

Do Not Worry - Be Ready

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[0 : 00] A little to the chapter we read in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 12. And looking at that section that we read from verse 22 to 40, I'm not going to read it again, but that section, which is really divided into two parts, although it's all part of the thing, one is saying do not be anxious and the second section is saying that you must be ready.

So Jesus says to his disciples, therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.

For life is more than food and the body more than raiment. And then in verse 35, stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Anxiety is very much a feature of the day in which we live. And of course there are different levels of anxiety. And I'm sure that all people at one time or another find that anxiety is part of their life, that they're anxious about things.

And I don't for one moment believe that Jesus is here saying that we should never, ever, ever be anxious about anything within our lives. That's impossible because if supposing loved ones are ill and you cannot help but being anxious about them, there are loads of things that will cause an element of worry and anxiety within life.

[1 : 37] But that's not the point that Jesus is making here. It is this unnecessary, undue anxiety that can govern our life, where we become really uptight and anxious about things which Jesus is saying we shouldn't be anxious about.

That by doing so that we lose sight really of who God is, lose sight of his provision for us, of his promises to us. Now, worry and anxiety are actually very destructive in their nature.

And I'm sure we're all aware of that. If there have been times when we have been anxious, it has an impact upon us. And indeed, the very word for anxiety, here this word means to be torn apart.

And the word that we get our English word worry from means to strangle. So when you take these two concepts together, anxiety and worry, you see that it is something that tears apart and strangles.

And you can almost identify to a certain extent with what these words are saying and the impact within our own lives. But Jesus is saying that anxiety really, it blinds us to the awesome wonder of this creation and the God who has created everything and is ruling over it.

[3 : 09] Because when we're crippled by anxieties, unnecessary anxieties, where anxiety just takes over our life, we're failing to see the world that we're living in that was made by God and is ruled by God.

And that is part of what Jesus is really talking about when he goes on in here. And ultimately, he is saying that when we become overanxious about the everyday things of life, it is a lack of faith.

And he says that in verse 28. But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you? Oh, you of little faith.

And in verse 30, he goes on to show that our Heavenly Father knows that we need these things. So, in the first part here, Jesus uses two very simple arguments to show us how God is providing, that God will care for us, that God will provide for us, and why we shouldn't be anxious.

Now, I suppose the day that we're living in, we have become geared, I suppose this is a way that society has now worked, that we aren't simply looking for the essentials in life, that we're not looking simply for food to eat, and for something to drink, and for clothing, and for somewhere to live.

[4 : 37] We have become so accustomed, where we are now, to have what we might term, the luxuries of life, where we have many extras in life.

And while these are blessings from God, God has never promised that that is what we will have by right. But He has promised that He will meet the necessities, that He will meet the needs of His people.

And there's a difference between these two. Now, that doesn't mean that the Lord doesn't prosper. And, in fact, when you go to the likes of Deuteronomy chapter 28, when God's people were going into the land of promise, God had said to them very clearly, if you walk in My ways, and if you follow in My footsteps, and if you obey the commands that I give you, He says, the blessings of prosperity, the blessings spiritually and temporally, will overtake you.

It's an amazing word. In other words, you can't prevent them coming. If you walk with Me, and do as I say, then these blessings will overtake you.

They will come upon you. God would see to it. But then He also said, if you turn away from Me, then the very reverse will happen.

[6 : 05] Then you cannot prevent My curses coming upon you. So, it was both wonderful to read, and it's frightening to read what God is saying. But it just shows us, and if God pleases to prosper, if we live at a time when God pleases to prosper, then we've always got to acknowledge Him.

Because God gave it again when His people were going into the land, He said to them, Beware! When you get on, and when you build houses, and when things multiply, and you are being prospered, beware that you forget not the Lord your God.

For it is God who gives you. God who gives you. God who gives you the ability, the power, to get whatever you've got. And so we've always got to remember that.

If God blesses us, make sure that we thank Him. And sometimes, and I'm sure we have to admit that, that in the previous generations, when our forebears didn't have, in the way that we have today, they probably, many of them lived closer to the Lord, because they lived in a dependence upon God, that maybe we've lost.

So we have to make sure that we ask God for the grace, that irrespective of how things are, whether He's prospering us, with extras or not, that we live in dependence upon Him, acknowledging Him at all times.

[7 : 33] But with regard to the actual provision of our necessities in life, for the things, the basic things for sustaining us, God will provide.

And Jesus uses two arguments to show us that. And the first really is, He's arguing, really, from the greater to the lesser.

And God is saying, Jesus is saying, your life has been given by God. God made you. God appointed the day of your birth.

God is the one who has ordered your existence in this very world. And this is, if God has made you and brought you into being and ordered your existence in this world, surely, if He's done the greatest thing of all of bringing you into this world, surely then, He's going to do the lesser thing of being able to sustain you in this world.

It's kind of the same argument that Paul uses with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. That if God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not in Him freely give us all things?

[8 : 56] So if God has done the greatest thing in giving us Jesus, surely then, He's going to continue to provide spiritually for all our needs.

It's that same kind of idea. So, again, Jesus is saying here, and there's different, it's translated differently, the different versions have it, maybe differently, but here it is talking about which of you being able, anxious, can add a single hour to a span of life.

some have it translated as adding, a cubit adding height on. So, the translator should have been doing difficulty with this as to whether it was talking about height, this addition of height, or addition of length of days.

Either way, you and I can't do either. We can't make ourselves taller. I remember when I was growing up, and I was, I was the same height as I am when I was 12. So I've got a photo, an old football team, and I was taller than, and then later on, everybody shot up.

And I stayed the same. And I used to say, oh, I want to grow taller. But you can't. With the best will in the world, you can't make yourself grow taller. And you can't make yourself live longer.

[10 : 17] There is a day appointed for your birth, and there's a day appointed for your death. And you and I can't do anything about that. With the best will in the world, with the best team of doctors around us, with everything, that day of appointment is there.

And we cannot, some of the great, the great dictators in this world have tried to make themselves live longer. They can't. You can have all the money in the world, all the power in the world, all the authority in the world.

You cannot add a single day to the length of your life. That is God's appointment. So this is, this is, what, what, Jesus is saying, that, if God is the one who has all this in control, then surely, surely he's the one who's going to provide for you.

That's what, that's what he says. If, if, if you're not able to do a small thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? You can't make yourself taller, you can't make your life longer.

So why, why not just hand everything over to the God who is in control of your height, in control of the length of your days, who's in control of everything.

[11 : 31] He brought you into being, he will provide for you. And there are plenty of verses in scripture which tell of how he will meet our needs.

And then Jesus argues then from the lesser to the greater. Jesus tells us to look at the birds. that's what he, what he says. In fact, to look both at the birds and to look at, at, at the, the, the lilies of the field.

And when he says consider, it says, it isn't just like a passing glance but look, consider the lilies. Consider the, the lilies and, and consider the, verse 24, consider the ravens and then 27, consider the lilies.

Now, these, these are little things. A raven, small bird, well, it's quite a big bird, a scavenging bird.

The lily, again, the lily. But, the point that Jesus is making is, God is in control of all these.

You look at the lilies and Jesus says, they are actually so beautifully made that even Solomon, who was not only the wisest king but the richest king because he had wealth and splendor that was unparalleled.

[12 : 48] People came from near and far not only to hear what he had to say but to see the temple that he built was, Solomon's temple was just the most amazed, one of the great wonders in the world really.

And, yet, Jesus is saying, however wonderful all that was and all the glory of Solomon, the lily that God has made surpasses it in actual, in actual one.

And it is amazing when you actually just study, when you study God's creation at different levels.

It's amazing. And you see the handiwork and the beauty, that was part of the wonder of creation.

It was, not only was creation there in the sense of providing for our needs but also for our aesthetic needs so that there was beauty in it.

It was mentioned that it was good to look at. And that's what God has done as creation. It's marvelous. And we should never say, oh, it's not right to, shouldn't admire the creation, admire photos of.

[14 : 01] Yes, we should. As long as we give glory to the God who made it all. And we should. We should recognize his handiwork, the marrow of it, the wonder, the intricacy.

And it's the same with these birds. As we say, scavenging birds, but God feeds them. That's what it says. Consider the ravens.

They neither sow nor reap. They have neither storehouse nor barn and yet God feeds them. God gives them the ability to find food. He provides for them.

And so, if he does that for the ravens, then how much more is he going to do that for us? And God provides for us. God gives us the ability to do, to get, to have, to provide for our homes, for our families, for all these things.

And that is why when we sit down to eat, we give thanks. It's a very simple thing, but it's such an essential thing to give God thanks.

[15 : 03] we are recognizing that God is the one who gives. And you know, it's, I've got a friend who's, who's, was working in the, in the oil industry for years and years in, in Britain and all around.

But he's now married in America and he was seeing an incredible difference between working here and working there. He said, I always said, it didn't matter what rig he was on, where he was, I always said grace, he said.

But sometimes I was the only person that I could see that would say grace. He said, now where I'm working and there's 300 men, he said, there's only half a dozen that won't say grace. And that, that, that shows an incredible, he said, I didn't realize how far as a country we have moved away from God in the simplest things of just giving thanks for the food before us.

But we should, it's something that we should, we should all be doing just to thank God. Now people, there are critics who will say, well, if, if God is promising to supply the basics for people throughout his own creation, throughout the world, why are so many people in the world starving today? People will say that. Well, that charge cannot be laid at the door of God. There is more than sufficient food and provision for food and drink to feed this whole world where the problems lie are in corrupt governments in where there has been a total abuse of power and you can go through some of the nations of this world that have been actually rich in resources and leaders have completely corrupted and exploited and through the ravages of wars that should never be and through all these things it is through sin, through the outworking of sin in society that we see that there are so many places that are actually in need today.

[17 : 11] But if, if there was an equitable distribution of all that the resources that is in the world there would be provision made for everyone so that the charge can never ever be laid against the Lord.

The people will say that but it's not, it's sinful hearts that have caused all these problems. But Jesus tells us that the great, the most important thing that we do is stop worrying about these things. He says, your heavenly father will provide, right? But he says, what is most important is seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you because see, see what he's saying here.

He says, why, why do, it's almost like Jesus is bemused by this 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 and your father knows that you need them.

So in other words, Jesus is saying other nations, they're worried, they have their, their worries and their anxieties because they're not trusting in the heavenly father. but you are.

[18 : 22] And so our duty is first and foremost and this is the beauty that if we seek first the kingdom of God, if this is our priority in life, if we're looking to the Lord first and foremost, the Lord says, you do that and I'll look after the other things.

It's a wonderful thing and when God promises something, he will do it. Trust him so that we put the Lord first and foremost and he will see to it that all the other things are added to us as well.

And Jesus, of course, we see how tenderly he speaks as well because he says, fear not little flock for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Little flock. See, God has given this little flock the shepherd and that's what Jesus is doing. He's the shepherd of the little flock. We're part of this little flock and he is the shepherd who feeds us both spiritually and physically.

He's the shepherd who leads us, the shepherd who provides for us all the time and this is part of God's great purposes for us. And Jesus then gives a very strong test for ourselves to know exactly where we are.

[19 : 41] When he says, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Then he says this, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

That's the acid test. Where is my heart? Where is my chief desire? What is it that occupies my thinking more than anything else?

Do I think about the Lord and who I am in relation to him? Or is it just now and again or am I taken up with other things? Because the Lord is saying, your heart will reveal where your treasure really is.

And also remember that if we're centered in the kingdom of God and his righteousness, then our treasure is in a place where neither moth nor thief can reach through or corrupt.

it is absolutely safe. And then Jesus warns us against being taken over by the world.

[20 : 46] So we must guard against these things. So we're not to be anxious, but we're also, just very briefly, we must be ready. And Jesus is speaking here about another motive for not getting caught up in the things of the world.

it's this, Jesus is coming back and he's coming back suddenly. Now, I would imagine that this would have been quite difficult for the disciples to get hold of because you put yourself in the shoes of Peter and James and John and the other disciples.

And Jesus is saying this, that he's coming back suddenly. And they must be saying to themselves, I don't understand. You've just come.

You're here. So how do you come back suddenly? Because at that point, they hadn't grasped although Jesus would be telling them along the way. They weren't grasping. They weren't grasping about his death, though he told them. He wasn't grasping about his going to rise again from the dead. So they hadn't, at this point, they wouldn't be grasping.

[21 : 52] So I would imagine it would be quite hard for them at that particular point to understand, although they would understand later. And we've always got to say, it's the same for ourselves.

There are things sometimes we read and we don't grasp. And it may be along in the Christian journey or through something and we say, ah, do you know something? I understand that now. I never, I used to hear it, I read about it, but I never, I couldn't get hold of it, but now I understand it. Sometimes it's through deep experiences that the Lord will send through the Spirit, His light will open up some truth that you had never really, yes, you believed it, but you had never really grasped it.

And all of a sudden, you say, oh, now I get it. Well, that would have been through so much in the experience of the disciples. It's like when John went into the empty tomb, it tells us he believed. In other words, it was this moment of clarity that everything that Jesus had said, that he hadn't, he accepted the word of Jesus, but he hadn't been able to lay hold, and then all of a sudden, there's this moment of real clarity and understanding.

[23 : 06] And it's wonderful when these things happen in our Christian experience. But Jesus is here telling us that he's going to come back, and he's going to come back suddenly. And he tells us that we are to be dressed for action.

In other words, you and I are to be ready as if we were going to go on a journey. Like Israel where when they ate the Passover, Israel didn't eat the Passover lounging about or stretched out. They ate the Passover dressed, ready for going, ready for action. That's how it was. And Jesus is saying, that's the way you're to live.

Because I'm going to return all of a sudden. And I want you to be ready. Because when I return, I'm going to call you with me. And I want you to be ready to come.

That's how it's got to be. And so, there's this sense of urgency, this sense of alertness, this sense of being awake and watching. Jesus is emphasizing that so much throughout his ministry.

[24 : 10] Watch and be ready. You'll find it quite often in the Gospels. Jesus turns to his people and he says, watch and be ready. Because you don't know when I'm coming back. And he also says, keep your lamps burning.

And I believe very simply that that means don't just be ready a day with your all dressed for action. Your lamps burning is be ready at night as well.

Be ready for my return. And whether it is the Lord returning or whether he returns in the sense of calling for you, you be ready. Because a lot of his people are taken through the night.

Remember as children used to be taught the prayer, as I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray thee Lord my soul to take.

And that is where we want to be ready. Ready so that the lamp is burning at night. So that if he calls and comes for us in the night that we are ready. And Jesus shows that it's like the bridegroom coming from the feast.

[25 : 19] Now back at that time a wedding feast could last a week. So nobody knew the servants didn't know in the house at what point the bridegroom would arrive.

They had to be ready and they had to be waiting so that they could open the door. And Jesus is saying the same as a heavenly bridegroom he's going to return. And he's looking for his servants, in other words his people, to be ready for that return.

Because you don't know when it's going to be I've heard it described in sort of a more modern day description of like how people sometimes get babysitters the parents of the little child the little baby they're out.

And when the parents come back to the house they expect that the babysitter has kept everything in order and has looked after the baby so the parents expect to go in and they expect to find the house in order and the baby safe and sound.

And there would be nothing worse for a babysitter if a babysitter says oh they're going to be away for age I'm going to throw a little party and invite people in and all of a sudden the parents come back to the house the shame everything in chaos and turmoil discovered in this way and that's what Jesus is saying he said when I come back I expect my servants to be watching and to be waiting to

be ready for my return because he also highlights that he's going to come suddenly and he likens it elsewhere he has said coming like a thief in the night and the success of thieves is usually their surprise attack because they hit when people don't expect if you knew that a thief was going to come to your house on a particular night you'd be waiting up all night you'd be on guard all night but the successful strategy of the thief is that they will hit when you don't expect so Jesus is saying [27 : 26] I don't want you to be caught out I want you to be ready and I want you to be waiting when I return but you notice something absolutely amazing in verses 37 Jesus says blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes and notice what Jesus is going to do I find this extraordinary truly I say to you he will dress himself for service now here's the bridegroom here's the bridegroom coming back he takes off the clothes of the groom and he puts on the clothes of a servant and he's going to serve his people have them recline at the table and he will come and serve them no wonder it says blessed that's an extraordinary picture of what Jesus is going to do for his people that he's actually going to serve them so our suffering servant will still continue with his service role even although he's a great leader he will continue to be our shepherd in glory forever he will continue to be our to be serving us as he's serving us here and yet he'll still be the altogether glorious king the shepherd king and it's quite extraordinary so no wonder

Jesus says to those who enter in enter into the joy of the Lord so here we have the importance of being ready and as we come to the end of another year and the Lord has spared you and me to this point as we all know within our families we lose loved ones as time goes but we ask the Lord to help us to live in a way where we will be ready for his coming and of course the first way is by accepting him as our Lord we have to that's a given that's the first point and when we just when we ask the Lord Jesus to come into our heart into our life to be Lord to be master to be king to be ruler to be shepherd then that's a prayer he never turns away from and once we have that then that we will live waiting for his return because he's going to come and he's going to come suddenly let us pray oh Lord we pray that we might indeed be found like what is described there dressed ready for action and our lamps burning oh forgive us

Lord for when we're not and we pray that as we carry on day by day living with you that we may do so focused upon you and that our hearts might be right with you deliver us oh Lord from who we are ourselves and help us to become more and more like you watch over us we pray and take us all to our home safely and ask that you will do us good and cleanse us we pray from our every sin in Jesus name we ask it Amen we're going to conclude singing in the 98th Psalm Psalm number 98 it's knock around Psalm 98 and the last two verses

Paulina Turchi Mour in Bos ■■■n Psalms■ T acknowledged conspiracy it's like in Ne■■■ B parfait B Bundes at Come long shake me Come long shake me You will always be Who will always be Let this Lord fall

Good help of the us my yeah yeah Thank you.

[33 : 36] Thank you.

Thank you.