

**Luke 12:22-32 (Ninth Sunday after Pentecost—Series C)**  
**“Provided for In the Journey”**  
**Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Enfield CT**  
**August 7, 2022**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our text is the Gospel lesson from Luke 12:

<sup>22</sup>And He said to His disciples, “Therefore, I say to you, do not be anxious about your life—what you will eat, nor about your body—what you will wear. <sup>23</sup>For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. <sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens because they neither sow nor reap, who have neither storeroom nor barn, but God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds? <sup>25</sup>Any which of you, by being anxious, is able to add a cubit to his age? <sup>26</sup>If, therefore, you are not able to do this little thing, why are you anxious about the rest? <sup>27</sup>Consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, but I say to you, neither Solomon in all his glory was clothed as one of these! <sup>28</sup>And if God so clothes the grass, being in the field today and tomorrow thrown into the fire, how much more you, you of little faith? <sup>29</sup>And you, do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink and do not be worried. <sup>30</sup>For all the nations of the world seek these things, and your Father knows that you need these things. <sup>31</sup>But rather seek His reign and rule, and all these things will be added to you. <sup>32</sup>Do not fear, little flock, because your Father is well-pleased to give you the kingdom.”

Physical needs are an important part of life. It is universally agreed upon that all people need food and water, clothing, and shelter—the most basic of human needs. However, physical needs should not dominate a Christian’s thinking. Jesus said to the crowd after the man asked Him to tell his brother to divide up the family inheritance that “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Lk 12:15). Possessions, as important as they are, do not make up our source of true life or wealth in relation to God. Since possessions can become a significant distraction for the Christian disciple, Jesus addresses the disciple’s attitude toward them in relation to the reign and rule of God.

“Therefore, I say to you, do not be anxious about your life—what you will eat, nor about your body—what you will wear. For life is more than food and the body more than clothing.” Last Sunday, I spoke on the theme of “being what you are” as a Baptized child of God. That theme does carry over to our Gospel text. You are a child of the heavenly Father.

The Holy Spirit dwells in you (1 Cor 3:16). You live by faith in Jesus Christ and so, as your Lord has taught you, you pray and trust in God your heavenly Father to provide for you all that you need to support this body and life. And yet, our sinful nature still clings to us, and it is so difficult to look past ourselves and depend on another, even God Himself!

Consider the rich fool from Jesus' parable last Sunday. He had no thoughts toward God. He looked to secure himself and his future without God. "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall **I** do, for **I** have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, '**I** will do this: **I** will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And **I** will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry'" (Luke 12:16–19 ESV). He trusted only in himself and his ability to take care of his life. The farmer did not entrust himself, indeed his very life, to God. And what did the Lord call him? "Fool!"

You and I have not just played the fool, we have been the fool. We have failed to always recognize that God is the Giver of all things, including life and salvation. That's because our possessions—our stuff—becomes a distraction. If life is truly more than what we eat, drink, and wear, if life is really more than storing up for ourselves earthly treasures, even though they might make us happy or feel good, why do we so readily live like our possessions are the end-all and be-all of our existence? Why do we fixate on having these things and attaining these things when God promises to provide them to us? Because we too are those of little faith. We seek what we are to eat and drink, wrongly believing that it is solely dependent on ourselves to provide. We do fail to pray and trust in God our heavenly Father to provide for us all that we need for life. When we are anxious and worried about

physical things, Jesus says that we end up acting like “the nations,” the Gentiles, meaning, unbelievers.

But that’s not who we are! Possessions, as important as they are, don’t make up our source of true life or wealth. “Consider the ravens because they neither sow nor reap, who have neither storeroom nor barn, but God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds?” Psalm 147:9, “He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry” (Psa. 147:9 ESV). Here is something interesting. In the Law given to the children of Israel, ravens are declared to be “unclean.” They are forbidden as food for the Israelites; ravens are not kosher. So, if God even cares for the unclean animals and birds of creation, surely He will care for His children! So don’t be anxious about these things.

“Consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, but I say to you, neither Solomon in all his glory was clothed as one of these! And if God so clothes the grass, being in the field today and tomorrow thrown into the fire, how much more you, you of little faith?” If God adorns the common plants, the lowly grass that is burned for fuel, with such glory and splendor and beauty, how much more will He lavish good things on the crown of His creation, humanity! So don’t be anxious about these things.

Jesus today redirects our hearts and minds from seeking after these things—food, clothes, and earthly treasures—to seeking what is truly an everlasting treasure, God’s kingdom, His reign and rule in the person and work of Jesus Christ. “Your Father knows that you need these things. But rather seek His reign and rule, and all these things will be added to you. Do not fear, little flock, because your Father is well-pleased to give you the kingdom.”

You have a heavenly Father, God Almighty, who provides for ALL your needs. That's why Jesus taught us to pray to our Father in heaven for ALL things truly necessary because God is the Father who always gives good gifts to His children. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear Father. His kingdom, His reign and rule, comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, "so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity" (*Small Catechism*).

By His grace, we believe the God our Father is kindly disposed toward us because of the saving work of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ's suffering and death on the cross for our sins of selfishness, for our lack of fear, love, and trust in God our Father above all things, won for us forgiveness and everlasting life. Through the Word and Sacraments, God the Holy Spirit delivers to us this forgiveness and life and so brings God's reign and rule to us in Jesus. God's will for our salvation is accomplished by Jesus. You and I can look to our heavenly Father in faith and with trust knowing that He will indeed provide all that we need. Therefore, we don't need to be concerned and worried about what we will eat or wear. We don't need to be afraid in this life because we have a God and Lord who is with us, who is for us, and who provides our daily bread.

We understand that daily bread includes "Everything that belongs to the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good

government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like" (*Small Catechism*). Luther further comments in the *Large Catechism*, "God wishes to show us how He cares for us in all our need and faithfully provides also for our earthly support. He abundantly grants and preserves these things, even for the wicked and rogues [Matthew 5:45]. Yet, He wishes that we pray for these goods in order that we may recognize that we receive them from His hand and may feel His fatherly goodness toward us in them."<sup>1</sup>

God our Father not only wills to provide us with earthly possessions and treasures that we need to support our body and life here and now, but He is also well-pleased to give us His kingdom with the assurance that all these earthly things are added alongside. Our eternal life in body and soul at the resurrection is also a gift of God that He has prepared for us through the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. According to His Fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, He gives us everlasting life through the Gospel and the Sacraments. This we receive by faith, according to His Word and Promise. As Abraham believed, and the Lord counted it to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6), so we too believe by grace through faith that Jesus alone has won our forgiveness and everlasting life that is filled with heavenly treasure. Even so, with faith in the Lord's promises, we trust that He will continue to supply us with earthly treasures, preserving us in body and soul throughout the days of our earthly journey, even to the day of the resurrection of all flesh. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 418.