22 is the kind of anxiety that comes when your heart trusts in money. It trusts in your possessions.

It's when your heart trusts in things and those things above everything else in your life. And that's what the whole passage is about. Christ is talking about the kind of anxiety that comes when you base your security and your identity on fragile things.

Christ is talking about the kind of anxiety that comes when you base your security and your identity on your identity.

The ceiling of it, three of the four of those were rotten at the base. So I ended up having to rebuild the whole thing. Now, I could have just put down another floor.

[3 : 47] I could have maybe found some sort of piece of, you know, treated plywood or something and just put it on top. But I would have known that the foundation was a bit dodgy. And every time somebody stood on it or leaned on it, I would have been pretty anxious.

Big windstorm would have kept me up at night thinking the whole thing is going to come down. You build your life on fragile things. Of course, you're going to be anxious.

And this is the anxiety that Jesus is talking about tonight. Anxiety is a mental health issue. That's a whole other thing. Now, we know this because of the word, therefore, in verse 22.

Jesus says, therefore, do not be anxious about your life. And it, therefore, is referring back to the rich young fool from last week's passage who spent his whole life just wanting more, more, more,

more.

It was a dodgy foundation he built his life on. And he dies before he gets to enjoy any of it. So here's the big picture. Jesus says the rich young fool parable to the crowds.

[4 : 55] And then he says that, therefore, do not be anxious, but just to the disciples. And I think the subtext here is this. He pulls them aside and he says to them, listen, this is sort of like paraphrase.

I know you're anxious. Following me is this huge adventure. And I know you guys are worried about your safety. I know you're worried about your next meal. I know you're worried about just, you know, life stuff.

But don't be. Don't be anxious about those things. And then he explains how. How do we do that? That's a great question. How do we not be anxious about those things?

How does that happen? Well, Christ says you need three convictions. You need three foundational beliefs to address those worries.

Let's talk about them. The first foundation, the first conviction we must have is this. We matter to God. We're not on the peripheral of God's views, his ideas, his priorities.

[6 : 03] We matter to God. Now, some of you hear that, you know, and you're like, it just bounces off you. You're kind of, I don't really, I'm not feeling it.

I'm not thinking it. I'm not feeling it. And I think Jesus knew that a lot of us wouldn't feel that. We don't know what to do with those words. It's not our experience.

So what Jesus does is if we don't feel it for ourselves, we don't see it for ourselves, Christ, he points us to something we can see. That's very real to us.

He says, you know, you can see some birds. You can see flowers. You can see the grass. Think about those things. Consider the ravens.

They neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. How much more value are you than those birds? Consider the lilies.

[7 : 02] 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 thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you?

These are just such lovely words, aren't they? God takes joy in his creation. He cares for it. He lavishes his beauty and his creativity on his followers, on things, on his flowers, and on things that fade really quickly.

And if he does that, what's he going to do for you, for his children? Jesus is saying, if I can make sure that these birds can get themselves fed, I'm going to look after you.

If I can make sure lilies are clothed beautifully, you guys are going to be okay. I remember backpacking around Europe when I was a young man, and I was hiking through the Swiss Alps. And I randomly came across this, it wasn't a tourist place, it was a really small village in Switzerland, this field of wildflowers. And I remember it so vividly, it was absolutely stunning.

[8 : 21] And God did this. For his pleasure, he did this. And you worry about whether he's interested in you.

Christ says, if I can be bothered looking after grass that lives for a short time and then is burnt for heating afterwards, it's worth nothing, if I can be bothered looking after that, if I can take an interest in the tiniest piece of my creation, how much more am I going to care for you?

And then Jesus follows up these pictures with quite a full-on line. He says, oh, you of little faith. You of little faith. You see what he's saying there? Christ is saying, if we worry about these things, if we are overly, overly concerned about these things, it literally means divided.

If our hearts are divided and we put so much attention on that, Christ is saying to God, you can't be trusted with my life. That's what we're saying to God.

We're saying to God, I don't trust you to look after me. I don't trust you to look after me as a married man in a difficult marriage or as a single person that's struggling or as a wealthy person who feels guilty or as a poor person or I don't trust you to meet me in the madness of having all these kids or I don't trust you to meet me in my life without children.

[9 : 47] But we can trust him. We can because verse 30 reminds us he's our father. He's not just a force. He's not just positivity. God is not just this idea.

God is not a philosophy. He's our father. We matter to him. Don't be anxious about your life.

Your God is a father and not just any father. He's our heavenly father, which means he has infinite resources. He's not like earthly fathers either.

He's not broken. He's a heavenly father. He knows what you need. He knows what is in your best interests. You are never outside his care.

You are never outside the care or love of your heavenly father. A few months ago, one of my kids fell asleep on the drive home from somewhere. Still asleep. I picked them up.

[10:49] They're in their car seat. I unbuckled them from their car seat. I picked them up. I carried them inside. I put them to bed. They slept through the whole time. They slept through the night. They woke up safe, happy, had no idea.

I did any of that stuff. I was caring for them. They had no idea about it. God does that for us all the time. And again, you might not feel this for yourself.

But let me tell you, you have not been abandoned by God. You might not see it. But you know what you can see? You can see birds. And you can see flowers.

You can see grass. Consider those things. Consider how God cares for those things, loves them, pours his creativity and beauty in them.

He's got you. Your heavenly father has you. So don't worry. You matter to God. So that's the first conviction. More quickly now, don't worry because it's so unproductive.

[11:52] Look at verses 25 and 26. And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his lifespan? That can also be translated, can add like a single cubit to your height.

Verse 26. If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you so anxious about the rest? What's Jesus' point? His point is this. Worry does nothing for you.

It does nothing positive for you. It can't make you taller. It can't make you live any longer. Worry only subtracts. It steals from you. It steals your sleep.

It steals your courage. It can steal your obedience. It can steal your hope. It can tempt you to sin. It can tempt you to put your security in other things. Worry is very destructive.

It robs us of our joy. It steals our peace and our contentment. And these are all things your heavenly father wants to give you.

[12:53] There's nothing good for you. So that's a very simple and practical point Jesus makes. So don't be anxious about your life. Why? First conviction. Because you have a father in heaven and you matter to him greatly.

Secondly, he's got you. And secondly, don't be anxious about your life. Why? Because it's just, there's nothing for you. It just takes from you.

Finally, the last conviction, the last foil for anxiety is getting your priorities right. Let me read a few verses to you.

For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things. Your father knows that you need them.

Instead, here's the line here. Seek his kingdom. These things will be added to you. Christ says you want to worry less and exchange needs to happen.

[13:54] You need to exchange what you are preoccupied with for what God is preoccupied with. And let's admit it. Our attention is dominated by what we have and what we want more of.

It's dominated by what we don't have and what we would like more of. And that's, you know, money, status, power, sex, whatever these things are. And Jesus is, folks, you've got to, you want to worry less?

Care more about God's priorities than your own. Have you ever lost your phone? That's seeking, right?

That is, you want to define seeking? That's what we're talking about here. It's amazing the laser focus that happens when we are really seeking after something important to us.

Seek first the kingdom of God. And now what does that look like? Goodness, that's a whole, that's a million things. It's tenaciously pursuing God in relationship.

[14:56] It's putting to death sin in your life. It's always having the cross and the resurrection before you. It's bringing all your decisions to God. It's asking yourself, is what I'm about to do honoring of Christ?

It's living in others focused life. There's a few things. It means a lot more, but we've got to finish up. You want to worry less? Remember what Christ has said to us tonight.

You matter to your heavenly father. He's got your back. Secondly, remind yourself, worry does nothing for you.

And lastly, if your priorities are all about you, you're going to be anxious all the time. So, seek him first.
Amen.