

**LUKE 12:22-40**

<sup>22</sup> And [Jesus] said 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. <sup>23</sup> For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! <sup>25</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>26</sup> If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? <sup>27</sup> Consider the lilies, 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. <sup>28</sup> 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! <sup>29</sup> And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. <sup>30</sup> For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. <sup>32</sup> "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. <sup>35</sup> "Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup> If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! <sup>39</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup> You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

**IN THE NAME OF JESUS.**

Do not be anxious, says Jesus. Do not be anxious about your life, about what you will eat, about your body, about what you will put on. God feeds the birds of the air, and you are more valuable to him than any bird.

Our Lord shows that our anxieties in life are not just anxieties about going hungry or wearing shabby clothing—they are, at root, anxieties about who our God is.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, we say in the Creed. God the Father has made me and all creatures, he has given me my body and soul, eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them—that's as we learn it in the Catechism. He gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, and all the other things of this living creation by which he takes care of us. And he does*

all this, as the Catechism tells us, purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this, it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey him.

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So our anxiety about our life, what we will eat, how we will have a home, about how we will survive in a bad economy, about what we will find out about our body and it's sickness, it's all an anxiety hitting us because we forget who our Father is and we think we are our own.

But he is our Father, he does take care of us, and he does it all out of his fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. *So, says Jesus, Seek your Father's kingdom ... and sell your possessions and give to the needy.* [Luke 12:33]

Our Lord does not say, "Sell *all* your possessions," though it has sometimes in church history been put forth this way; and when that happens there are stories of people emptying out their whole house and all their goods, and living in destitution, having given all their money to charity.

Our Lord says, "Sell your possessions." How much, how totally? That may be another question. But he *is* showing that we no longer need to acquire possessions in order to make ourselves feel safe, as if we're about the business of stocking up enough food to live through a disaster, and enough possessions to make ourselves always impenetrable.

So our Lord gives us no Christian methodology for how to sell everything and live in subsistence, but he does redirect our sight. We are no longer living to make ourselves safe against whatever the world might throw at us; we are now living as those who belong to him, living as a little flock belonging to the Father, knowing that it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

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And what a kingdom it is. For while we were holding onto to our possessions, trying to ease our anxiety by the material things we could build up around us, while our world was seeking after these things, too, there is One who entered this world, who took this anxiety upon himself, and who willingly did sell everything he had, even selling out his own body, his own life over to death, in order to give mercy.

He's the One speaking this sermon—Luke 12:22: "And Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you, do not be anxious about your life.'"

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried ... we say in the Apostles Creed.*

*What does this mean?* says the Catechism. *I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned*

*person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death, that I may be his own and live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.*

There is one who sold everything he had in order to give charity. He sold his very life, paid the price of his own blood, and the charity he gave was the ransom paid for us, the mercy given to us to make us his own. Do not be anxious about your life, he says.

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Find your anxiety, and there you will find what you are afraid of, there you will find where you are trying to build up your own security, where you are even willing to push others aside to make sure you can feel safe, you will even find your own false gods—those things you look to for safety.

Do not be anxious about your life, says your Lord. For your daily life, what you will eat, what you will wear, how you will live and build a future, is not your Father in Heaven the One who created all things? And is he not worthy of being prayed to in all our anxiety over the things of this world?

Do not be anxious about your life before the face of God, about the sin you know you are guilty of, about the sin which has been done against you and the shame thereby brought upon you—do not be anxious about how you stand at the face of holy God, for has God the Son not shed his blood for you? Has he not called you his own and cleansed you of every sin? Has he not given you his own Name and Baptism and covered you with his honor? Does he not gather you into his congregation where he says to you, *Take and eat, this is my body*, thereby joining you to himself and making you a member of his Body, the church? And is he not worthy of being prayed to in all our anxiety, interceded to for his promised mercy and sanctification?

Do not be anxious, says your Lord. You may receive the gifts of this world not as something to hold onto, as if you can somehow purchase and acquire your own safety, but you may receive these gifts from your Father, receiving them, rather, as possessions by which you may serve your family and show kindness to your neighbor.

Do not be anxious in your standing before your God and thereby try to acquire some worthiness on your own, but, rather, stand before your Father in the confidence that his Son has ransomed you with his own blood, has made you his own, and cleanses you of every sin.

Your anxieties belong to him. “Fear not, little flock,” he says, “for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

**IN THE NAME OF JESUS.**