

Seek First the Kingdom: Stewardship of Faith

Bible text: Luke 11:22-34

Sermon series: Luke 12 - Stewardship

Introduction

Back to Luke: Luke 12 – series on stewardship

Last week: stewardship of finances. Directed mainly to wealthy people (most of us are, compared to the rest of the world). Do you lay up treasure for yourself or are you rich toward God (v.21.)?

Today we continue with the next verses... they also deal with money, but now mainly directed to people who are struggling financially.

Text: Luke 12:22-34

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.

1) Stop worrying, start worshipping

Luke 12:22-23 (ESV)

22 ... 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.

Examples:

- “Consider the ravens... God feeds them” (v.24)

- “Consider the lilies... even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” (v.27)

>>> Solomon was known for his wealth. Neither ravens nor lilies own anything... yet God takes care of them.

We can worry all we want, but it’s not going to help us. We cannot provide for ourselves by worrying more. We cannot “*add a single hour to [our] span of life*” (v.25).

Worry is pointless. So stop worrying, start worshiping. Instead of being a professional worrier, become a prayer warrior!

>>> Worship and prayer takes the burden of worry off of us! Having more income or more possessions doesn’t eliminate worry... we just have more things to worry about!

#1 Stop worrying, start worshiping!

2) Live a life of faith: believing loyalty

Luke 12:28-30 (ESV)

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.

“O you of little faith” – did Jesus really say that? So my faith just needs to be bigger and then God will provide for me? Or are we understanding “faith” incorrectly?

When the New Testament speaks about faith, it uses the Greek word pistis. Too often we shrink that word down to “believing certain things in our head.” But in the ancient world, pistis carried the sense of allegiance or loyalty, especially the kind of loyalty people back then would give to a king.

Real faith is not just believing about Jesus believing that he will give you what you want or what you need, but giving our full allegiance to Jesus as the risen Lord who reigns in heaven and will return to the earth.

This ties directly into the Old Testament. The Hebrew word for faith, *’emunah*, doesn’t mean abstract belief but steadfast trust and covenant faithfulness. Abraham’s faith was not just intellectual assent—it was trusting God enough to follow wherever he led. Israel’s faithfulness meant living in covenant loyalty with Yahweh. And God himself is called “faithful,” because he never breaks his word.

Habakkuk 2:4 (ESV)

... *the righteous shall live by his faith.* (covenant loyalty)

So when the New Testament calls us to faith in Christ and contrasts it with having “little faith”, it is calling us to live in that same covenant loyalty. Faith is not just saying a prayer or agreeing

with a creed; it is the daily posture of allegiance—trusting Jesus, following him, and remaining faithful because he is faithful.

Faith (pistis) = believing loyalty

Let's be people of "great faith", believing loyalty to Jesus!

Did you know that the only two instances in the New Testament where Jesus speaks about people with "great faith"? Both of them are in relation to Gentiles. Remember... Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (and still is), but he had us as gentiles in mind!

Matthew 8:10 (ESV)

When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith."

τοσαύτην πίστιν = tosaútēn pistin = such faith / such a degree of faith

Matthew 15:28 (ESV)

Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire."

πίστις μεγάλη = great faith

As (mostly) gentile followers of Jesus, let's be people that are known for their "great" faith, their remarkable loyalty to King Jesus!

#2 Live a life of believing loyalty!

3) Keep the Kingdom in focus in everything you do

Luke 12:31 (ESV)

"Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you."

Actively seek his Kingdom! Chase after it with your whole heart! When that's your focus, "all these things" ... your daily needs, food, clothing, etc., will be taken care of!

Luke 12:32 (ESV)

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Our daily needs fade when we think of the amazing promises of his coming Kingdom! He promised his disciples "the kingdom," which in their mind would have been a literal kingdom in Israel... God's Kingdom! And this Kingdom will spill over to the rest of the world... and we will rule and reign with him!

God's end time purposes will stand!

Remember last chapter... Luke's shortened version of the Lord's prayer:

Luke 11:2-3 (ESV)

*"Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread..."*

Yes, we can pray for these daily needs, but our prime focus needs to be YHWH's name and fame (*"hallowed be your name"*) and the Kingdom that is coming (*"Your kingdom come"*)!

You can see that focus in Jesus' teaching on worry and faith here in Luke 12:

Luke 12:34 (ESV)

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Your heart follows where you invest your prayers, your faith, your finances, your investment of time!

#3 Keep the Kingdom in focus in everything you do

Conclusion

So is Jesus and his Kingdom in focus in your life?

So where is your treasure? Where do you place your focus? On Jesus, his Kingdom, the things that are above?

I believe Paul captured the heart of Jesus' teaching here in Colossians 3:1-4:

Colossians 3:1-4 (ESV)

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

How do you *"seek the things that are above"*? How do you *"set your minds on things that are above"*? Are you too busy with the things here on earth... the little focus you have for God is during the 1.5 hrs of Sunday service... maybe 5 minutes each day by reading the verse of the day.

Here is what: invest your time – treasure – talent in Kingdom things... starting with the local church you are a part of! Your heart will magically follow!

Focus on Jesus! Focus on his Kingdom!