**Luke 12:22-34**

**The Weight of Worry**

What do you worry about? Everyone here worries about something to some degree for some amount of time. You may be someone who worries a lot about work—am I gonna hit my deadlines, will my work be satisfactory, am I gonna be forced into overtime this weekend? Maybe, you’re someone who worries about your kids—are they going to be successful, have I given them everything they need, will they be safe? Maybe, you worry about your relationships with family or friends—is he ever going to learn, will they talk to me when they find out, will we be able to reconcile or is this the reality moving forward? We could pass the mic around the room and open up our worries to each other, but we’d be here all week. Because worry has grabbed a hold of each one of us in some way, shape, or form. Worry is a pain, it’s destructive, it’s debilitating—it’s sinful. The weight of worry is crushing in two generic ways. 1) It’s physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting. 2) It’s spiritually destructive. But this morning, Jesus reminds us that we don’t have the responsibility of carrying the weight of our worry, because we have a God who fills in all those what ifs, and we have a Savior who has already solidified our salvation and eternal destination.

I have a couple people I want you to meet. Kelly is a wife to Ben, and a mom of 3. Kelly is self-employed and tried her hand at filing taxes on her own for the first time. She received a letter from the IRS a couple weeks later, and when she laid eyes on that envelope, her hands trembled as she picked it up. “It’s probably a mistake,” she told herself, but her heart pounded. She imagined everything: tax fraud, back payments, losing her house, going to court. That night, she hardly slept. She pictured the worst—packing boxes, crying children, the look of disappointment on her husband’s face. The next morning, she canceled plans with her friend, skipped breakfast, and finally forced herself to open the envelope. Inside was a single piece of paper. “You overpaid by $300. You will receive a refund.”

Frank had applied for his dream job—an environmental policy advisor with a well-known nonprofit. After weeks of interviews, they told him to expect a call on Friday with their final decision. By 10 a.m. Friday, no call. At noon, still nothing. By 3 p.m., Frank’s mind was spinning. *“Did I say something wrong in the last interview?”* *“Maybe they Googled me and found something bad.” “I knew I shouldn’t have joked about that one thing.”* *“They hated me. That’s it. I’ll never get a job in this field.”* He stared at his phone, refreshing his email every five minutes. He didn’t eat lunch. He ignored texts from his friends. The weight of dread sat heavy in his stomach. At 4:45 p.m., he gave up and went for a walk, fully convinced he had failed. When he got home at 5:15, there was a voicemail. The hiring manager had called at 4:30, but his phone was in “Do Not Disturb.” *“Hi Frank, we’d love to offer you the position. Call me back when you can!”*

Kelly lost peace and sleep all over something that hadn’t even happened. Frank was overwhelmed because he had spent the entire day worrying about something that had already worked out. Most of you probably have something that you’ve been worrying about and you don’t know what to do with it. Your worry has you thinking about your past, what’s happening in the present, and what’s going to happen in the future as if you have control over any of it, and the fact of the matter is, you don’t. Jesus’ first picture is of a scavenger: **Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap; they have no warehouse or barn; and yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds!** He makes the same point about your clothes. Not even the super rich King Solomon could buy something as beautiful as the clothes God puts on flowers. So why do you worry so much about the things God says he’ll take care of? Many of you know that parenthood opens your eyes to a whole new view of life. When you’ve got a baby, you need to do everything. Feed them, change them, file their nails, move them from the crib, to the floor, to the car seat. You do everything. But now I want you to close your eyes and look back. All the meals that sustained you. All the nights you spent under a roof in bed. All the days when your lungs took in air, and your heart was pumping. That’s God’s grace. Not a day has gone by when God, by whatever means he cared to use, took care of you.

But we do it anyway. We worry anyway. If we could just do everything Jesus tells us to do then we wouldn’t be here this morning figuring out how to do what he tells us to do. Listen again, **To be sure, the nations of the world chase after all of these things, but your Father knows that you need them. Instead, continue to seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you.** You see what Jesus is saying? We all have a problem with getting wrapped up in worry. We all get crushed by worry. It is a problem that every sinner has. And our God knows how debilitating it is. Jesus knows that we worry and he gently sets his hand on our shoulders and says seek the kingdom of God. Jesus is really saying, seek me. Be with me. Listen to me. How do we do that? How do we seek the kingdom of God? How do we seek Jesus? Read one more verse. **Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.** God gave us his kingdom on a silver platter—his name is Jesus!

To have the kingdom of God is to have Jesus. To seek the kingdom of God is to seek Jesus. And guess what, ladies and gentlemen. There’s only one place you find him—in his Word and sacraments. Seek, seek, and seek to have more Jesus in your life tomorrow than you did today. I don’t think anyone here has a photographic memory—which means that no one here would be able to read the Bible and perfectly retain everything that God says and everything that he promises. That is where you seek. This is where you go in search of the kingdom of God. This is where you find your Savior. And it’s not a one-and-done deal. Continue to seek. Because those of us prone to worry are prone to quickly forget the promises God makes. If you became malnourished and showed up to the doctor’s office on a Friday afternoon and said, well I ate my breakfast on Monday, I thought that would get me through the next month, your doctor would call you crazy. We would all be guilty of spending more time during the week nourishing our stomachs than our souls. We probably spend more time seeking other people or our own brains for the answers to life's simplest questions rather than probing the pages of Scripture for the answers. Seek the kingdom of God. To seek his kingdom, you need to listen to his voice. Not just on Sunday morning. This is an everyday seeking out. Your body needs food everyday. Your soul needs God’s Word everyday. Make it nonnegotiable. Because when you daily spend time in God’s Word, then you are daily reminded of that which is more important than anything life has to offer.

When you seek the kingdom, when you have seen your Savior, you will quickly realize what is most important. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** When you read and listen and learn about your Savior, do it with passion and intent. When you see your sins forgiven, jump for joy! When you find out that you were the treasure that Jesus set his heart on, then there’s nothing more to do than sit at his feet, listen to his voice, and let him love you. Jesus knows that you’re going to worry about the trivial things of life. He knows that it’s scary to be in that place where you don’t know what’s gonna happen next. But understand the perspective of your God. Jesus made sure that his kingdom would be filled with people like you and me, sinners in need of saving. So, when the weight of worry is bearing down on your shoulders, turn to that cross where the weight of the world bore down on him. And as you see your Savior shoulder that weight, know that the kingdom of God already belongs to you, because Jesus is all yours. Amen.