

Luke 12:22-34  
“Seek His Kingdom”  
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 11, 2019  
First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.  
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

**[Intro]**

*O little flock, fear not the foe  
Who madly seeks your overthrow;  
Dread not his rage and pow’r.  
And though your courage sometimes faints,  
His seeming triumph o’er God’s saints  
Lasts but a little hour.*

*(O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe; LSB 666, stanza 1)*

The United States Public Health Service issued a statement some time ago about the tendency of worry to weaken and shorten life. It reads in part: “So far as is known, no bird ever tried to build more nests than its neighbor. No fox ever fretted because it had only one hole in which to hide. No squirrel ever died of anxiety, lest it should not lay by enough for two winters instead of one, and no dog ever lost any sleep over the fact that it had not enough bones laid aside for the declining years.”

As Americans, we find things to worry about. Life is good, but it could be better. Life is never good enough is the thought of society. And, we often think that way.

So, how are you responding to Jesus when we hear Him in our Gospel lesson today saying, **“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear”** (Luke 12:22)?

Why not fear? Why not be anxious?

Well, today’s Gospel lesson picks up where last Sunday’s left off. If you recall, last week Jesus told the parable of the rich fool. Today, Jesus is speaking right to His disciples – you and me – about how we are to live as a follower of Christ.

Now, Jesus isn't telling us to be careless in our lives, so that we don't care for ourselves. But, He is teaching us about faith and God's promises.

Today, Jesus is catechizing us – His disciples – to not worry about food, drink and shelter as the godless people continually do.

So, to remind you of last week: A rich man produced a bountiful crop and so he thought to himself that he needed larger barns to store his abundance crop for many years to come. But then God said to this rich man: ***“You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you”*** (Luke 12:20).

You see, this rich fool was more concerned with his possessions, which he thought he earned all by himself. This rich fool never thought once about when he would die and he never thanked God for his bountiful crop. It was all about him. He was living in the present and never thought about the future.

Now, the very opposite of the rich fool is presented in today's Gospel lesson — the raven.

Jesus teaches us: ***“Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!”*** (Luke 12:24).

You see, the raven is satisfied with leftovers and would not think of storing up food for the future.

Now in ancient times, ravens were regarded as careless creatures that even failed to return to their nests. But in Psalm 147:9, God teaches us that He provides food for the young ravens when they call.

Then in today's reading, Jesus teaches us that we should imitate the raven, rather than the rich fool. Jesus teaches us what our proper attitude should be.

### ***[Our Proper Attitude]***

Elsewhere, Jesus teaches us our proper attitude through prayer. In the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to pray saying: “Give us this day our daily bread.”

In Martin Luther's Large Catechism, Luther goes into great detail on what this looks like in our life.

“Here, now, we consider the poor breadbasket, the necessities of our body and of our temporal life. It is a brief and simple word, but it has a very wide scope. For when you mention and pray for daily bread, you pray for everything that is necessary in order to have and enjoy daily bread. On the other hand, you also pray against everything that interferes with it.”

So, what out there interferes with our daily bread?

Luther answers that, as well.

“This petition is specifically directed also against our chief enemy, the devil. For all his thought and desire is to deprive us of all that we have from God or to hinder it. He is not satisfied to obstruct and destroy spiritual government by leading souls astray with his lies and bringing them under his power. He also prevents and hinders the stability of all government and honorable, peaceable relations on earth.”

You see, the devil desires that we do not look to God for our daily bread, but instead to ourselves. He doesn't want us to remember that God provides all our needs of body and soul. He wants us to look inward, rather than outward toward God for nourishment.

### *[Prosperity]*

Now, we are fortunate to live in the most prosperous country in the world. Yet, for most of society, we would rather associate ourselves with the rich fool than the raven.

We desire more and more things. Just look at all the storage units sprouting up across the fruited plain. We don't have enough room in our homes, so we build storage units, like the rich fool.

Now, I'm not preaching against storage units, but the question is why do we need the storage units? You may have a good reason. You may have a small home. But, this isn't always the case. Sometimes, we have a hard time letting go of things that we don't need, and I for one am guilty of that.

Also in the last decade, I have become aware of food storage programs – now I’m not talking about storing your leftovers in Tupperware containers; but instead buying meals that you have no intention on eating until a disaster.

At one time, Christians thought this was something that only Mormons did, but today more and more Americans are buying meals to store in their basements that supposedly last up to 25 years in storage.

One such company promoting this is “My Patriot Supply” which is promoted by various television and radio shows. This company promotes their food as ideal for economic collapse, global conflict, major natural disasters, and as a suitable food in the event of a power grid collapse. They claim that these meals are tasty, but who really knows?

You may think this may be a good idea, but remember what Jesus tells us. We are not to worry about tomorrow. We are to be like the raven.

But, even as disciples of Christ, we can fall into this trap of becoming a “Doom’s Day prepper.”

This is what Jesus was reminding His disciples. It’s not about our life now. It is about our life to come. Jesus is reminding us to not worry about tomorrow, but to seek His kingdom.

So, what does that mean? How do we seek His kingdom? How do we not worry?

Well, as an example to us, when Jesus sent out the twelve apostles and the 72 disciples, He told them to take no food along. They were to eat in homes along the way. They were to live a day-to-day existence.

We, too, are to live a day-to-day existence. But, also don’t take it too far. We just have to remember that God provides. He provides food to the birds of the air and remember: ***“Of how much more value are you than the birds!”*** (Luke 12:24b)

### ***[Fear Not]***

Remember, God knows everything we need – even before we even realize what we need – and He always promises to provide. So, through our vocations in our life, God cares for us. He gives us food, clothing, shelter, and so on.

Jesus tells us, *“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”* (Luke 12:32).

It is also good to remember that faith isn’t us getting over anxieties. Faith is knowing that God will take care of us. Faith is remembering that God provides.

So, how is your faith today? Are you putting your faith in God that He will provide? Or, are you putting your trust in yourself?

The unbelieving world fears that they will not have enough this or that, or that the world will end if we don’t do this or that. But the attitude that Jesus looks for us is one of faith and trust in the Heavenly Father.

So, fear not and receive God’s promise!

In our life now, God provides our daily bread, but in the life to come, He will provide us even more. He will provide us the kingdom. In fact, this is God the Father’s good pleasure to give us His kingdom.

You see, we became royalty when the Triune God adopted us at our Baptism when we drowned to sin and rose to new life. It was at that moment that we became in Christ and so we share in His death and resurrection.

This is why God the Father sent His Son so that by grace through faith in Jesus we could enter His kingdom as heirs.

Now, our faith isn’t always strong. But, God the Father gives us strength to live out our days on the way to His kingdom through the Means of Grace as we hear God’s Word and receive forgiveness, life, and salvation through remembering our Baptism and receiving the very Body and very Blood of Jesus under the bread and wine.

God does this for you and for me. So, fear not, and receive God’s grace. Fear not, and receive by faith God’s promise of His kingdom!

*[Our Hymn of the Day]*

I began today's sermon with the opening stanza from hymn 666: "O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe." When the *Lutheran Service Book* went to print in 2006, this hymn was placed here on purpose. This hymn reminds us that we have nothing to fear – not even Satan – because of God's promise.

*O little flock, fear not the foe  
Who madly seeks your overthrow;  
Dread not his rage and pow'r.  
And though your courage sometimes faints,  
His seeming triumph o'er God's saints  
Lasts but a little hour.*

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠