

Session 5

February 18, 2024

CONFIDENT FAITH

Luke 12:22-34

Luke 12 contains what we often call the Sermon on the Plain. It has much in common with the longer Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. The two differ in context, audience, and purpose, but there are several shared themes and illustrations. Don't let the repetitions bother you. All preachers repeat themselves! We think if it's worth saying once, then it's worth saying again! To glean the most principles from these themes, put the two sermons side by side and study them together. This week's theme is worry. I've organized the text around three key words.

Confusion (vv. 22-26). This section follows immediately after the Lord's parable about the rich fool (vv. 13-21). Everyone wants to be prosperous, but we are confused about what that means. Jesus taught His disciples that seeking earthly treasures was a selfish trap. But He didn't simply say, "Don't do it!" Rather, He explained why believers didn't need to worry about material wealth. First, material wealth is just that: it's material. And life is so much more than material possessions—even when those possessions pertain directly to us and affect our own well-being (v. 23). Second, if God takes care of His common creatures (and He does), then will He not also take care of His special creatures, His children? (v. 24). Third, worrying about it is a waste of time! It doesn't change us, nor does it change our circumstances. In reality, worry only hurts the one doing it. Reflection: *Think about your own life. Has worrying about your financial position (or anything else, for that matter) ever really helped you? In what ways has such stress actually hurt you?*

Contrast (vv. 27-30). Jesus continued to use the power of contrasts to make His point in this section. Notice first, that the splendor of King Solomon's royal wardrobe pales in comparison to the beauty of the simple wildflowers. Second, the flowers are temporary. They fade and are then discarded. But the children of God belong to Him. They are eternal and they will never be discarded (see Heb. 13:5). The third contrast is inferred, contrasting the unbelieving and worldly Gentiles with the children of God. To be "like the Gentiles" is to lack faith (v. 28), to worry about material things (v. 29), to eagerly seek earthly treasures (v. 30), and to ignore the great God of heaven who sovereignly knows what we need and provides for His own (v. 30). For reflection: *If God really does know what we need before we ask, then why do you think He encourages us to ask Him for it anyway?*

Condition (vv. 31-34). While worrying about earthly things doesn't negate our relationship with the Lord, it certainly damages it. Verse 31 says, "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be provided for you." This is not so much a condition as it is a promise. Those who put the kingdom first will certainly have everything they need...and a great deal of what they want. But to worry about the necessities of life not only indicates a lack of faith that He will provide (v. 28), but it indicates a misunderstanding of His character. Remember, this discourse was directed toward the Twelve. They needed to understand that their priorities changed as soon as they left their nets to follow Him. As they were forsaking everything, He reminded them not to fear; for they are His "little flock," and He "delights" to give them all His kingdom had to offer (see Matt. 19:29). The verses that follow should not be seen as commands, but rather as encouragement to relax and

participate in His delight. “Go ahead,” He said. “Sell all you have and give it to the poor!” And instead of seeking temporary, material treasure, He encouraged them to store up kingdom treasure that lasts forever. Why? Because those who seek first His kingdom, will always have His sufficient provision. And He actually likes to take care of us! For reflection: *Do you think that Jesus was condemning material possessions completely? What do you think He meant by kingdom treasures?*