

August 7, 2022 – Luke 12:32-40 – Stop Worrying! (*Easier Said than Done*)

Do you know someone who worries a lot? If you do, or if you are that someone, does it help when you're told to: "*Stop worrying*"? It doesn't. Some years back, comedian Bob Newhart did a skit on Saturday Night Live where he tried that same approach to the people he counseled. After they walked into his office and shared their problem, he'd yell: "*Knock it off!*" That didn't work either.

We worry a lot. We worry about violence finding its way into our lives. We worry about the way people drive. We worry what people will say if we speak up or out. We worry about the food we eat and the water we drink and the medicine our doctor prescribes. We worry about let's just say, there's plenty to worry about.

It becomes even harder to "*Stop worrying*" when we've been doing it for so long. How do we stop? It seems Jesus is trying the Bob Newhart approach when he tells us: "*Stop worrying!*" But this is different. Let's see how.

Jesus mentions two things we worry about – the basics of life, what we eat and what we wear. With the cost of groceries, clothes and shoes going up, we worry about making ends meet each month.

Even when we have enough or more than enough, we still worry about what we're going to wear ... Will it fit? Will we fit in? We still worry about what we're going to eat ... homemade, order in, or go out? Our lives revolve around food and fashion.

Why does Jesus tell us to "***Stop Worrying***"? His first reason: It doesn't do any good. It won't add a minute to your life. Research has found worry subtracts minutes, months, even years from your life.

His second reason is this simple fact: **Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.** Can you remember ... maybe a date you

were on, or someone you spent time with who was well-dressed? But they couldn't carry on a conversation with you. Or, they spoke only about themselves. Their clothes did nothing for them.

Bridesmaids and groomsmen get worried about how they look, but let's be honest, nobody's looking at them. Instead of worrying how they look, they should enjoy their friend's wedding.

Jesus reinforces that life is not about food and fashion in a positive way: **Do not constantly chase after what you will eat or what you will drink. Do not be worried about it. To be sure, the nations of the world chase after all of these things, but your Father knows that you need them.** Because your Father calls your heart his home and your body his temple, he knows what you need better than you do.

If anyone knows food and clothing, it's God. Look at how he feeds the ravens. Without any tractors or barns, ravens live 10-15 years. They don't starve. Look at how he dresses the flowers. Without sewing machines or cloth, flowers are breath-takenly beautiful.

Jesus wants us to think about this: "*When God weighs the importance of birds and flowers with humans, which is most valuable?*" Before you answer that, this is God-in-the-flesh asking, the One who came to live and die for you as a human. Your answer? When it comes to birds: **How much more valuable are you than birds!** When it comes to flowers: **How much more will he clothe you!**

God is generous when it comes to feeding and clothing us, and he's very good at it. Guys, ever been to a tailor? Ladies, ever been to a dressmaker or seamstress? They're experts and have done it for years. They measure you up and the fit is just right. How much better is God than any tailor or dressmaker?

Right away, God fits you with Christ's robe of righteousness at your baptism, making you holy in his sight. There's more to come as Paul speaks of God's tailoring skills in 2 Corinthians: **God is able to make**

all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need. Memorable words when worry comes knocking.

To relieve more of your worries, Jesus has you think about something besides what you wear on your body and stuff into your mouth: **seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.**

Now, before we find out what his kingdom is and how we seek it, let's discuss the connection between *worry* and *being afraid*. Jesus wants us to stop doing both! Fear and worry feed off each other. Both reveal a lack of trust in our heavenly Father.

When Jesus sent out his 12 apostles and the 72 disciples, he told them not to take any food along. Where would their next meal come from? Jesus told them: **"Don't worry"** about it. He knows that's easier said than done, but he's looking for an attitude of faith and trust in his heavenly Father from his disciples.

"Do not be afraid!" Jesus tells his little flock. Again, he's looking for an attitude of faith and trust in his heavenly Father from his followers. **Do not be afraid!** God knows that's easier said than done. That's why he uses that phrase 365 times in the Bible. He offers us that encouragement every day of the year.

Jesus' remedy for worry and fear is found in the word *"kingdom."*

- Sometimes Jesus described his kingdom as a PLACE that you enter: **It is hard for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God.**
- Sometimes Jesus described his kingdom as something you RECEIVE: **The kingdom of God is within you.**
- In today's lesson, Jesus tells his disciples to CONTINUE SEEKING his kingdom because it's something that God GIVES, and he enjoys doing it: **"Your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom."** You can't earn it. God's kingdom is packaged as a gift and can only be given.

You received it when you were baptized. You continue to seek it when you keep it and cherish it through faith in Christ. Faith and trust come from hearing the message and by receiving the Supper. Remembering that is a remedy for fear and worry.

Worrying gets us so wrapped up in today and tomorrow, that it's easy to forget about our final destination. Jesus died to take you out of this world. That's why he wants you to **Stop worrying!** about what happens to you physically down here: **"Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not become old, a treasure in the heavens that will not fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."**

How literal are we to take Jesus' words? Give away everything and live a life of poverty? Hardly! Jesus isn't against owning things. Abraham, David, Solomon and plenty of other believers had lots of possessions. The point he's making is don't let your possessions own you. When we prize the gift more than the "Gift-giver," possessions take you away from your Savior Jesus.

Jesus says that your heart will follow your treasure. So what does he do? He gives himself as the treasure that never rots or rusts.

When you are sick and dying, it doesn't matter what job you had or what kind of car you drove. Popularity and possessions won't do you any good on your death bed.

Jesus gave his all to give you something more ... *hope* – in the life to come ... *peace* – knowing you are good with God ... *perfection* – what God requires from you ... *forgiveness* – for all your sins.

In 1988, a singer by the name of Bobby McFerrin had the hit, *"Don't worry! Be happy!"* It was a relaxed, laid-back song. One problem. It couldn't deliver. It didn't have the power to do what it said.

When Jesus says, "***Stop worrying!***" it's more than a catchy tune. And, he knows it's easier said than done. That's why it's his promise. You have a God who knows what you need and gives you his kingdom along with everything else you need for soul and body.