

Family Worship Booklet



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,
day after day, and that the people of God
were filled with joy!

Friday - Luke 12:22-31 – What is there left for us to do?

Yesterday, we read the emphatic command of Jesus not to be anxious about anything in our life, and the reason he gave why we shouldn't – namely the provision which God makes for the birds. In verse 27 the Lord draws another illustration from the creation. He speaks of the common lilies that grow effortlessly in the wild in Palestine; it's like the heather in Scotland, it just grows and comes to bloom naturally, and when it does, it is a beautiful thing to behold. Jesus says of the lilies that they are more beautiful than Solomon in all his glory, and Solomon, in his day, was the most finely dressed man in the world. One commentator sums it all up well when he writes, "If God enrobes the lowly and ephemeral lilies so gorgeously, he will surely give common garments to his far higher creatures."

In verse 29 Jesus repeats, albeit with different words, his admonition of verse 22, and his argumentation moves from nature to the world around us. We should not be like the godless around us, who are constantly taken up with and distracted by what they feel they need. It consumes them; it worries them. We should and need to be different from them, because we have a living relationship with our loving, omniscient, omnipotent, heavenly Father, who will not only care for us during our lives on earth, but for all eternity.

V31. So where does that leave us? What is there left for us to do? We are to seek, to hunger and thirst for something else. We are to be consumed with seeking the Kingdom of God in our lives. When we do that, God has promised us that He will give us all that we need. And note, this seeking is to be undertaken with continuous diligence. We are to *pursue* the Kingdom of God with relentless *passion*. This is to be our great chief end in life.

So, what purpose is served by worrying? God has made it clear that He will take care and provide for you, as you seek first His Kingdom. Leave the worrying to the godless in the world; you have far greater things to be taken up with, matters of eternal significance.

Q1. What has God promised to do for those who are His children?

Q2. What must we as His children do?

Thursday - Luke 12:22-31 – Do Not be anxious about anything.

v22. Jesus has been addressing the issue of covetousness and its consequences, and now he turns to the disciples and continues to apply what he has been teaching. His progression into the issue of 'worry' is significant because the two, while not identical, are linked. Covetousness is about wanting; money, possessions, health, relationships, etc., and it is driven by a fear, or the worry, of not having enough to cope.

"Therefore, I tell you." As we have seen before, Jesus is calling his disciples to listen, and think seriously about what he is saying. In Greek, his command, "do not be anxious," is a negative present imperative, which means 'stop doing what you have begun to do, and are continuing to do'. The critical point is 'stop'. Stop, because as we shall see, there is no need to be anxious and to worry, and stop because it is distracting you from pursuing what you should. What is it that we are to 'stop' being anxious about? It is whether or not we will have enough to keep ourselves fed and clothed, to an extent beyond what is necessary. Jesus is not saying – don't work to put food on the table and clothes on your back. What he is addressing is worrying about whether there will be enough food on the table in a year's time, and if there will be enough clothes for the seasons to come. And it speaks, of course, to everything that is material in our lives, not just food and clothing.

To drive home his point, Jesus asks the disciples to think about birds who never cultivate a thing, and yet God provides for them. Even ravens, which were unclean birds and therefore could not be eaten (Leviticus 11:15) are fed by God. Jesus' point is simple but emphatic, 'is God going to neglect feeding and caring for you, you who are made in his image?'

V25. Jesus moves from what we eat and wear, etc., to the span of our lives. The question is simple: 'Can you add to your life's length by worrying about your life?' And since you can't, why worry about anything in your life. Nothing needs to be said to explain what Jesus is saying; again, it is both simple and clear, and speaks for itself. You and I just need to read and think about the implications of what he says.

Q1. What is anxiety? What does Jesus say we should do with it?

Q2. What reason does Jesus give us when he tells us not to be anxious?

Monday - Luke 12:8-12 - The Sin that will not be forgiven.

V10. Jesus is clear that if a person speaks blasphemy in respect to his name, that can and will be forgiven, assuming that forgiveness is sought. Forgiveness means to 'send away', to remove the guilt of the sin from the sinner, so that they are free of it. BUT this cannot happen where there is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Why? Because this sin speaks about a life of continual denial in respect of the work of the Holy Spirit.

V11,12. Jesus now tells the disciples that there is a time coming, when they will be brought unceremoniously before various Jewish courts, to give an account of their teaching and actions. How are they going to respond? Obviously, they will be anxious, especially with Jesus no longer with them, that's why Jesus not only tells them not to worry, but gives them the reason why they don't need to, because the Holy Spirit will help them respond. One commentator writes, "Without previous thinking, planning, imagining, the apostles will, in their trials at court, receive directly from the Spirit just exactly what they must say to make the defense which God wants them to make."

This help of the Holy Spirit is 'biblical inspiration'. It is what Paul writes about in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." Peter writes of it also in 2 Peter 1:20-21. He says, "that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." This work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the canon of Scripture is finished, the Holy Spirit no longer 'inspires' men to either say or write truth from God. But that does not mean that the Holy Spirit is no longer at work in our lives, He is, and we must seek that sanctifying work. For as the Lord Jesus said in John 16:13, it is the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth.

Q1. What is the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

Q2. Is there a difference between how the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to speak the words that became the Scriptures, and how the Holy Spirit helps us today?

Tuesday - Luke 12:13-21 – Covetousness – what a danger it is!

V13. Jesus, as often happens, is confronted with a question from someone in the crowd. It's about two brothers and their inheritance. Why does the man ask Jesus to intervene? Because rabbis frequently gave judgements on disputed points of law, and Jesus is a rabbi. But Jesus doesn't give him a judgement, in fact, his response indicates that he's not happy about the approach, even if it is legally legitimate. Instead, Jesus takes the opportunity to speak about covetousness. The best teaching opportunities often come when someone asks a question, because the questioner is naturally open to hear the answer, and we all like things that are personally relevant, even if we are a bystander.

V15. Addressing the crowd, Jesus opens up with the words – "Take care, and be on your guard". Those are serious and challenging words. They demand that we sit up, take note, and then think about what we are doing. The word 'guard' literally means 'take positive action to ward off an impending enemy'. And the impending enemy that Jesus warns his hearers, and us about is the destructive sin of covetousness. God addresses the sin of covetousness in the Ten Commandments, in fact, it is the tenth and final commandment. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." (Exodus 20:17).

Covetousness is wanting something that belongs to someone else, because you are not happy with what God has given you, and you wrongly think that if you have this person or thing then it will make your life better. God makes it very clear that it won't, and that you need to cut off the idea that it will, the first time it rears its ugly head. We can covet lots of things, but the most common thing we covet is money, and material things because we think that they will protect us, when in fact the Bible tells us the opposite is true. Paul writes, "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (1 Timothy 6:10).

Q1. Why did the man ask Jesus to rule on his case?

Q2. How did Jesus respond and why?

Q3. What is covetousness and why is it bad for us?

Wednesday - Luke 12:13-21 – Our life is not about who or what we have!

Yesterday, we saw Jesus warning us about the sin of covetousness. To drive home the point, Jesus now tells the crowd a parable. Parables are important because they help us understand really important truths. This parable is about a rich man. Note, it is not wrong to have money, it is the **love of** money that is a root of all kinds of evil (2 Timothy 6:10).

There isn't any hint of impropriety in how this man has made his fortune. The problem is that he wants to continue investing in his business solely to provide for himself in the future. One would think, 'what's the harm in that, in fact, he'll be creating employment for a lot of people as his business grows.' Well, the sin lay in his love of himself and his self-image. He is motivated to produce more and more, because he sees his 'being,' who he is as a person, in terms of his 'owning'. He has no thought for the fact that God is giving him the breath to live, and creating the conditions for his crops to grow, etc. This is his life; these are his crops, his barns, his plans to tear down and build up, as is the power to make it happen. Of course, he is not alone in taking this approach to life, and it doesn't always revolve around money and material things. This past couple of years have seen a lot of inappropriate coveting of health, to the detriment of the soul.

V20. God isn't a silent observer in our lives, and He speaks into this man's life and describes him as a "Fool!" We tend to think of a fool as someone who is stupid, someone who should know better. God defines a fool as a person who denies Him – "The fool says in their heart there is no God," (Psalm 14:1). Such denial never ends well; it can't. God demanded the rich man's soul that night and left him with the question, "the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" As Job said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21). How many family businesses have been founded, devoid of any thought of God, only to be sold or run into the ground by the third or fourth generation?

What is the wise thing to do in our lives? The wise thing is to make sure that whatever we do, we invest heavily in our relationship with God in the process of doing it. It is as simple as that.

Q1. What was the problem with this man's attitude to his wealth?

Q2. How did God respond to him?