

Luke Worry

Chapter 12.22-34

3.07.2005

Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of evil; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. Greed is such a weaselly thing. It catches us off guard so often. Even when we have good reasons and aspirations, like an oil slick, coating everything with its slime, greed can quickly spread in.

Jesus warned them to watch out for greed, and not to rely on things for life's meaning, but now in Luke 12:22 he moves on to show just how evil greed and its products are. Just before we look at that, I want to take us on a journey with your vivid imaginations.

Picture some of the rich and famous, when they are at their most luxurious. See their faces, with the makeup... see their professionally appointed hair styles...their clothes... and imagine how big their wardrobes must be... do not forget their feet... their shoes... Imagine their houses... the size of them... the gardens... the big fences... the views... Now think of what they eat... the showy restaurants... the French cuisine... the maitre d'... the wine... the desserts...

Now let us move on... this time to the poor and famished people of our world... you choose whether Africa, India, Sth America or elsewhere. See their faces, with the dust... see their windswept hair... their ragged clothes... and imagine how small their wardrobes are... do not forget their feet... what shoes do they have?... Imagine their houses... the lack of gardens... no fences... the size of the house...the view... and now think of what they eat... the relief food truck... the bland rice... the organisers of the dish out... the muddy water... the deserts...

Now fly home to your place... See your face, and what you put on it... see your hair style... your clothes... how big your wardrobe is... and do not forget your feet... what shoes could you put on?... Imagine your house... the gardens... the fences... the views... and now think of what you eat... any restaurant meals... your normal cuisine... who cooks for you... what you usually drink... the desserts...

Having been on that journey, now think about how people worry about what they wear and what they eat. In every society, whether rich or poor, people worry about food and clothes. They spend an enormous amount of time and energy caring about their clothing and eating.

Whether we are concerned about how extravagant and expensive it is, or if there is any, or if any is left or to be scrounged, or whether the credit card bills will come before pay-day, many people spend a lot of time on worrying about food and clothes.

Jesus says we are to watch out for greed, but as we do that, we are also to not worry about the food and clothes we have or need. We are not to worry about them because in God's kingdom, worrying about food and clothes shows that we do not trust God.

Jesus does not say worry is no good for your health, causing ulcers, and many other medical complaints. But he does say that worrying about the basics of what you eat and wear [1] is misguided, [2] is ineffective and [3] shows a lack of faith.

1. It's misguided. (v23) *Life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.* There is much more to life than food and clothing. As he said in v21, life did not consist in the abundance of possessions.

So what is more important? What is the most important thing in life, which is much more important than being concerned if we have enough to wear or eat? He says in v31 *strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*

Do you believe that? Do you really believe that if you put all your priority and energy into seeking or striving for God's kingdom, then He will provide for your food and clothing?

We may find it hard to trust that God can do this. But when I went to Moore college, I repeatedly saw God doing just this. For some people the experience was marvellous. e.g. One

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couple had a new baby, and would have lost their house because there was no income. However, God provided an elderly couple, who paid off the mortgage at the bank, and gave them an interest free loan, with no repayments until work and money came along.

But for others, the experience was more mundane, finding their bank balance dropping so much that they had to borrow money, yet other students and concerned Christians were able to supply money or food or clothes.

Whether it is easy, or whether it is touch and go, God still does provide for us when we seek His Kingdom, and not our own desires. If we think that life is meant to be a race to see who can earn or collect the most, then Jesus said we are misguided.

2. It is ineffective (v25) *Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? The translation from the Greek could also be Can any of you by worrying can add a single cubit to your height?*

Either way, who here can do it? Can worry add an hour to your life?

Medical experts say that it will do more of the opposite. Worry tends to shorten your life. Can you grow any taller simply by worrying?

Worry is ineffective! It does not help at all. It is totally ineffective.

3. But more importantly, worry shows a lack of faith. (v24,27-30) *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!... Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the*

world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

He did not mince his words. If you worry about that, then you are acting like those who do not know God! It shows that you do not trust God!

He cares for you. He came to die for you. He loves you and me, and knows us, and provides for us. So why act as if we do not matter to him? Why slap his care and concern back in his face, by not trusting that He will provide?

He cares for you, and if he provides for the birds and for the grass, surely he will provide for you and me, because we are worth much more to Him than the birds and the grass!!

Yet so often we want to wallow in worry! Like the tennis centre in Melbourne, we close off the ceiling between us and God, and pretend that we live in a closed world, where God has no access, and we have to fight, struggle, scratch and worry out a living. As we do that, we act like unbelievers!

In His kingdom, His children are to focus on living His way. and that involves trusting our heavenly Father for our daily bread and for our clothing. Seek his kingdom! Seek His will! Look to glorify Jesus our heavenly King, not to glorify ourselves!

As we do, God freely gives us his kingdom. Hear the promise Jesus makes:

Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Where is your heart? If you lost all your possessions today, would life be totally shattered for you? Do you worry over what to eat or wear? Could you sell all you have and give it away if Jesus wanted you to?

Why worry, for it is misguided, ineffective and

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shows a lack of faith. If you are in God's Kingdom, trust God, even for your daily needs. Do not trust your bank balance or your goods.