

Why Worry?

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[0 : 00] Let's pray. Gracious God, as we come to this passage, we ask again that you would challenge us, you would convict us, you would clarify for us misunderstandings of what it is to be your disciple.

Father, these words from Jesus, which cut right to our heart, and we can explain away, and just by saying that he's using hyperbole, Lord, I pray that we might not do that.

Help us to hear the full weight of them, and Lord, to walk away from here, challenge to rethink the basic principles of our life, and we ask it for your sake. Amen.

So you're shopping in Chatswood Chase, you're walking through the stores, you're browsing a wide variety of items, and finally it happens.

Something catches your eye. You're excited by it. You hold it. And you know you want it. There is one final hurdle remaining.

[1 : 08] It's the price. So you reach down for the postage stamp size tag, dangling from the greatest treasure that you've ever seen, but now sits within your hands.

And this is it. It's the price tag moment. Number one. Numbers start to come into focus. Is it too much? 50% more than you'd guessed.

100% more than you can afford. 2,000% more than you need to spend on something like this. But still, you stand there making the decision to buy or not to buy.

And you ask yourself the all-important question, is it worth it? We face those price tag moments every day.

That is, we are consistently doing cost-benefit analysis, asking ourselves the question, is it worth it? It's because the society which we live in is a materialistic, consumer society, and we are forced to make those value judgments.

[2 : 15] We make our choices, one price tag moment after another. And of course, the price tag moment is different for us all. For one of us, \$100, spending \$100 on fabric is a no-brainer.

For some of us, it is a significant thing to spend \$100 on fabric. You ask kids, \$100 on lollies, no problem at all.

It's a great way to spend money. For others, it's ridiculous. You'd rather spend your \$100 on a shirt. And that's what makes Jesus' passage here for us so pertinent.

He's on his way to Jerusalem, as we know. He's on his way to Jerusalem to die. And along the way, he teaches his disciples, he tells them what they can expect if they're going to come and follow him.

That is, they're going to take up their cross and follow him. And in the process of what he does is he clears up their misconceptions of what it actually means to be his disciple. He talks about things like trust, conviction, singled-mindedness, persecution.

[3 : 24] And now he turns his attention to one of, if not the major, distraction for the Christian life. In fact, I think every scholar I read on the passage said this is the major, major distraction for the Christian life.

Jesus sets it up in a way that he sets up nothing else in the New Testament and that is greed, the disease of possessionitis. The issue is raised because a guy, you see it there in the passage, pick up your Bibles, Luke chapter 12 verse 13.

This guy calls out in the crowd and he says, teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But Jesus picks it up, he knows what's going on, he knows his brother, this guy doesn't want an arbiter between him and his brother.

He wants someone who's going to command his brother to cuff up the cash and give it to me. He gets a hint of greed and so he takes an opportunity to teach and he says, watch out.

Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. Watch out! It's like you're driving the car, you've been distracted for a moment, you're looking over there and your passenger says, watch out because you're driving straight over pedestrian crossing and someone's walking in front of your car.

[4 : 48] It's that kind of watch out! Danger! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. You see, what Jesus does into this greed-ridden consumer world, he comes with his own price tag moment, his own price tag question and this is it.

In Luke chapter 9 verse 25, what good is it for a person to gain the whole world and yet forfeit their soul? That's Jesus' price tag question.

Greed affects us all in one way or another. The difficult thing for us is that greed in the society in which we live is a huge blind spot and I think for us therefore it's the most socially acceptable sin in our culture.

We don't see it as big as it is but it's the one thing that probably more than anything else I think what Jesus would be saying here that would be sucking the life out of spiritual integrity consistently. It was American millionaire Malcolm Forbes who coined the famous phrase he who dies with the most toys wins and this is the philosophy that most of us live by and so here again comes the voice of Jesus and this time to the person who thinks that their security and meaning comes from building bigger and bigger barns who thinks that life is about getting as much as you possibly can and this is Jesus price tag moment you fool this very night your life will be demanded from you you fool can you imagine getting to the end of your life and instead of hearing well done good and faithful servant you hear the words from King Jesus you fool you fool you've read the price tag moment all wrong he who dies with the most toys still dies like everyone else and will still stand before the judgment throne of God like everyone else and he will put a huge zero value against all the things that you've spent your life chasing you fool this passage here is a passage to challenge us to take again a look at the price tag and to work out what is really worth treasuring and that's the bottom line here the bottom line here is not valuing the things of eternity enough that's the danger and valuing the things of this world too highly on the surface though you could say this guy has made some wide choices he's made some good investments even he has a bumper crop and rather than wasting it he makes more and more storage space seems like a reasonable thing to do that's because that's what we do so it seems reasonable whereas what

[7 : 55] Jesus is saying is that that bumper crop is a gift from God and you've stored it for yourself the rationale his philosophy of life his desires and his attitude that lie behind his decision to build bigger and bigger barns are there consistently if you read through the passage you notice things like my crops my barns my grain my goods myself me me me I I I self interest in making it self security in having it and now he has plenty to retire on and spend the rest of his life in self indulgent ease and he says here I will take life easy and eat and drink and be merry but Jesus says he's read the price tag all wrong and he joins the dead and the departed and he has made no provision for eternity and Jesus says you fool you fool his contentment is in what he thinks he can control his investments but God says to him in verse 12 verse 20 you fool this night this very night your life will be demanded of you in other words and hear this if a person finds his income rising and rising and instead of funneling that increase into kingdom ministry and for the poor instead of doing that they buy more of and bigger and bigger things to increase their ease and to build their security like this rich man then God will call that person a fool and take away their life did you hear that did you hear the warning from

Jesus lips it's what I love about John Wesley John Wesley when he first started his ministry life got paid 28 pounds a year he learnt to live on 26 pounds gave 2 pounds away as his ministry grew and his income increased from position to position he learnt he eventually got paid 40 pounds a year he learnt to live on 26 pounds a year and gave the rest away eventually he got paid 80 pounds a year he learnt to live on 26 pounds a year and gave the rest away greed is a distraction for everyone not just the rich people are convinced that more money will solve their problems meet every longing in their life will give them the security it motivates us to earn more than we need to own more than we can use and yet still somehow to ache for more and more and more is because of greed that we consistently muck up the price tag moment day after day not just the little decisions but the biggest one of all we swap the creator of the universe and find our satisfaction in the created things and that is why

Jesus warning against greed in the Bible New Testament in the Gospels is so strong again and again and again what profit is it he asks watch out he calls you fool he rebukes and he says things like no one can serve both God and money no one not just most of us won't be able to do it but no one will be able to do it and so if we're not going to pursue material things then how do we deal with our physical needs and the answer in this passage as it is with the rest of the Bible is trust God do not worry that's that's the main gist of this next section verse 22 therefore I tell you do not worry about your life what you will eat about your body what you will wear again in verse 29 and 31 do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink do not worry about such things for the pagan world runs after all such things and your father knows you need them you see what Jesus says here is that he calls us as his disciples a radical re-changing value to actually look at the price tags and he says to stop things seeking and go for kingdom seeking stop things seeking and go for kingdom seeking and to do it without anxiety for not having things he calls us to be different from the rest of the world he says do not set your heart on what you will eat or what you'll drink because the pagan world runs after all such things to be different from the rest of the world the followers of Jesus replace thing seeking for kingdom seeking they leave the financial success of their ventures with God as they focus on the spiritual payoff the righteousness payoff the mercy payoff the Christ exalting payoff not the money payoff the basis of this fearlessness in the face of anxiety is a single minded focus on the kingdom of God in all that we do is that God's promise is to us that he will be there for us verse 30 our father knows that we need them all he knows it and he'll provide for it do not worry it is the constant attitude of the disciple of Jesus what Jesus does is he turns our value on its head he puts the creation order back in its right order instead of serving the created order instead of serving material needs

Jesus says that the focus should be on relationship the deepest dimensions of our life should be relationship with God and relationship with others in other words as it says in verse 23 life is more than food and the body more than clothes it's what we saw a couple of weeks ago with the parable of the good Samaritan real life has to do with relationships and what Jesus is saying is that if we pursue material gain then we will never ever be able to be the good Samaritan we will never ever be in a position to think that I can give up my time my money my energy to be a good Samaritan because this material gain is primary living is more than having it is being in relationship with God and relating well to others and so Jesus mentioned a few reasons why we shouldn't worry in this section verse 25 he says who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life since you cannot do this very little thing it's amazing

[15:27] Jesus says even adding an hour to my life is a very little thing why do his advice here is both logical and practical worry all you like you're not going to be able to change a thing when I was a teenager I was worried about getting bald Ashley and Martin weren't doing much air time back in those days and what Jesus is saying here what's the point worry about it in fact worrying about it probably make life fall out anyway in fact I think there should be a general health warning attached to worry and stress and anxiety may actually reduce the length of your life rather than increase it what he's saying is wasted energy but I think he's saying more than that it's more than just wasted energy it's actually an approach to life it's actually an approach to life the reason why we shouldn't worry about the things of our

God is good merciful trustworthy and has made promises he's made promises to provide I don't think it's a mistake here that Jesus refers to God in verse 30 and verse 32 in this passage as their father and in verse 32 he refers to the disciples as the little flock I don't think that's a mistake the picture here is of a God who is a tender carer and provider for easily frightened fragile sheep and so the promise is to give everything of the kingdom to his fragile sheep his disciples in a world where we are fragile sheep amongst ravenous wolves the promise here of God is that he will provide for us God will graciously mercifully lovingly give us everything that we need to fulfill his purposes for us now in case you didn't get that last bit let me just emphasize it his purposes for us he will give us everything we need to fulfill his purposes for us the basis of fearlessness is not our human resources but

God being there for us don't fear even though we are sheep amongst ravenous wolves and even though we are little and they are great but remember the basis of your fearlessness is you have a father who owns and who runs the world and really really really loves giving everything of the kingdom to his sheep like but did you notice what the threat is in verse 32 you notice there's a threat here that in verse 32 leads Jesus to say fear not little flock and what's the threat in the context of the

scriptures here what is the threat there's two you can go backwards you can go forwards if you go backwards a few verses the thing that they are in danger of fearing is the call to no longer be like the nations who seek things and who build bigger barns that's the threat that's the fear for us not to be like them if if we actually focus on the kingdom and stop pursuing things and ease and security the big question that comes in our mind is will

I actually be happy will I actually survive and to this Jesus says fear not little flock don't be afraid to stop seeking things fear not or if you go forward in the context into verse 33 the thing that they are in danger of fearing is giving things away verse 33 fear not little flock sell your possessions and give to the poor so if you go backwards a few verses the fear is not seeking the things the way the nations do and if you go forward a few verses it's not fearing giving away the things that you own unlike what the nations do seeking the kingdom in verse 31 includes both of those things stopping something we stop doing and something we start doing we stop focusing on our quest on things and we start selling what we don't need and turning our stockpile of resources into ministries of kingdom bringing love that's the call just let that filter down for a moment

Jesus knows that this passage as it does for me and frankly as I look on your faces as it does for you strikes fear in our very hearts he knows it strikes fear in our hearts fear not fear in our hearts fear in us that God's will for us for you for me might be a lifestyle for the very one that I'm currently striving to pursue right now right now and that strikes fear in your heart Jesus knows it's a fearful message and so he says fear not little flock it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom to give you the kingdom the pathway to the kingdom is the path of falling in love with Jesus King [21 : 45] Jesus treasuring King Jesus trusting our heavenly father falling out of love with the things of this world and taking on a wartime lifestyle that maximizes all income for the cause of this kingdom and he says fear not little flock he knows it's a tough call and since this is the pathway that leads to the kingdom and since Jesus says our father will give us the kingdom then we can be assured of his goodness his provision his mercy as we walk that path therefore do not be anxious and do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink or wear Jesus is calling us not to waste our life to seek first his kingdom to have different priorities from the non-Christian world to have our security tied up in him relationship with him not our superannuation not our education not our inheritance not our job not our reputation nothing but the gracious provide

God as we seek his kingdom and his righteousness we are to pursue relationship with God we are to pursue his will for our lives we are to pursue the evidence of his rule in our lives we are to pursue God's kingdom it is to pursue his righteousness and as we do that as we pursue righteousness we will never lack anything we need in order to pursue righteousness he is talking here about the very basic approach to life that we have are we anxious and lacking trust in God constantly trying to gain control over the things that we do not have control over as of two months ago I thought I had control over my dual cab Hilux I really did and that changed in a twinkling of an eye do not put your trust Jesus says in this passage in the things where moth will destroy eat and destroy where rust will destroy where thieves will break in and steal or the New South Wales police will put on the back of a truck do not trust in those things he says we trust in the God the gracious provider and concentrate our lives on God honoring relationships by pursuing righteousness and serving others with our resources the two things that tell us the answers to that question whether or not I am pursuing kingdom mindedness kingdom mindedness is my heart and my wallet verse 34 for where your treasure is there your heart will be also our heart tells us if we are anxious and our wallet tells us if we are generous and both tell us whether we treasure

Jesus more than anything else and value what he values regard important what he regards as important and both of them tell us whether we got the price tag moment right and we actually treasure Jesus more than anything want to remember