**Luke 12:22-34 August 7, 2022**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text for this morning comes from our Gospel lesson, Luke chapter 12 here re-reading these words. “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, O you of little faith! 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 you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and all these things will be added to you.” This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It’s a fun game I play sometimes to test my memory, and I must admit I enjoy asking this same question to confirmation students to help wipe their minds before they answer a question or say memory work. I ask them what they ate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It’s a very simple concept you just start with yesterday and see how far back you can go. If you’ve never tried it or thought about it before you’ll find it’s not as easy as you may think. I’m guessing for some of us we may find it hard to even remember what we ate, yesterday, and it would be near impossible to remember even a week ago what we ate or even what clothes we wore. Now don’t feel bad if you can’t remember these things, it’s just a sign that our lives keep going, and that the worries of today are quickly replaced by the worries of tomorrow. Anxiety stacking up on anxiety, a constant moving train as we continue to chug through our lives here in this busy and worrisome world. Jesus says in our Gospel lesson. “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.” Well that sounds easy on the surface, but we all worry. It’s in our sinful nature to worry, or a better word for anxiety and worry is really fear. To fear the unknown in our lives, to fear the unexpected, to fear the future or even worry about the events of the past. It’s a part of us and our lives, but here Jesus makes the case, that worry is as meaningless as the work of the rich fool who finally set himself up perfectly on earth, only for his soul to be taken from him. That worry is meaningless in that through worry we can’t accomplish anything important. And that ultimately worry is a fear of where we are going or what we will experience, which is something that we should know and trust in a concrete way, after all, we are told to have no fear, little flock, for it is our Father’s good pleasure, to give us the kingdom.

So what are you worrying about? I doubt it’s what you ate yesterday. What are the worries of our world? Just last week were primary elections, other elections obviously are on the way the rest of this year. What about inflation? Increased tensions with China seemed to be in the news this week, and of course the ongoing war in Ukraine which has been going on for months. What do you worry about? Larger global threats and problems or things in your own personal life? Are you worried about your family? Your friends? Yourself? Your spouse or children? Your job? Your retirement savings? Your vehicle? Or is it easiest to just say, you’re worried about your life? As you can guess in a lot of these described instances the worry is usually attributed to the fear of those things changing, or the fear that those things will be taken from you in one way or another. It’s a focus and fear on the kingdom not of God but of this world. Our own personal kingdoms of possessions and people that we have around us. Even a worry about a national problem or event is a fear for ourselves and how it will affect us. Jesus phrases it very personally in all of His examples from Luke 12. He’s telling them not to be anxious about *their* lives, what *they* will eat, what *they* will wear. He makes it personal, because usually at the end of the day, we’re the most worried about ourselves.

We worry about our kingdoms, rather than rejoice in the kingdom to come. It’s found not just here in Luke but also when we look at the trials that Abram was facing in our Old Testament lesson. While He was happy to hear from God that His reward was going to be great, and He was greeted with a similar message to what Jesus says here in Luke with “Fear Not” Abram is focused on the earthly worries and cares of his inheritance and kingdom. Yes God, all of this rewarding and blessing is great and all, but there’s one little problem, I continue childless, and the heir of my house is going to be Eliezer of Damascus, one who isn’t even a member of my household. Abram sounds far from someone who is fearless, but rather someone who is focused on what will happen to his bloodline after he’s gone. God richly provides from Abram as we know, giving him a child miraculously through his wife Sarah who was past the age of childbirth, a notion that was so ridiculous that when she heard it was going to happen she laughed. The writer of the Hebrews goes on to list Abram and Sarah and their works as being done by faith, showing them off as examples of faithfulness. God backs up his imperative command to Abram to “Fear Not” by actively working in His life to bring about the blessings that He had promised, through miraculous means.

How easy it would be for me to stand in front of you this morning and tell you to pray harder, give more, or praise louder at God’s altar and He will bless you in a similar way. How easy it would for me to alleviate your worries and anxiety by pointing to the relief of those fears coming from yourself and what you do rather than what God does for you. But sadly after you tried harder, did more, gave more and prayed harder, ultimately your worries, anxiety and fear would return, because you can’t alleviate your sinful condition. None of us can. “And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?” It’s simple really. We worry about ourselves, but we can’t alleviate that worry. We create the problem, but we can’t accomplish the solution. It’s true many times we’ll feel that we can through our own efforts, and no one in this world that we live in will tell us otherwise. We will be promised salvation from every worry and care in ourselves and our own actions and effort but ultimately that work is tainted with sin. And we aren’t all powerful. Abram couldn’t produce an heir for himself no matter how hard he tried, it was God who intervened and worked the miracle of Isaac in Abram and Sarah’s life. We too have worries and cares, anxiety and trouble here in this world, but we aren’t the all-powerful masters of the universe and ultimately our days are just like the grass that is so beautifully arrayed by God our heavenly Father. “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, O you of little faith!”

In this Jesus gives us the wakeup call, the moment of harsh reality that we have to be smacked with and reminded of each and every day of our lives of worry. This is not our kingdom. This is not the final resolution of all of Jesus Christ’s work here on Earth and His ministry to these disciples. This is not all that matters in our lives of toil and work, as a matter of fact, everything that we work for and accumulate here on Earth at the end of time and at the end of the day is; meaningless. It’s perishable. It’s not part of the true Kingdom of God. A Kingdom that we can’t earn for ourselves any more than we can destroy or alleviate our own worries here on Earth. We instead look toward the Kingdom that we have the sure hope and confidence in because of God our heavenly Father. “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Again, it sounds so simple doesn’t it? “Fear Not” “Do not worry about your life, do not worry about your food, or elections, or wars, or your job, or your friend, your family, your money, house, car, children, even your earthly life.” “Fear Not” O child of God, and know with certainty that the worries of this world are heard by Your Lord and Savior, who loved you so much, that even from the cross He reached out in love to both his family and enemies alike. “Mother here is your child” “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” “Fear Not” for the kingdom, has been given, to you.

The kingdom is yours, the everlasting kingdom promised to Abram that He received on account of the work of God himself by sending His Son to die in the place of the entire world. The kingdom is yours, not on account of your own efforts or actions but solely because of the grace of God, the undeserved love of the all-powerful creator, the one who adopted you into his family, the one who loves you, cares for you, provides for you every day, has blessed you with everyone around you, everything around you, the intellect, talents and abilities that you have and has even blessed you with the work and toil that you get to do in thanksgiving to him for this gift. That’s why Jesus says “sell your possessions, give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old.” Everything that quantifies or counts as success and power, the things that help to take away our worries in building up our own kingdom and keeps our focus on building up storehouses and barns of our own wealth here on Earth must fall in comparison to the treasures that await us in heaven. It’s all meaningless in comparison to the everlasting life that has been won for us by Jesus Christ on the cross. So get rid of it Jesus says, give it away, help those less fortunate, see your lives through the lens of the salvation You have in the work of God rather than through the worry, care, and fear of a world that says “try harder and do more.”

So again I ask you, what are you worried about? The earthly cares and worries of this world will not pass away until the Lord comes and takes us to be with him, but in the fear of our lives of sin here on Earth, find comfort and joy in the fact that your treasure is in heaven, “where no thief approaches, where no moth destroys” and where your Father waits to give you the kingdom and welcome you with joy.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.