

November 16, 2025 - Luke 12:13-34 - What we Fear, we Follow

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[0 : 00] The scripture passage today is in Luke chapter 12.! If you want to turn your Bibles to Luke chapter 12,! We're going to be beginning in verse 13!

But he said to him, And he said to them, Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

And he told them a parable, saying, The land of a rich man produced plentifully. And he thought to himself, What shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops.

And he said, I will do this. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.

Relax, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, Fool, this night your soul is required of you.

[1 : 29] And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. And he 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.

For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 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? And which of you, being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life?

If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? 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. But if God so closed the grass, which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you?

[2 : 40] O you of little faith! And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. This is the word of the Lord. Praise the Lord for his word to be heralded in our gathering today.

And our hope and our expectation is that it will do a hard, laborious work in all of our hearts today. And I'd like to set the scene with a simple little story between Greg and Maria.

[3 : 56] And it happened on an ordinary Tuesday afternoon. Greg was walking into his bank. He was walking into his bank not to withdraw any money, but he was walking into his bank for a little bit of reassurance.

And the market was dipping. His retirement was shaky. And the headlines were shouting at him and the whole world, instability, inflation, recession.

There was literally fear everywhere. And so he sat down with his advisor and asked the question that it seemed like no spreadsheet could answer.

He asked a question. He said, can you tell me honestly, am I going to be okay? On the same day across town, Maria wasn't sitting with a financial advisor.

It's unknown to her. She didn't have enough money to afford a financial advisor. But she's sitting at a kitchen table. She's sitting with overdue bills surrounding her, rent reminder, an electric bill with a little disconnection warning, and a grocery list that it seems like has more needs than she has dollars.

[5 : 31] And so she stared at the numbers that wouldn't add up and whispered a different version of Greg's question. She said, Lord, are we going to make it?

Two different lives, two vastly different bank accounts, and two different ways that fear shows up. One man fears losing what he has because he has quite a bit. The other, a woman, fears not having enough. But both fears share the same thing.

Will I be okay? Am I okay? Am I secure? Can I trust God with tomorrow?

Tomorrow, Greg had abundance. Maria had scarcity. But the same fear haunted them both. What if the bottom falls out?

[6 : 37] What if there's not enough? What if God doesn't come through? And what both failed to discover is the issue was actually not in the numbers.

That's not the issue. It's not the market. It's not the paycheck. The deeper issue is an ancient issue that we see here in Luke chapter 12.

We see a deeper issue. It's a heart that can never get enough and a fear that never lets go. It's a heart issue.

So whether you're managing much or stretching little, fear whispers the same lie. You're on your own, buddy. Good luck.

Hopefully you make ends meet. And that fear binds two shackles upon us. Greed, a tendency of greed, of keeping as much as we can, or worry, losing sleep at night.

[7 : 53] Two shackles, but two very different symptoms. Same disease. Same root. And this is the basis of the entire argument of the sermon.

And so today, Jesus breaks both of those shackles in the passage today and actually invites us into something. Not just with Greg and Maria, but for us to surrender the fear that's behind both our greedy tendencies and our worrying tendencies.

And to reorient us and to reorient our hearts to His kingdom. Something in the future. The main point today is that when the heart wakes to the kingdom, greed loosens and worry lightens.

When the heart wakes to the kingdom, greed loosens! And worry lightens. sermon title today is What We Fear We Follow.

And I have three sections I'm going to break this chunk of text into. And let's pray as we dive in together and ask for the Holy Spirit to give us guidance in our quest.

[9 : 14] Let's pray. Father, we come to You needy, desirous of the things that You want in our lives.

We come to You not as perfect people that have it all together, but troubled hearts at the bank talking to an advisor, troubled hearts sitting at a kitchen table.

Come to You asking for help to see rightly. Help us to think rightly. Help us to worship rightly.

Help us to call out in our own lives the disease of fear and how it shackles us by greed and worry.

Pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. First section is titled Greed Follows Our Fear.

[10 : 16] And so we're kind of playing chase in this sermon. Greed Follows Our Fear. Where fear is, greed will follow. Greed follows our fear. And we see this from verse 13 all the way to verse 21.

Now, keeping in mind the context, who would have thought that there's 12 verses before this in chapter 12? Preached on that last week. And who would have known that they actually play a significant role in the text today?

It's a marvelous thing, context. It's very important and it's very interesting when you allow context to inform passages. Now, Jesus has just warned the crowd to confess him before men, to fear God rather than man.

And suddenly here in this passage, a voice erupts from this crowd. It says, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. It's, what?

That way, if we preached all the way from verse 1 to today, we would say, what is this guy talking about? It's either he wasn't paying attention or maybe a case of ADHD, you know, back in that day.

[11 : 42] I don't know, but it's an odd request. It's disruptive. It sounds random. It sounds completely out of place. But maybe it's not.

Maybe it's not so random. Maybe it's not so out of place. Maybe there's a sense of underlying fear, even in such a request.

Because fear makes us grab things. Whether it's money or possessions, things like that in our lives. It demands control.

You need to do this for me. Makes us cling to possessions as if they're not guaranteed tomorrow.

Let's see if that might fit with the context here.

Jesus' response. He says in verse 14, But he said to him, Man, addressing him like a stranger, that's a stranger term, Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?

[12 : 49] And he said to them, Take care and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

Jesus kind of exposes something going on with that question that is directly related to the presence of fear.

While addressing this man as a stranger, it would appear that through Christ's omniscience, he knows how deep this materialistic concern goes.

He knows the depths of our hearts. and he knows the depths of this man's heart here. In fact, if we break down Christ's response, we see three issues actually being called out by Christ.

Well, number one, it's a false motive that Christ is calling out, that he wanted Jesus to use his authority that he seems to display to the crowds.

[13 : 51] He wants to use his authority for his own personal gain. Jesus, I want you to be my Judge Judy, right? Come on, advocate for me. Help me out.

You see, another thing being called out, sin. He has succumbed through the implied response of Christ to covetousness.

He is desiring the things that belong to somebody else. He has succumbed to covetousness, which is close neighbor of idolatry.

He believes that life, verse 15, that his life consists of possessions. All three issues grow from a single root, greed, which is driven by fear.

And now fear is complex. It might have been of not having enough, not being enough, or maybe what tomorrow might bring, but what's the issue?

[15 : 01] It seems to actually be theological. It seems to be theological. And when fear is not brought to God, it tries to secure life without God.

When fear is not brought to God, it secures, tries to secure life without God. And that's where greed is produced.

Greed is what happens when fear tries to become its own provider. Or think of it this way. Greed is a strategy that fear uses.

Church, greed rarely shows up like this obvious monster. Right? It usually dresses itself sort of like within the name of responsibility or maybe nobility.

Like, well, sometimes we might say and justify our greed by saying, well, we're just going to keep all this here and all our stuff.

[16 : 19] We're going to keep it just to be wise in the name of wisdom. Or maybe we're just saying, well, let's plan ahead. Keep all this, plan ahead.

Or maybe we just want the sense of stability. Now, we have to ask, does my desire for just a little more come from trusting God or from a fear that God might not give me again?

Does our desire for just a little more come from trusting God or from fearing what God might not give? Now, that's not to say saving is bad.

That's not saying that having a retirement plan is bad, all of those things. Those are good things to have, and we should diligently give them. Saving is actually good.

Ask Joseph's brothers during the famine, right? Those things are good to prepare for some unknowns, but not to prepare without God.

[17 : 46] And so Jesus seems to crown this warning against greed with a parable. He's a storyteller. So in verse 16 through 18, you've heard it, the rich fool.

Imagine a man whose business explodes overnight. This is kind of going on with this parable, that there's just an abundance of stuff. The barns are full.

They're actually overflowing. And so building new barns was actually a logical solution for this person in the parable. It was prudent.

It was sensible to do. Well, business is growing. We need to build more to accommodate that growth. That's a very responsible and logical way of handling himself.

However, the problem of this parable is not that having material possessions or building bigger barns or storehouses is inherently bad.

[18 : 46] The problem of this parable is found in verse 19. This man would say in his soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.

relax, eat, drink, be merry. It's time to live the good life.

You see, he isn't building barns. This man in the parable is not out to build barns.

He's building security without God. He's preaching a false gospel to his soul that if I store enough, I will finally rest and be worry free.

The pronouns really give the man away in his selfishness here. I is mentioned eight times, my reference four times.

[20 : 00] In other words, fear fueled his greed of not having enough. Greed promised safety and God exposed the lie in this parable.

This is a long history of issues related to this. In ancient Israel, prosperity was meant to spill outward as generosity.

But fear shrinks the world down to one person, the man or the woman in the mirror, ourselves. And just as we saw last week, a person who does not fear God will always fear something else other than God, and that what we fear determines what we cling to.

We see this divine interruption. This guy has a heart problem in the parable. He says, fool. This night your soul is required of you.

He is a rich fool, isn't he? Friends, if God interrupted your life tonight, if he interrupted my life tonight, what would we leave behind?

[21 : 27] Would people see this kingdom that was built for yourself? Or would they see a testimony of faithfulness?

Let's continue into verse 22. If greed grows from fear, worry trembles from the same root. Let's see how Jesus moves from one to the other almost instantaneously.

And we see worry follows our fear. Not only greed following our fear, but worry follows our fear in section 2. We see this from verse 22 all the way to 30.

And so in verse 22, Jesus changes his audience. He said to his disciples, therefore, because of all of that, all of those warnings and the issues going on with whoever the stranger is yelling for me to be as Judge Judy, or even the guy, the rich fool in the parable.

He 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, for life is more than food and the body more than clothing.

[22 : 55] Who better to have a legitimate reason to worry than these disciples? I mean, behind the backdrop of this stuff going on, you got the Pharisees and the scribes and this tension that's building between Christ and his followers.

They want to silence this gospel and this movement. They're trying to catch him in what he might say. These disciples, they feel the cost of following Jesus every single day, right?

Now, imagine for a moment, these disciples have very little food, they have very little clothing, it was actually Christ's command was sending them out to not look like they got all this stuff and they're trying to capitalize upon other people to just get more stuff.

They were to pack lightly, right? So, imagine the daily temptation that they would have to worry about lunch while they're taking bites of their breakfast.

Imagine that temptation. We're all human beings. We worry. if you don't worry, let me know what the trick is.

[24 : 19] We all have this temptation. Imagine their temptation eating breakfast of wondering, is lunch going to come? Is dinner going to come?

It's the same temptation that laid in the heart of the Israelites having manna every morning by the hand of God's provision. those still worried at the next meal.

Always grumbling. Always unsatisfied. Always worried. But most of all, always forgetting. Jesus provides two tangible examples.

He provided examples of the ravens and the lilies. He's trying to expand the disciples, theology of God's providence and care for them.

He talks about these ravens. Ravens are like the cousin of crows. Nasty, dirty, annoying crows at six o'clock in the morning outside your window for the love.

[25 : 28] Right? Am I the only one? Maybe I am. Crows are wild in Austin town. These things are, these ravens are unclean.

but God still provides for them. These nasty, annoying ravens, God still provides for them. And no, this isn't a lesson that should justify to your employer that I don't need to work. God's going to take care of me. Right? This isn't creating some sort of ideology of laziness because we know Proverbs 13 4 says, a sluggers appetite is never filled, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.

We have a responsibility to not be lazy. Amen. And now, that's the ravens. Look at the ravens. God provides for their every meal.

He says even look at the lilies. I learned a lot about lilies sitting at a church member's house who has this plant Bible. And I saw all the details and these descriptions and the origins of all these things.

[26 : 44] I saw these lilies. These things are beautiful flowers. They're bright. Man, if I could get a bee's eye perspective of a lily up close and personal, the details are absolutely amazing.

but these bright, beautiful flowers have an expiration date. They won't exist forever.

And God created it that way. Not necessarily created. That wasn't his original design according to his plan.

But sin caused death to come into the world through one man, Adam. And now all have fallen from sin.

And so these bright, beautiful flowers, they live without worry. Not like they have a conscience or anything. But the illustration is pretty clear.

[27 : 52] They're beautiful and they exist. They're God's handiwork for a season. And they pass away when their time is up. And verse 28, he says sort of the logic, but if God so clothes the grass with these beautiful things, 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?

You see, worry, worry is losing sight of God's purposes. Worry is losing sight of God's provision. It's losing sight of God's loving care. It's living as though God either doesn't know or maybe he doesn't care or maybe God just won't act.

worry. And I'm preaching to myself because I do worry a lot. And my own worry, church, is a direct assault upon the sovereignty of God.

My worry, your preacher, it's all of our problem when we worry. How much more in verse 28?

[29 : 26] What a powerful statement that serves as the foundational argument as why we ought not to worry. How much more? This is bringing out the fact that every person on earth at the moment of conception bears the image of God.

That's rooted in Genesis 1.27. God created man in his own image. Man and woman, he created them. Now, this image, just as I kind of hinted at, is distorted by sin, but it's still present nonetheless.

And if God treasures the temporary creation of nasty ravens or beautiful lilies, how much more for his image bearing children.

How sad it is to realize that this distortion is verifiable by the amount of anxiety that overwhelms Christians.

Crippling anxiety. I know crippling anxiety. anxiety. And I know that in my propensity of distorting that image, how much we can look around and have verifiable Christians in our lives that are just overwhelmed with anxiety.

[31 : 00] worry. Whether it's major issues or maybe minor issues, worry becomes the driving factor of many of our decisions, many of them, whether it's budgetary, financial, could be medically, it could be career-wise.

But church, worry and worship cannot coexist. And that's the hard challenge that this passage presents to us worry warts.

Worry and worship cannot coexist. Worry must be given to Christ to fear the Lord, not fear tomorrow or the what-ifs.

Church, don't forget God. Simply stated, don't forget God. As stewards of God's provision, all things that we have in our lives have been from the hand of God.

Yeah, we work for it, but it's been given to us, whether it's plentiful or scarce. We have a theological responsibility to remember that we are more valuable than birds, than flowers, and Jesus continues

to sort of like reinforce and emphasize this perspective.

[32 : 28] He says in verse 29, and do not seek, there's activity here, do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried, for all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your father knows that you need them.

Worry is doubting God to the extent that we forget that God knows our needs better than ourselves. I love how George McDonald wisely put it.

He says, about worry, no man ever sank, no man ever sank under the burden of the day. No man ever sank under the burden of the day.

It is when tomorrow, tomorrow's burden is added to the burden of today, and that weight is more than a man can bear.

To put it simply, we frequently get crushed in the present, not because of anything presently weighing upon us, it's heavy enough, but we crush ourselves with tomorrow's weight as well, and the other day, and the next year, or years ahead.

[33 : 47] The worries of today are enough for us to deal with. And so he resolves both of these shackles in this last couple verses.

If greed and worry both follow fear as shackles upon our heart and our mind, what breaks fear's power? And we see this in section three, that faith follows our king.

So greed follows our fear, worry follows our fear, well, faith follows our king. Verse 31 through 34, this is the turning point of the passage.

passage. It's been highly negative in the commands up until this point. Hint of the positive, but a lot of negative commands. And he ends with this just cover of positive.

He says, instead, a contrasting word, instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. In other words, the direction of the disciples' hearts must be kingdom word.

[35 : 04] This is an entire reorientation of human desire. Why? Why should we do that? Give us something else, Jesus. Hit us again.

He says, fear not, little flock. Fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

In fact, the very reason a disciple doesn't fear is because God is their shepherd. And through faith in Jesus, the father has already given his kingdom to them.

And so, in the presence of experiencing, in the presence of experiencing God's kingdom and the kingdom that he's establishing on earth, they are to continue to look heavenward to the eternal kingdom that is to come.

What does that mean? Where they are fully secure with an inheritance that is undefiled, imperishable, unfading.

[36 : 22] see this man at the beginning, he was crying out, Jesus, help me with this inheritance. Jesus is saying to his disciples, see something important, y'all have an inheritance and it exceeds anything in this life.

It's yours already guaranteed. You don't purchase it. It's been given to you by the hands of God.

And so if the kingdom is already yours, why are we living as if God still needs convincing?

Why clutch our money as if God won't provide? Why do we cling to control as if God doesn't rule?

Why grasp for approval when heaven already sings our name?

When our names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Church, you are heirs of God, not beggars.

Stop acting like orphans. You have been adopted into the flock, little flock of God.

[37 : 40] This is a reorienting reality for anybody struggling with greed. anybody struggling with fear or worry, which are both driven by fear.

Fearless Christianity believes the future is secure not by our efforts, but it's by our Father's efforts that we are secure.

Maybe you're not in Christ today. The Father can give the kingdom to you because he gave the kingdom to his Son. and his Son lived a life that none of us can live.

He died a death that we all deserved. But death couldn't hold him. The grave couldn't keep him. He rose and broke these shackles for us.

If only we could keep that reality front and center. I pray to God today that you see that hope in Jesus Christ. Christ. I hope that you see that today.

[38 : 47] The keys of the kingdom are for you to take here and now by your faith, receive his kingdom and all the inheritance, all the security that flows from it.

Once that is true for us, it's like the only logical outflow is this radical expression of kingdom confidence. Like, our faith then has to become sight.

It has to be verifiable. How might this look? Well, verse 33, sell your possessions. Give to the needy.

Provide yourselves money bags that don't grow old with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

Generosity becomes a joy for those who have their minds kingdom word. It's a joy, not coercion. And now history proves this command, and unfortunately these verses have been taken severely out of context from different sides.

[40 : 03] On one side, you have this pagan prosperity movement that guts Christ's words completely by twisting them into a slogan for personal gain.

It turns the seek first the kingdom into this transaction of I give to God so God will then give to me and give me what I want, whether that's a preacher's private jet or maybe your big house or new fancy car, right?

Don't gut this verse into some transaction. you're more concerned about possessions than you realize if that's the case.

You're a kingdom word. This is not Christianity. This is baptized selfishness. Now on the other side, church has swung so far with cultural reactions, adopting like Marxist ideology and using scripture to baptize not selfishness but kind of selfishness with political activism.

Marxism insists that salvation comes through redistribution. It's the core of Marxist ideology. In other words, justice means enforced equality, enforced policed equality, and that human systems can usher in this utopian kingdom.

[41 : 23] It's all kingdom now, nothing later, all now. And I don't know who needs to hear this today, but Jesus was not a Marxist. Right?

Nor is his command contextually advancing that ideology. Marxist Christianity is impossible because it tries to manufacture the kingdom of God without the king himself.

It's a no king's ideology, right? Church, both extremes. Prosperity gospel, Marxist activism, miss the point completely because they forget the verses before.

Context. Jesus is after a heart issue, and the outflow of this heart issue being redeemed is to demonstrate, let faith be sight, sell your possessions if God calls you to.

Don't cling to him, give to the needy, be generous. generous. Why? Verse 34, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

[42 : 40] So if the heart is fixed on Jesus and his kingdom that he gives, generosity will flourish. There's a reason why we don't necessarily ask people to give in this church.

We know that when our hearts are fixed on Christ and his kingdom that he gives, generosity will be an outflow of that, not by manipulation, not by passing a basket, but by worship, a response to what Christ has done.

And so what does Jesus want us to do right now? Well, you're in the presence of the complete opposite of a prosperity preacher.

This would be a great moment to capitalize, get your wallets out. Now, the problem that we need to really hone in on in our hearts, the problem is not in our treasure, but the problem is what we treasure.

Not in the treasure, but by what we treasure. This life or the life to come?

[44 : 07] Think back to this man shouting from the crowd. He thought he was forgotten. Forgotten nasty raven, forgotten lily. But even an unbeliever is not forgotten by God.

Even those who aren't in Christ, it's a theological impossibility. God knows everyone. He knows even unbelievers the amount of hair that are on their head. Just as he numbers the stars, he knows. And so this is good news, but it gets better than just God's awareness of you. by your faith, God can know you and you can be known by God.

Not workers of lawlessness, but orphans adopted into the family of God. How we respond to this passage will rise and fall of how serious we can inventory the fear of our hearts.

However, I will challenge all of us, myself included, to ask a simple question in your sermon notes, reflect on it throughout this week. Just one question.

[45 : 25] Does Christ's kingdom reign in all areas of my life? Does Christ's kingdom reign in all areas of my life?

If Jesus audited your heart today, you know, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he's doing quite an audit on all of us right now, what would he find in your checkbook?

What would he find in your browsing history? What would he find in your family budget? What would he find in your private fears?

Does Christ's kingdom reign in all areas of my life? And church, I don't think it's a coincidence that this passage carries this quiet yet steady cadence of repentance.

Consider this very intriguing. A lot of negative commands, but don't forget the positives. It's like, stop the greed. Instead, number your days, like the lilies.

[46 : 34] stop the worrying and trust your father. Divest from this earth and invest in the kingdom.

I can't help but recall the one time we were going through the first Thessalonians series. I told everyone to circle in your Bibles first Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 9.

That was like four years ago. I can't believe, I can't remember my neighbor's name, but I can remember something I told you in a sermon for one second. 1 Thessalonians 1.9, this image of putting away and putting on where the Thessalonian church, Paul commended them for turning to God from idols and serving the living God, a picture of repentance.

This passage is sown deeply with a call to repentance. See, every treasure reveals a throne.

And every throne reveals a king. Is your faith following the king? Christ isn't asking more of your effort.

[47 : 44] He's asking for more of your heart through your repentance because the heart that awakens to the king, that wakes to the kingdom, is the heart that finds peace with Christ.

Christ. We must turn our eyes to Jesus. Let's pray.!