

Monday

Read Luke 12:22-34

Four days of devotional content and four reasons Jesus gives in this passage not to worry or be anxious. Very convenient. Jesus teaches us not only not to worry or be anxious but to stop doing those things. So, if you find yourself consumed by anxiety and worry this week, your number one task is to bathe yourself in scripture, prayer, and conversation with fellow disciples in an effort to stop worrying!

In verse 22, Jesus turns to the disciples and starts with, "Therefore..." referring back to the passage from last week. Rephrased, we might say, "Therefore, since your life does not consist of possessions, I'll tell you this, stop being anxious about your life."

Reason number one: Being stressed out about possessions is foolish because life itself is more important (v. 23). Those of us with possessions are always at risk, especially in times like these, of radically overvaluing our possessions. What possessions would you have to lose before you decided life wasn't worth living? God did not create you so that you could buy a bunch of stuff and lord over it.

I have been to Tijuana, Mexico about 10 times to build houses. The first family I built for were a married couple, perhaps 21 years old, with a toddler and an infant who lived under a tarp on a plot of sandy ground. The dad worked as a security guard and the mom spent her day tending to the children and figuring out how they would stay safe and fed through the day. Their toilet was a small hole they dug by the tarp. Yet, they were not angry, they were not bitter, and they did not despair. They trusted God in a deep way that I doubt any of us could relate to in our daily lives. This doesn't mean that we should write them off as being ok with their lot, but they relied on God's provision and God used us to build them a house in which they thrived. They knew that God was taking care of them and they had an understanding of Jesus' second reason...

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Reason number two: God will take care of his own, just as he cares for birds (v. 24).

Jesus refers to ravens in this passage. It is interesting that he chooses ravens because they were considered unclean. Jesus doesn't say, 'Consider the lovely dove,' but rather asks them to consider what they would've thought was an ugly and unclean bird from which they should stay away. The raven is a scavenger, it doesn't work or have storerooms and yet God takes care of it. You are much more valuable in God's sight than a raven, dear disciples. God doesn't take your

demands for how you'd like to be taken care of, but He promises to take care of you. Be comforted that you will always have what God thinks you need.

Wednesday

Read 1 John 4:12-16

Reason three: Anxiety accomplishes nothing. Anxiety gives the illusion of control and that you are doing something in a situation that you can't actually do anything about at the moment. The only thing worrying accomplishes is destroying your well-being. (I'll quickly note that some have a mental health issue around anxiety. If you think that may be you or someone in your life, please seek professional help.)

Remember, in 1 John 4:12-16, John wants us to know that whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, that God abides – makes God's home – in that person through the presence of the Holy Spirit. God is love and that love abides in you. God is literally with you. God doesn't want you to worry or be anxious.

Thursday

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This is the only place in the New Testament that we hear Jesus refer to his 'little flock', which emphasizes the significance of the Christian community. Jesus personally loves and cares for you! God is happy to give you the kingdom as an heir alongside Jesus himself. In light of that, v. 33 tells us to make sure we can be generous with what we've been given. Some acquire too much and then spend all their time and resources hoarding, maintaining, and protecting what they have instead of being generous. This is not the way of the Jesus follower. A Jesus follower should be willing to sell their possessions if necessary to be generous and the prudent course would be not to acquire too much stuff in the first place so that you have plenty to be generous to God and others with. Matthew 6:24 says, "Woe to you that are rich, for you have already received your comfort."

In the last verse of our passage for today, Jesus tells us that where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. What do you practically treasure in your everyday life? What do you hold close? In this passage, Jesus says your priorities should be like this: seeking after the Kingdom of God you will naturally be generous to God and to your neighbors without having to concern yourself with tomorrow – God will take care of you.

Friday

In preparation for Palm Sunday, please read and reflect on Luke 19:28-40. Blessings!