

Anxiety-Free living, Part 2

Luke 12:22-35

Last week we established that we live in an anxiety laden society, and the best most people do with their anxiety is manage it. Jesus has something better for us.

In our passage today, Jesus says three times, in v. 22, 29, and 32, to stop worrying, stop being anxious, stop being afraid. Why? Because, Jesus says, your Father and I have your back. We will take care of you. We will take care of you in the two areas of your existence - the spiritual and the physical.

Worry, anxiety, and fear are sin: they miss the mark of who God wants us to be. These sins rise from a failure to understand God: a failure to understand His sovereign love, His sovereign care, His sovereign resources. To understand these, one needs to be intimate with Him. When we are intimate, we trust.

There are six points that we will uncover as we unpack Luke 12:22-34. Today, we will uncover our failure to understand divine priority and divine provision.

Divine Priority

In v 22, Jesus defines the kingdom of God by referring to vs. 13-21. Here, Jesus responds to a disrespectful interruption by telling the parable of the rich young ruler. He summarizes the parable by saying "You should lay up treasure in heaven." You should be rich towards God and not be selfish. (Matthew 6:24, in the spiritual realm, you are either selfish and materialistic or you are rich towards God. You cannot serve God and money simultaneously.)

Perhaps those who heard Jesus say this didn't understand what He meant: *God will take care of you.* 1 Peter 5:7, *Cast all your care on Him. For He cares for you.*

So, if He asks you to give up everything like He did the rich young ruler, what would you do? Jesus said in Luke 9:23, If you want to be in God's kingdom, you must deny yourself. You must lose your life. You must abandon everything that grieves your heart, exchanging them for Christ. How desperate are you? How much do you want to be in the kingdom of God?

When you surrender your money, you learn to be content. Philippians 4:11.

Phil 4:19, "My God shall supply all your needs." Do you trust God to do this? When you come into His kingdom, you can trust Him to meet your needs. This is an issue of divine priority.

Let's go back to the text and see how this works.

"Do not worry or be anxious for your life." What is meant by "life"? Your physical life—what you eat and what you wear. This was a huge issue in Jesus' day. These folks lived to survive.

"Don't worry about what you're going to eat, or what you're going to put on." Verse 23, "For life is more than food and the body than clothing."

In other words, *you exist for a higher reason.* God has a purpose for your life. You are under divine priority. If you are in the kingdom, He wants you to live. He has a purpose for you to fulfill in His kingdom to His glory. He will sustain you to that fulfillment.

So, if God gave you life, if He redeemed you, if He has a purpose for your life, then He will provide what you need to survive.

That does not mean you do not plan for the future, *but you're not the one who has obligated himself to your care, God has.*

God's priority is spiritual purpose. You live and exist is for the purpose of God, and God will sustain your life until that purpose is fulfilled. You don't need to worry about it. Worry, anxiety, and fear fail to understand divine priority.

Divine Provision

V 24 The birds neither grow crops nor store food, yet God feeds them. You and I are more valuable than the birds.

Birds are fragile and completely dependent upon God for their existence. If He takes care of these who give Him a limited amount of glory, He will make sure you can eat, you who have the highest and noblest capacity to give Him glory?

This doesn't mean that they don't work. They are in constant motion. We must work to gather our food. He's provided us with the resources and the capability to work and to gain food and clothing, and if we're ever in a situation where at our best efforts we can't provide enough, God will find a way to take care of us, to sustain us. The birds work, and we work, but it's God in His providence who provides. Job 38:41; Psalm 145:14; Psalm 147:9.

Life is from God. He gives it. He sustains it. He makes provision for it.
So, is it possible for God to withhold His provision from His people?

In Haggai 1:1-11, God commanded the returning exiles from Babylon to prioritize what need to be done first as they began to resettle the land. The first thing they were to do is rebuild the temple, the house of God, then they could build homes for themselves. The people, however, chose to build their own homes first, and not just build them, but make them very nice. Their attitude? "We will take care of ourselves first, before we build God's house."

What were they saying with these actions? "We are the priority. We will provide for ourselves. We don't need God. We trust ourselves."

They wanted to please and honor themselves. They desired to bring glory to themselves.

How does God respond to this? In verse 10 He says, "Because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce." God called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and all the labor of your hands. God made it all go bad.

If He gave you life, He is obligated to sustain your life, and He will provide all you need if you continue to honor Him.

The Lord's providence in the food supply is staggering. There's more than enough potential for this planet to provide food for the whole world.

Famine has nothing to do with the capability of this planet to produce. Famine has to do with false religion, with war and social politics, with economic systems like socialism and communism where governments tell people not to work to protest against the people who rule over them. It has to do with laziness.

Famine has nothing to do with potential. The earth is still filled with food. God has created a boundless, boundless supply and He provides it for His faithful people. Psalm 37:25

If you belong to Him, He takes care of you until His work for you is finished. Psalm 34:10. God will take care of you!