

2017 NL3 Luke 12:22-40 Summer Series
17-08-27 Some Sunday after Pentecost

God's beloved people, grace and peace to you in the name of our crucified and risen Savior,
Jesus Christ.....Amen.....

"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or your body, what you will wear."
This is a word from Jesus today that got me thinking.... because I am a worrier. So I decided to do some research and I googled "worry" which led mostly to pages of definitions and then self-help guides: 9 ways to end worry – webMD; 10 ways to stop worrying and sleep; 15 ways!; 30 Bible verses about worry; 7 steps to better sleep and less worry - - sounds like a lot to worry about!!!

Then I googled "what worries..." and the very first suggestion was an article in Financial Times, "What worries the wealthy." "I can't find my mansion on google earth because it was only built last year."

But they also polled 2800 millionaires across the world from Italy to Singapore....., Hong Kong and Japan....., the UK and the US. And the top five categories of worry were these: geopolitics, the environment, the economy, financial planning, and family.

And the next entry in the google list was: what worries the world. The most common worry across cultures and countries is unemployment..... No job... no income.... No means to support you and your family.

Hear Jesus' words again, *"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or your body, what you will wear."* Then continuing.... *"Consider the ravens whom God feeds and the lilies whom God clothes.... And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying.... It is the nations of the world that strive for these things.... sell your possessions, and give alms."*

Several people this week in different bible studies commented, "But we can't live this way." And it's true. Our culture today is so different than the culture of Jesus' day: in Jesus' time, people had their kinship and community ties to rely on. In our time, we don't.

Our society and western culture is primarily individualistic; in the US we uphold individual rights as the highest order. If I sell everything, if I quit earning a living that puts food on the table and clothes on my kids, that's irresponsible, because I can't count on someone else doing it for me, and we shouldn't. Yet even so..... some folks in our culture and society, need help.

Jesus here is talking to his disciples, and he's talking to the rich in the crowd. The poor in that day lived at a subsistence level – day to day. Even the wealthy, or those who had a bit of surplus lived in the moment without much thought for the future. But Jesus - - again - - presents a different way.

And in rapid succession, Jesus lays it out there:

v.31 *Strive for the kingdom! And these things will be given to you.... Do God's work.... Focus on serving God and the rest will be there..... Because.....*

v.32 *It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom! In Jesus, God has given you all you ultimately need. It's yours!! God has saved you in Jesus. God loves you.... Therefore....*

v.33 *sell your extras and gives alms.... Serve the kingdom by sharing with your neighbor who has none..... Give regularly to the church and to causes. Make purses for yourselves in*

heaven!.... By helping your neighbor. When we serve those around us, that currency never goes bad. Changed lives never lose their value.

v.34 *Where your treasure is.... so is your heart.* The treasure that Jesus has given you is salvation.... There is no striving to earn it – the Father has given it to you already..... So your heart is free to love and serve God and neighbor..... It's not on you to save your life – Jesus did it!!! So you can focus on those who are stuck in worry..... *not worrying about your life.*

v.35 *Be dressed for action* – your clothes, like the lilies, are workout clothes, or strike team gear..... Not theological comfy pants and slippers....

v.40 *Be ready!!*

Even in Jesus' day he wasn't giving permission to do nothing..... and live a life of sloth....

It's NOT..... “don't worry, be happy....” IT'S... “Don't worry, be ready!!!”

Be ready because.... *The Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour....* This can be taken as a second coming kind of thing..... BUT more significant for us is that Jesus comes to us every day in the poor...., the hungry.... the blind...., the lame, and those who worry.

God is up to stuff in the world..... the kingdom is now – as we talked about a couple of weeks ago. And God brings in the kingdom: in unexpected ways, often at inopportune times, when you might feel ill-prepared.

But God is working and calls us to be ready. God's people..., Be ready.... to bring justice to those who can't manufacture it on their own.

It has been two weeks since Charlottesville and also the demonstration and counter-protest in downtown Seattle. In the aftermath of that, as so often happens, the internet was LIT UP by people reacting to the racism and hate on display in our own country. And it should have been that way. People signed petitions and statements condemning racism and so on.....

Then after a day or so you started hearing other voices condemning the actions of the counter-protesters against the hate groups..... “They use violence, too,” some said.....

And what about removing the Southern war memorials?.....

Some of the counter-protesters critiqued the petition signers saying, “Where have you been all these years? This isn't new to us, we live it every day!!” There is worry in these words.....

There is daily worry out there - - those who are made poor in confidence by worry and forced to subsist day by day.....

And so Jesus talks to you and to me....., people of faith,.... to not only share the promise of worry-free life, but also to give it away.....

It is one thing to advocate for justice – to sign petitions and share articles on Facebook.

But Jesus also comes to us in these times and calls us to pursue justice, strive for justice – to be ready for action and come to those who are stuck in worry....., seek them out and meet them with justice....., so that they don't have to beg for it.

How do we use our voice, constructively, so that those steeped in worry are freed to share their voices?

GWOH t-shirts this year!!!! A small gesture of support for our Arabic speaking neighbors who are troubled in this world by radicals and others alike.

There will always be things that pop up to trouble us – none of them can take away Jesus' promises to you. And the promise of the worry-free life is for everyone. Be ready and dressed for action to share it.

Amen.....