

Pentecost 11, 2010C

743 “Jesus, Priceless Treasure”

*736 “Consider How The Birds Above”

735 “Have No Fear Little Flock”

“Do not be Anxious?”

²²[Jesus] 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. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider 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! ²⁵And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷Consider 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. ²⁸But 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! ²⁹And **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.** ³³Sell 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. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Luke 12:22-34 (ESV)

When Jesus says, **Do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them,** He’s not saying that you ought not think about the things needed for your bodies, as if you don’t live in the body and don’t need to eat and to drink, sleep, or anything else. Some might have such an understanding that you ought not concern ourselves at all with the things of this life, as if you’re only spiritual beings, not flesh and blood; spiritual beings without a digestive system, without need for proper nutrition, without the need for medicine, not needing \$\$, not needing protection from the elements, and having no need to care for your bodies.

But just as Jesus was flesh and blood, eating, drinking, and sleeping—so are you. We have no spiritual Jesus. And neither are you just spiritual beings. You **walk by faith, not by sight** (2 Cor. 5:7). But you still live in the world, though you are not of the world (John 17:11; 14, 16). You have a soul, but you also are flesh and bone. For this reason, we don’t deny the use of God’s gifts like some do, gifts like modern technology, medicines, and medical treatment.

In and of themselves, these things are be good. And many they of great blessing and benefit. The concern is how they’re used. They can be used for good. But they can also

be misused and abused for evil. They can also pose more questions than answers and create more problems than solutions. With life support systems as they are, how long is too long? Just because we *can* do something, does this mean that we should? (i.e. Stem cell research is a good technology. But embryonic stem cell research is a bad one, resulting in the destruction of human life.)

The fact that medical technologies and other technologies can likewise be misused or abused, though, don't make them sinful or bad. Guns don't kill people. People kill people. Drugs can make the sick more comfortable and the pain more bearable. But they can also be overused and create manifold complications, and even death if used improperly. Computers are useful tools, but they can be used to exploit others and to tempt and indulge our already sinful nature.

Again, with reference to today's text, Jesus is not saying that we ought not think about or consider the needs of our bodies. Rather does He say, **Do not be anxious, Do not worry**, Do not 'be upset' concerning these things. There's a difference between being very concerned, somewhat concerned, and not concerned at all about the things of this life. God would have us not worry, be anxious or fret over what we do or don't have. At the same time, He would not have us neglect what we do need, thinking that we can live however we want, do whatever we want, and not care at all about how we use what God has freely given.

As God's people, called by the Gospel, having been washed through the water and Word of Holy Baptism, we are to avoid the extremes of anxiety and worry about God's provision on the one hand, and independence from what God says on the other. Anxiety and worry about God's provision, anxiety and worry about God taking care of our bodily needs demonstrates a dependency of our soul on worldly things, not on God. It also shows doubt, even faithlessness that God will follow through with His promise to give what you what you need. This is why Jesus says in verse 28 of Luke 12, **O you of little faith?**

Therefore does Jesus direct your attention to His creation and to His wonderful provision (like in the Psalms and the Proverbs of the Old Testament). Look at the grass! Look at the lilies of the field! Look at the flowers and the trees. God clothes them. They are done to. And since He clothes them as they are, how much more will He clothe you? Look at the birds! Consider how they neither sow nor reap, nor do they have refrigerators or freezers, and **God feeds them** (v24). **Life is more than food and the body is more than clothing** (v23).

Jesus is saying, 'Stop and think about these things, these things that you see and know. Stop taking God's care of His creation, and for you, for granted. Since He cares about the things of the earth, His creation, How much more does He care for you?

If God provides for His creation with all it needs, and He does, how much more will He provide for those He originally created in His own image, both male and female (Genesis 1:26-27).

Again, look at the plants and the animals, and there you see the Lord God at work. As the grass of the field and the flowers and the trees, as well as all living creatures are dependent on our Lord, so are you. And since not one sparrow **is forgotten**, neglected, or overlooked **before God**, neither are you (Luke 12:6). Our Lord says, **The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows** (Luke 12:7).

For this reason you are not to worry or be anxious about your life, about what may or may not be, about what food you will or won't eat, about where you'll live or how you'll live. God has you in His good and gracious hands.

Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things, even before you ask Him. **He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust** (Matthew 5:45). He gives good gifts to those who ask, to those who ask in faith, not doubting, but believing His promises and trusting His Holy Word. So ask, and so trust in the Lord, for not once has He or will He fail You. Not once has He not kept His Word. Do not doubt or disbelieve, but hold fast to Him who is faithful, who truly does give you 'all that you need to support this your body and your life' and who truly does 'defend you against all harm and danger' (Small Catechism, Meaning of First Article).

And if He does these things for you, certainly will He provide the very means for His church to do and to so be about doing what he would have them do in the way He would want it done—faithfully—according to His Word.

The world and the things of this world will pass away. But **The Word of the Lord endures forever** (1 Peter 1:25). Your bodies will die, should your Lord not return before your last breath. But there will be a resurrection of our bodies. Your faith is not futile. Your faith in Jesus Christ is not in vain, for Christ has risen from the dead, **For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive** (1 Cor 15:17, 21-22).

God, through His Son Jesus Christ, gives you eternal life. You have no need to fear even death, let alone anything else, for you have your Savior, Jesus Christ. By worrying and by fretting you add nothing to your life (v25).

God would have you neither worry, be anxious, nor fret over the needs of this life. He will provide, for such promises does your Lord make. Into His hands, then, commend yourselves, your bodies, your souls, and *ALL* things. The Lord would have you seek His kingdom, His Word and promises, His grace, His good will and favor towards you, demonstrated and found *IN* Jesus, and given to you in Word and Sacrament. Having Jesus is also to have everything else, for so your Lord says, **And all these things will be added unto you** (v31).

God would also have you not misuse, abuse, or neglect the gifts He has given. The Lord's Word, **Don't worry**, is not a license for either anxiety and worry on the one hand,

or laziness and contempt of work on the other. Your abilities and talents are among the gifts God has given you. Your Lord provides for our bodily needs, this is true, but this doesn't mean that you now don't have to work. Money doesn't grow on trees. Nor does food or clothing somehow magically appear to you. Your Lord does provide, but He does so through you and through others. He has given you hands and feet and arms and legs that you use them to serve others. Therefore, use wisely what the Lord has given you. It's not a matter of lack. It's God that gives to you and provides for you what He will, whether that be less than or more than another. It's a matter of your use or another's use of what God has given, whether you squander or hold back, or give liberally and generously.

Our dependence is on the Lord, but He has given you your body and the things for your body to be used for good and for the benefit of others. Just as the Lord Jesus sacrificed Himself willingly for you, so are you to serve those around you, both inside and outside the home, and those inside and outside this family of faith. And this you do, not to get right with God, but because God has given you His Son; and because of Him, you know and believe that your true and lasting treasure is not of the things of this world, but of God, whose kingdom comes, as we pray, "Thy Kingdom Come" (Small Catechism, Second Petition).

In and on God's Word and promise—stake your confidence, for there is the unshakable foundation. For the Christian, there really is no reason to worry or fret, over anything. To do so demonstrates that you still live in the flesh and are in need of a Savior—Christ and Him crucified and resurrected.

Worry is not of God. But what is of God is certainty and confidence, for His Word is true. Therefore strive to hold firm to Him and to His Word. Turn away from doubt and lack of confidence in God's promises. Strive not to misuse, abuse, or neglect God's gifts of both body and soul, but use them as He has intended them to be used—according to His will. Hear His Word. Believe what He says. Receive His good gifts with joy and thanksgiving, and live life in service to others, having full confidence of His kingdom, not worrying about the things of this life, nor taking for granted what you do have, all by God's giving hand, for **it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.** Therefore, **fear not.** Amen.