

Fear Not – February 21, 2021

1. **Introduction:** We certainly live in unsettling times: Covid-19, war, world poverty, political discord, bigotry, religious persecution, etc. Yet Jesus tells us “do not be anxious.” Today we’ll discuss the tension between living in fear and living in faith. We will also explore life’s priorities.

- a. Question: What are some things we worry about?
- b. Question: Why do you think we find it so hard to avoid worry?
- c. Question: Since worry is natural and ubiquitous what’s wrong with it?
- d. Question: Why are faith and trust strong medicines against worry?
- e. Question: Since worry is a congenital/chronic rather than an acute disease what does this tell us about the required dosage of the strong medicines of faith and trust?

2. **Read:** Luke 12:22-27, “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.’²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.²⁴ 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!²⁵ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?²⁶ If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?²⁷ 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.’”

- a. In verse 22 Jesus says, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.” This is not a suggestion; it is actually a command. But, it is clearly a command that is hard to keep.
- b. Question: God’s commands are all hard to keep. Why do you think God commands us to do things that are hard, in fact, impossible?
- c. Question: What reasons and/or examples does Jesus give for our not being anxious?
- d. Question: Does this mean that we are not to sow or reap?
- e. Question: Does this mean that we are not to save?
- f. Question: If the passage does not prohibit or even discourage us from sowing, reaping and saving then what is it saying to us?

3. **Read:** Luke 12:28, “But if God so clothes the grass, 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! ²⁹ And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.”

- a. Question: Verse 28 compares the worth of grass to a human. What is God’s evaluation of the relative worth of people and grass?
- b. Question: What happens when we over evaluate our importance/self-worth?
- d. Question: What happens when we under evaluate our importance/self-worth?
- e. Question: How would you describe a healthy evaluation of importance/self-worth?
- f. Question: What does verse 31 say about priorities?
- g. Question: What does verse 31 say we will receive if we first seek the kingdom of God?

4. **Read:** Luke 12:32-34, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that **do not grow old**, with a treasure in the heavens **that does not fail**, where **no thief approaches** and **no moth destroys**. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

- a. The passage continues the theme of priority. We are told to seek the truly valuable. We are shown the folly of wealth as the world considers and calculates it.
- b. Question: What is the promise in verse 32?
- c. Question: What does verse 33 say are the benefits of a treasure in heaven?
- d. Question: How can the 4 benefits listed in verse 33 be applied to our lives?
- e. Question: According to verse 34 what is the real disaster of trusting in worldly treasure?
- f. Question: How can we avoid the temptation of worldly treasure?
- g. There is a danger of over-literalizing verse 33. It is meant much like Matthew 5:29-30 where Jesus says as part of the Sermon on the Mount, “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.” Obviously, we are not being told to blind or mutilate ourselves. Jesus is simply emphasizing the importance of, in this case, avoiding sin. In our text today He is strongly emphasizing always putting God first in our lives and trusting in His provision.