

Worry-Free Giving: Building Campaign 2018
Luke 12.22-34

Intro

Been in our building for about year and half - time is flying. If you are new here you have arrived in an exhilarating season as we after 30 years God provided us with this facility. What joy in seeing the fruit of our giving and prayer. God has been and continues to be generous and faithful.

Last Spring I preached a series called Going and Growing to prepare us as a church to essentially plant here in Middletown - funky church plant - We have planted ourselves in Middletown for the sake of Gospel Mission going forward in this area and beyond - how grateful we are that we have this building - this tool for ministry and mission.

Title - 2018 because as we have told you over the years - there will be 2018 and so forth until we pay off the building - we need to raise \$180,000 each year to pay our mortgage - we will give at the conclusion of this sermon

As Ken explained last week your pastors are in faith to pray and ask God to increase our general fund 40% by 2021 in order to absorb the mortgage payment and begin paying off the mortgage in earnest. Please join us in prayer for God to accomplish this.

We are going to commit to give at the conclusion of this sermon - my aim this morning is not in the first place to stir you to give at my request. My aim in the first place is to direct your attention to God, so that you might hear from him, and in hearing from him you would find your heart stirred to give generously to his cause - his kingdom - his mission in and through this building he has provided.

Not just paying a mortgage - spiritual realities at work here. When we consider generous giving in the context of the church of Jesus Christ, we understand that God is after far more than people fulfilling a religious duty or meeting a practical need. He's after our hearts, our desires, our motivations - he's after his glory magnified among his people - he meets us right where we are through his Word.

Our text, Jesus speaks to his disciples and so he speaks to us about fundamental realities - he reaches into the bedrock of our lives. Realities of anxiety and worry and fear, contentment and faith, lives lived for the sake of Jesus Christ and faithfulness and hope and eternal realities. Jesus speaks into all these things in our text. So my aim is in the first place to direct our attention to God on this building commitment Sunday.

Very Word of God

READ TEXT

Let's examine this teaching by Jesus on the topic of giving as we prepare to take our building commitments at the conclusion of our meeting. 3 Points to help us navigate

1. Jesus Addresses a Major Hinderance to Giving: Anxiety
2. Jesus Reminds us of God's Care
3. Jesus Inspires us with God's Generosity

I. Jesus Addresses a Major Hinderance to Giving: Anxiety

- A. In Luke 12, Jesus has been teaching his disciples about many things and in v. 22 he says "therefore" - what is it there for - directing our attention back to that which he just explained.
 1. In v. 13-21 Jesus told a parable about a man who, in his prosperity as a farmer, declared that he would build bigger and better barns to store his abundance of crops. And, resting in his prosperity, the farmer said that now he will spend the rest of his long life eating, and drinking, and making merry.

2. But God calls him a fool because that very night this man's life would be required of him. He will die and leave behind all that he had trusted in. He reveals the vanity of believing one is secure because of prosperity
3. Jesus says fools are those who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich toward God by generously giving to his cause and for his glory

Illustration: Commercial on preparing for the future - woman in her 60's - "I have a long life ahead of me" - maybe or maybe not - shouldn't bank on it - life is short

- B. One way to treat money and possessions is to experience prosperity and fail to be rich toward God by giving generously. But an opposite extreme is anxiety and worry about having enough. V. 22 "therefore do not be anxious about your life"
 1. Jesus comes to us at one of the most fundamental experiences of our human existence - anxiety - worry about what will be - worry about what is to come - Jesus comes to us at the level of our fears, anxiety and worry - he speaks into our emotional core
- C. Jesus says "don't be anxious about your life - about the future - where you will get your food and clothing"
 1. Addresses life's basic necessities - don't be anxious about food we must have to survive - clothing which shields from the elements
 - a) Speaking to a relatively poor community in the middle east - no food pantries or salvation armies to buy second hand clothing - don't be anxious about how you will survive

Illustration: In our culture in the west we are anxious about not just necessities many more ultimately unimportant and secondary things - better house, nicer care, latest tech

This Friday is black Friday where we will see droves of people anxiously pursuing a "good deal" - inevitable stories of people being trampled

My black Friday story

- D. Jesus addresses real serious concerns - how will I find enough to eat or have clothing? Jesus says don't be anxious about these very real concerns needed for survival
 1. Don't be anxious - how can that help? V. 25 which one of you can add a single hour to your life by worrying? It's futile it accomplishes nothing so don't let it stick around - there's more to life than food and clothes
- E. Application
 1. Certainly, there are lots of temptations to worry or become anxious in our day
 - a) 24-hour news cycle - political polarization and even violence - angry mobs and chaotic protests
 - b) Natural disasters - California wildfires
 - c) Our own experiences with sickness, suffering, and death - within us and the people we love
 - d) Sadly, heading out of the house with the real possibility of encountering racism for one's skin color
 - e) Real financial struggles - making ends meet
 - f) Health and future of our children
 2. Jesus speaks to his disciples - he speaks to us in our worries, fears, anxieties - I tell you, do not be anxious - you may rightly hear the voice of the Savior speak over you. Do not be anxious it will not help you. It will not fix anything. He says repeatedly throughout the Gospels - do not be anxious
 3. And in fact, this is a command. He knows our frame that we are often weak and needy. That a purely pragmatic argument for why we shouldn't worry - it won't accomplish anything - is not fulsome enough to get down into the core of our existence and so, thankfully he continues by directing our attention to God's care for us

II. Jesus Reminds us of God's Care

- A. Don't be anxious and let me tell you why - let me provide you with understanding that will help you move out of anxiety - what big revelation do you have for us Jesus. Consider the ravens he says - look at the birds.
 - 1. V. 24 look at the Ravens they do not sow or reap - they have no place to store up their food - a Raven's nest isn't much of a warehouse
 - 2. Yet God feeds them - they have no means of food production or storage and yet look to the ravens - considered creepy, lesser birds, a group is called an "unkindness" or a "conspiracy" - behold God generously feeds them
 - a) If God thinks ravens are valuable enough to feed them - then consider how MUCH more value you - you who are his special creation - created in the image of God - HOW MUCH MORE ARE YOU valuable to him
 - 3. v. 27 or consider the lilies how they grow - they don't work to make their clothing - but just look at how beautiful - look how they are arrayed in splendor by their Creator God with glory and beauty - more than King Solomon in all his splendor - the King of Israel who the Queen of Sheba when, in the account of 1 Kings, saw the glory of his kingdom "there was no more breath in her" - more than that is the beauty of the flower
 - (1) And even now as the winter conceals the ground with its own charms, we know how we long to see the verdant green of sprouts and buds and flowers breaking through in their beauty come springtime
 - b) v. 28 if God so clothes the flowers and even the grass - burned by fire for fuel as refuse - if he so clothes his creation with beauty how MUCH MORE will he clothe you
- B. v. 28 O you of little faith - and in this rebuke is the crux of the whole matter and the root of anxiety and worry - the antithesis of anxiety is faith - it is trust in God's care for my life.
 - 1. If I don't worry about the future who will care for me - God himself will care for you - in our anxiety Jesus directs us toward the care and kindness of God and his promises to provide for us
- C. v. 29-30 Don't be worried about food and clothing - not a call to passivity but instead trust in God as we work

The birds are an example not of idleness but of freedom from anxiety...they are not always worrying that the supply of worms may run out; yet they do not expect the worms to crawl down their beaks. (Quoted by Darrell Bock, *BECNT: Luke*, pp. 1160-1161)

- D. Anxiously seeking and striving after things - that's what the world is consumed with - striving for things to assuage anxiety - rather listen my Christian friend - unlike the world apart from Christ - YOU HAVE A FATHER - you have a heavenly father who knows what you need before you ask and is eager to provide - move out of anxiety by PUTTING YOUR FAITH IN HIM

Disciples should not act like the rest of the world when it comes to being anxious, because disciples know the Father who cares for them. Security comes from the realization that God actively cares for his children. (Darrell Bock, *BECNT: Luke*, p. 1164)

- E. Anxiety sees need and shrinks inward - finds deficiency and deduces that God is unable or unwilling to provide
- F. Faith looks to the immensity of the creator providing for his creation and sees a Father - caring for us his beloved children - able and willing to provide and we trust him
 - 1. v. 31 Demonstrates that faith by seeking God's kingdom - seeking his will and reign in our lives and in the world - and as we do so by faith - displace self-focused anxiety with trusting in him and pursuing his will - all these things are added to us - he provides for his kingdom-seeking children

G. Application

1. In anxieties about the future - Jesus calls us to intellectual engagement - faith is not divorced from the intellect - the intellect, the mind is the organ through which God's reality passes in order to build faith and trust in our hearts toward God.
 - a) Consider Jesus says - think, observe, engage the mind - some things are as basic as the realities of God's created order - our text should in a sense provoke desire to study his creation to see his hand there - Romans 1 - God has left the testimony of his attributes and power in creation amateur zoologists and botanists to in effect counter anxiety
2. Lack of anxiety, internal peace of the soul is not so much a feeling that we passively receive - it is hearing his promises of care and provision and taking him at his word

Lloyd Jones - Faith is a refusal to panic...it is an activity, it is something that must be exercised

- H. Our faith rooted in the gospel - His promise sealed in the blood of Christ - all promises yes and amen in him - faith is the appropriate response - HE WHO DID NOT SPARE HIS OWN SON

- I. not trying to gloss over real anxiety issues. UNASKED FOR SUFFERING - STRUGGLE - CHRIST'S HEART IS TENDER TOWARD YOU

1. Reality remains
 - a) Anxiety looks inward
 - b) Faith looks outward and trusts
2. Jesus tells us more to this story - faith is not passive - it expresses itself with a lifestyle of living for God's glory - a lifestyle of generous giving

III. Jesus Inspires us With God's Generosity

- A. v. 31 ACTION seek his kingdom - go after God's kingdom - his cause - his righteousness - his will - his reign - his glory, seek his kingdom with your whole life
- B. v. 32 FEAR NOT - again and again fear not - tender words of condescending mercy - "little flock"
- C. Fear not it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom - the kingdom of his grace, his blessing, his righteousness, his everlasting kingdom in which his children dwell forever and ever.
 1. God is pleased to give you his kingdom - no impersonal transaction
 - a) Father and children - shepherd with sheep - sheep not the mighty and wise
 - b) It brings him great pleasure to bless us in his everlasting kingdom of righteousness
 - (1) The kingdom we enter by his grace - through faith alone in Christ alone - through the substitutionary, wrath-bearing sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary - HE IS PLEASED - by his grace to give you his kingdom - not just provide for your physical needs!

Believers are tenderly loved by God the Father. It is 'the Father's good pleasure' to give them a kingdom. He does not receive them grudgingly, unwillingly, and coldly. He rejoices over them as members of his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased. He regards them as his dear children in Christ. He sees no spot on them. Even now, when he looks down on them from heaven, in the midst of their infirmities, he is well pleased, and hereafter, when presented before his glory, he will welcome them with exceeding joy. (J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, p. 63)

2. HE TAKES PLEASURE IN YOU! INFIRMITIES, SIN, AND WEAKNESS

- D. V. 33 so - in light of his constant care and eternal goodness in giving to us his kingdom - SELL YOUR POSSESSION AND GIVE TO THOSE IN NEED

1. The only right response to his personal and generous care by providing for our needs and giving us the kingdom - ONLY RIGHT RESPONSE - moving towards need with our money and giving!

Illustration: Jerry Lewis telethon - crusty old has-been, Tom Jones "it's not unusual" - entertain and encourage you to give to the cause - here God himself takes center stage in the immensity of his glory and grace extending his kingdom to us and says will you give to my cause and for my glory?

- E. Anxiety hordes resources - faith let's go of resources for God's glory
 - 1. Anxiety can look like wisdom - faith always looks like generosity
 - 2. Anxiety spends and saves to sooth self
 - 3. Faith spends to serve the Savior
- F. THERE IS MORE INSPIRATION FOR US v. 33 - as you give you provide yourself with heavenly moneybags that don't wear out containing heavenly treasure that will never fade or rust or be stolen - no one can touch - no stock market crash can diminish
- G. V. 34 Finally the reality - where your treasure is there will your heart be also - those of us who trust Christ - our hearts are with him - our hearts are with God - provider, Father, savior - that's where our treasure is
 - 1. Death doesn't close this account - First National Bank of Heaven

Illustration: Nanny's bank account - DIE ENTER INTO THE INHERITANCE

The man who does well for himself is the man who gives up everything for Christ's sake. He makes the best of bargains. He carries the cross for a few years in this world, and in the world to come has everlasting life. He obtains the best of possessions. He carries his riches with him beyond the grave. He is rich in grace here, and he is rich in glory hereafter. And, best of all, what he obtains by faith in Christ he never loses. (J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, p. 64)

- H. Application
 - 1. Jesus provides us with the inspiration and the motivation to spend ourselves for the sake of Christ and to give to his cause. That's what we're aiming to do on this building commitment Sunday
 - a) To reject the closed hand of anxiety and extend the open hand of faith anew
- I. Here's the need - \$180,000
 - 1. How we are seeking his kingdom
 - a) Sunday morning continues to grow as we gather weekly to celebrate the grace of Christ - sing and hear his Word - we have been strengthened, edified, we have been changed in beholding him
 - b) 2 Rounds of the Bridge - a couple dozen people - we had a couple folks who have trusted Christ and many others built up in their faith
 - (1) CELEBRATION DINNER
 - c) VBS over the summer - many children were invested in as disciples of Jesus Christ
 - d) Trunk or Treat - 375 - made a connection - we exist and you are welcome - a means of blessing and serving our community - KID FROM VBS
 - e) Concerts that glorified Christ
 - f) Ladies Bible study - women built up in their faith
 - g) UNITE in the Living Room - Christian worldview
 - h) Missions Prayer Team in the Family Room - FOR THE NATIONS
 - i) Eaten tougher, prayed together, served together, sung together, cried together MET GOD TOGETHER IN THIS PLACE
 - j) HAPPY TO REPORT THAT WE HAVE BEING SEEKING HIS KINGDOM!
 - 2. Our giving in 2019 toward the building fund is giving to need and pursuing the kingdom - no mere practical need being met
 - a) We are rich in God, recipients of his grace, in his everlasting care, citizens of a kingdom that cannot be shaken - SO WE GIVE! By his grace and for his glory

Close

USHERS BRING CARDS AND PENS - HOLD UP HAND IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE

WE WANT EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE IN WHATEVER WAY THEY CAN - EVEN IF YOU CAN ONLY COMMIT TO PRAY
PRAY FOR 2021 AND THAT WE WOULD PAY OFF THE BUILDING

I'm going to pray - if you haven't already filled out band will play for a short time to give space to fill out - come to the front and give in faith

DOES THIS LOOK LIKE FAITH? DOES THIS LOOK LIKE I AM IN GOD'S CARE AND HAVE RECEIVED HIS KINGDOM? DOES THIS EXPRESS THAT I'M SEEKING HIS KINGDOM IN FAITH?

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