

August 7, 2016
Sermon for The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Luke 12:22-34

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Luke 12:22–34 (ESV)

²² 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. 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. ³² “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.

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

Amen.

Our Gospel speaks about worry. *meteōrizesthe* While “worry” is the best translation, the classical Greek (and LXX) meaning of “lifting yourself up” (cf. Ps 131:1) gives an insight into what worry really means.

When we worry, we are lifting ourselves up above God, in place of God, rather than taking our place under God’s generous hand; we are exalting ourselves to be our own gods when we think our provision is all up to us.

We certainly have some mixed messages in today’s service. We have the voice of Jesus calling out to us: “*Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom*” (v 32). On the other hand, we have our bulletin and newsletters telling you what our contributions are and what activities are coming up that you as a congregation are responsible for. These two seem to be working at cross-purposes to each other.

We say that we don’t want you to worry, but at the same time, there are many burdens, many concerns, and many worries of this world that are laying upon you. Not to mention the various concerns of the world clamoring for your attention, often bringing anxiety, so, to which voice are you going to listen?

We get plenty of conflicting sounds and sights. Watch television and there are concerns about drug treatments...but, there are many side effects. The government says that they will solve all of your problems but then on the news it seems like hardly any of their laws and legislative processes solve anything.

Jesus points us to God’s creation and says, “Will God not care for you?”

Jesus calls for us to *listen* to what we see. So many of our worries are unfounded and we find that much of our worry is for nothing nor does it add any time to our lives.

Jesus' voice points to creation all around us ("*Consider the ravens,*" v 24; "*Consider the lilies,*" v 27) and says, "When you see creation, don't you see my Father's care? Don't you see the concern my Father has for everything all around you? Then surely you know that my Father is concerned for you as well."

When we look to creation, we see destruction and devastation. Tsunamis, hurricanes, tornados, wild fires—how many of these tragedies have touched your lives?

We can go on the internet and click from the birds in the air to the starving in Africa. Not only these natural disasters but also biological disasters—ravens that are being poisoned, lilies being stamped out—seem to cry out *against* God's care in creation.

They instead call our attention to failures, hardships, and trials that would weigh us down and fill us with anxiety: continued poverty in our nation, our soldiers fighting and dying in foreign countries, our dysfunctional political system.

And worse: it is not even really the tragedies of the world that bring us the greatest anxiety; rather, it is the call for *improvement*.

We are bombarded by the claims society places upon us concerning what we ought to be worried about. Commercials on television prod us to a better life. They tell us what we lack—whiter teeth, fresher breath, a better tasting beer—things that will supposedly turn our life around and make us better people.

We need the latest smart phone or tablet, or even a tattoo or piercing...we just have to have them or society won't accept us.

We see these things and satan and the world convince us of what we should want and that our life is certainly not complete without it. They want us to see what we lack.

The problem, though, is not with our eyes seeing things, but with our heart loving things.

We look to creation and see what we lack, but the problem is not what we see. The problem is where our heart is. "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (v 34). What we treasure is what we will love and what we will ultimately be concerned with.

The heart that does not see Jesus tries to build up treasure for itself. It places trust in the things of this world. But creation will not bring us satisfaction—since creation is intended to point to the Creator, not be worshiped itself (Rom 1:19–25).

So we find nothing but anxiety.

When the heart is treasuring the wrong things, then creation does not bring the comfort that Jesus speaks of; the problems of the world weigh upon us rather than being lifted, and anxiety and fear can be a great burden.

So, how do we put our heart in the right place so we can see rightly?

The solution is not how you see the world. It is how you see God.

Only by changing the way you look at God will your eyes shift and see things the way God would have us see them.

Specifically, you see how God sees *you*. In His Son, Jesus Christ, God sees us as a treasure. And we see rightly when we hear His Word that we are a wondrous treasure to God and where we (God's treasure) are, there also is His heart.

We are a wondrous treasure to God, and where we (His treasure) are, there also is His heart.

God sees us as a wondrous treasure. He loves you and paid for your salvation with His only begotten Son.

We are the culmination of His creation, those made in the image of God. Remember in Genesis, after God created man He looked at His creation and said that: "*it was very good*".

This is why Jesus can point to the raven, a worthless bird, and say, "*Of how much more value are you than the birds!*" (v 24).

Again, where God's treasure is, there is His heart also. We, you, are a treasure that draws His heart. That causes Him to send His heart down to earth, as His one and only Son leaves His place in heaven and becomes human, with a beating heart, that lives with God's treasure here on earth.

And God allows that heart to slow, slow, slow its beating, until it stops as Jesus hung on the cross. God treasures us so much that His own Son's heart ceases to beat and He dies, killed by the very treasure, His "very good" creation that He loves so much.

Being a treasure in God's eyes places our heart in the right place to see things clearly. Since God has given His Son's heart to us and put His heart where His treasure is, we can pull our heart away from what the world would have us treasure and place our heart in the loving hands of Jesus.

When our hearts are safe with Jesus, then we can be comforted by creation and see the love that God has for what He has made.

Since God loves His creation so much, how much more will He care about you? Anxiety and fear can be replaced by confidence and hope in Jesus Christ. It is yours!

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Sermon Outline

What Does Your Heart Hear?

(Luke 12:22-34)

- I. We get plenty of conflicting sounds and sights.
- II. The problem is not with our eyes seeing things, but with our heart loving things.
- III. How do we put our heart in the right place so we can see rightly?