

Sermon Luke 12:32-34

32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The unit of thought starts at verse 22 and maybe as far back as the beginning of the chapter.

Subject: How can we not fear having what we need and/or giving things away?

Compliment: By trusting in our Shepherd, Father, and King, and by putting our worth in the eternal (the kingdom).

Homiletical Idea:

We need not hold tightly to possessions or fear giving because we can trust God desires to give us the Kingdom.

Introduction

When Jonathan asked me to preach and told me I could pick any passage from Luke that was not already being preached, I thought it was imperative to preach on the foundation verse for this portion of the series. I mean, if we thought it was important enough to memorize, it ought to be important enough to preach on, right? As I thought more about it, I remembered that last November I preached on 1 Timothy 6:17-19 and spent a lot of time talking about not putting our trust in money, but putting it in God. I even quoted the passage in Matthew which is similar to today’s passage in Luke about not storing up treasure on earth, which is uncertain, but storing up treasure in heaven, which is certain. The big idea from that sermon was that you can’t take hold of eternal life while holding onto money. I wondered if I was setting myself up for a repeat sermon, because at first blush, this passage seemed very similar. However, as I meditated on this passage, looked more closely at it, and sought out what other people have seen in it, God gave me a

definitively new and different, although certainly not contradictory, message to share from this passage. The message from Timothy was about taking hold of eternal life and living for the age to come. I think this passage is much more about how God's people should live here and why.

Context/Background: Luke 12:22 we see that Jesus is talking to his disciples; we see this message is for his followers. He is telling them not to spend time worrying about what they will eat or wear. Jesus notes that the pagans worry about these things. He assures them God knows they need them and he says if they seek the kingdom, all of those other things will also be provided.

1. We do not need to fear lacking daily necessities and care.
 - a. So, picking up in verse 32 it says, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." There are a lot of things we can learn from this short verse by looking at the language Jesus is using. First, we are like sheep... not too bright, a bit helpless, and lacking direction. Second, Jesus is our shepherd. Third, we have a Father in God and we are part of a family. Fourth, our Father is good and generous and it makes him happy to give us His kingdom, which leads us to the fifth item; God, our Father, if he has a kingdom to give, must be a King. There is a lot in that little verse, and it certainly helps us understand why we don't have to fear.
 - b. Psalm 23 was our foundation verse in the previous sermon series. It says, The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
 - c. Now contrast that with this thought: I don't have a lot of time to watch TV, but there are a couple of shows I find interesting

when I have time. I tend to like to watch things I haven't done, couldn't do, or wouldn't do. One such show is a reality show on the Discovery Channel called Naked and Afraid. In this show, two people are dropped off in a deserted and dangerous place with no shelter, no food, no water, and no clothes to survive for either 21 or 40 days depending on the show. Can you imagine? How much of your time would be spent worrying about what you will drink, eat, wear, etc. It would be all consuming.

i. When a child comes into the world with a good father, they don't spend any time worrying about what they will drink, eat, or wear.

d. We have a good shepherd, a good Father, and a good King; we do not need to worry about what these things.

2. We are to be generous as our Father is generous

a. The beginning of verse 33 says, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor." Remember, Jesus is talking to his disciples. They are not walking around with a lot of cash; they don't even have a lot of things. Yet, he wants his followers to be like him, generous.

b. I remember in 2010 or 2011, when we had just completed one adoption and we in process on another, and cash was not abundant, I had finally come into ownership of a handed down snow blower. I had wanted one for a long time, and this one came to me free. I was quite pleased. Shortly after getting it, God clearly told me I was to sell the snow blower and give the money to man I had met in Haiti who had a wife and two sons, but no home. I was obedient in that, and it provided joy to me to think about them, and pray for them each time I shoveled.

c. n/a

d. As John Piper says it, sell the treasure that will not last, and seek the treasure that will not fail. I happen to know the person I sold the snow blower to, and it is still running strong. But, I can guarantee it will be in the scrapyards someday. Sell

the treasure that will not last and seek the treasure that will not fail. This brings us to the next point.

3. Seek the treasure that will not fail.

- a. The rest of verse 33 says, “Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.” How do we do this? I think the answer is in the first part of the verse. “Sell your possessions and give to the poor.” Each time you do this you are loosening your grip on the things of this world and seeking the Kingdom to use the language of the earlier part of Luke 12.
- b. Luke 6:38 says, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” There seems to be some correlation between giving in this life and what will be given to us in the coming age. In addition, we see in Matthew where Jesus welcomes in the coming age those who shared things with the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, imprisoned, etc. “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”
- c. Likewise, Jesus sent away those who cared more about their possessions than the needs of others. “whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”
- d. Seek the treasure that will not fail. Store up for yourselves treasure in heaven.

4. Jesus calls us to abundant life

- a. I said this passage is about how Jesus’ followers should live and why. I think I have laid out the how, and perhaps a little of the why, but I think the why so far is a little abstract; about treasure in heaven. The final verse brings us to the practical why for the here and now; for life on earth. Verse 34 says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” In John chapter 10, another chapter about Jesus being the shepherd and thieves stealing and destroying, Jesus says that

he, as the good shepherd, has to not only protect his sheep but to give them abundant life. What does it mean, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also? The heart is the source of joy and hope in our life. Think of the sayings we have. It fills up my heart means that something brings you joy. Don't lose heart means don't lose hope. If our heart follows our treasure, then it would stand to reason that if our treasure is secure, our joy and hope are secure; if our treasure is not secure, our joy and hope are not secure. Our joy and hope must be in Christ, in God, in the Kingdom.

- b. Certainly we understand that we cannot treasure things that obviously devalue and degrade over time, right? We are keenly aware of what is temporary, right? We would never treasure a car or a boat. Would we treasure our lawn or our house? What about our job? Our 401K balance? How about our athletic ability or our health? Our ability to walk? How about our spouse or our family, we are supposed to treasure them right? What happens if you lose your job and they repossess your car? Would you still have joy? What if the stock market drops by 50%? Would you still have hope? What if your house burned down? What if you were paralyzed in an accident? Would you still have joy? What if, like Job, you lost everything including your family? Would that take your hope and joy?
- c. There are very few absolute promises in Scripture outside of the attributes of God, although throughout Christian history people have taken things out of context or twisted things to claim a prosperity gospel or to condemn those who are sick or poor. Here are some of the promises Jesus made to his followers:
 - i. Luke 9:23-24 “Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.”
 - ii. John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

iii. So, it will be hard to follow Jesus, and we know this world is broken. Life will not be easy. But, thankfully, Jesus made other promises to his followers such as abundant life, rest, power through the Holy Spirit, eternal life, that he is preparing a place for us, that he is coming back...

d. Jesus wants us to reduce the things we treasure on earth and increase the things we treasure in heaven because he wants to guard our hearts, or joy, and our hope. [Christine Caine if time] What can we do to treasure Jesus more? What can we do to treasure God more? What can we do to treasure the Kingdom more? Sell our possessions and give to the poor.

We need not hold tightly to possessions or fear giving because we can trust God desires to give us the Kingdom.

Conclusion:

Sell the treasure that will not last, and seek the treasure that will not fail. Remember that we have a good shepherd, a good father, a good king. God desires to give us the kingdom. We cannot exhaust God's resources. Be generous as our Heavenly Father is generous. Hold loosely to the things of this world and give to those in need. Help those in need of help. Don't be afraid to give beyond what seems smart. Store up treasure in heaven. Treasure God. Treasure Christ. Your heart, your joy, your hope will all follow your treasure. Protect them by putting them all in a secure place. Please pray with me.

Prayer, and don't forget the offering.

Benediction: Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."