

## Sermon Reading: Luke 12:27-34

*Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*

*<sup>32</sup> “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

## Sermon Theme: Where Your Treasure Is

There’s a show on Netflix that my wife has told me about called “Tidying Up.” The premise of the show is this lady comes in and helps various people “tidy up” and organize their homes. And how she goes about it, as my wife tells me, is that you go through your things and ask yourself, “Does this spark joy?” If something doesn’t, her suggestion is that it is taking up unnecessary room in your life. When my wife first told me about this show, I started thinking about my stuff. I can remember a time when I could fit all my possessions in the back of a car. Now it’s quite different. So my thoughts wandered to the various items in my house that I have stored away, my personal treasures, and was wondering, “Does this spark joy?”

What would you consider your most treasured possession—what sparks joy? Obviously those answer could be all over the board from a special gun, to fishing stuff, a family keepsake, to something you worked hard to buy yourself that you are quite proud of having. But it doesn’t have to be an object. Is it your family? Is it your time? Is it the fact you are able to work? Is it your name and reputation? What is your treasure?

The last few weeks we have been looking at those various gifts God has given to us. We saw from God’s Word that the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it. We learned how God has abundantly and generously given to us so that we can in turn be generous with what we have right now in our lives. And still, even when we know these truths, we may be reluctant to use them as God desires. We worry what the future will bring. We become overly anxious so that it keeps us up at night wondering if we will have enough. So then the question must be asked, not just what but where is your treasure?

In this section of Luke Jesus teaches us the stark difference between concerns of this world and our relationship with God. With his disciples Jesus tells us to, **“Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.”** King Solomon in the Old Testament, known for his wisdom, is sometimes considered to be the one of the richest, most wealthy individuals to have lived on this earth. We can read in the Bible how immensely God had blessed him. Depending on what information you find, some estimate that during his reign he gained \$2 trillion in today’s money.

And yet, Jesus says, Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like those wild flowers. They themselves obviously do not labor and spin. No human planted them, cultivated them, made sure to water so they prosper, and still they grow. And not only do they grow, but they are dressed more beautifully than Solomon ever was. Those flowers and grass grow in the field one day and then the next it might be thrown into the fire for fuel, and God clothes them in this way. In light of that truth: how much more will God clothe you? If God the Father provides for the short-lived grass, won't he provide for his own children? If God decks out the wild-flowers with such beautiful garments, won't he provide his children with the things you need for everyday life? This includes not just clothes, but food and drink as well.

For some today there is a real concern about what clothes they will have to wear or where their next meal is going to be. But for many other people, cupboards are stocked and dressers are filled. And, yet, we still can struggle with this worry about what we will have in our lives. Everything keeps getting more expensive while the income stays more the same—how are you supposed to keep up? One might worry about making sure their family is able to get the experiences they think they need or deserve whether that's being involved here or it's being able to travel there. Another worries whether or not they are making the best decisions for themselves and family. One worries about their status with their peers and reputation they hold. Someone else worries about time being filled up and whether or not they will have enough to fulfill all their obligations and responsibilities. Another sees the time and worries how much longer will they be able to do the things they like or want to do. There is much in this physical, material world one could worry about.

But Jesus says don't. He says in v.30, **“The pagan world runs after all such things.”** Jesus draws a line between two groups of people. On the one side there are the people of God, on the other is everyone else—unbelievers—or pagans is the word used in the reading. Unbelievers wish for, chase after, are worried about what they will eat, what they will drink, what they will wear, these material, physical things because they see it as being entirely dependent on them to have those things. But you, God's people, are different. There's no need for you to chase after those things or to worry because Jesus says, **“Your Father knows that you need them.”** Nothing comes as a surprise or can shock him. The Father doesn't forget to put something on his to-do list. He doesn't operate according to “may-be's” and “what-if's” because he already knows. And because your Father already knows he is going to provide. And because he is going to provide it Jesus says, **“Seek his kingdom,”** and trust that **“these things will be given to you as well.”**

But it's not just worrying about having enough. We also worry and are anxious because we aren't content. We know that having certain things and a certain amount impacts our status in this world and how we feel about ourselves. It's a statement that I have my life put together because I have or am able to do *this*. It shows that I have worked hard to get to be where I am today so it's a statement to the type of person I am. Our things make us feel good; otherwise you wouldn't have bought them, have them, or keep them. They give us comfort, they remind us of something in the past, a memento of how things used to be. And so we seem to build up this little kingdom of our own with these different treasures on this earth. We're well aware of the fact that they won't last. We know that you can't take it with you when you die. And still we hold onto and store up just in

case, we like it, or we want it. And that's not necessarily wrong. But, what is the attitude of your heart? Why do you have them and want to hold onto them? It's a dangerous and easy temptation to fall into that sin of not trusting God's promises to provide. It's a dangerous temptation to be short-sighted and focus on what we can have on this earth and building up our treasures here.

When one tries to build up their treasure here on this earth first, there's never enough. There's always more work to do, more accomplishments to attain, a higher status to achieve. And when we busy ourselves first with building up comfort, pleasure, treasures, here on this earth, it takes us away from the treasure that we need. Jesus said it quite clearly, you cannot serve two masters. Either you will serve the one or the other. Anything that takes you away from God, has the potential to become a false god. Loving good things too much leads to breaking the very first commandment that we are to have no other gods. It's a damning sin! And so it shouldn't be any surprise when we then are left worrying and overly anxious because we took ourselves away from the true treasure that gives us real peace and comfort.

And so, Jesus tells you and me, to set our heads in the right direction. Seek his kingdom—not your own personal kingdom of comfort and peace in this world, but his kingdom. And he encourages you by saying, **“Do not be afraid, little flock, your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”** Calling us his little flock Jesus reminds us we are his sheep and he is the shepherd who takes care of the sheep. Do not be afraid, your shepherd provides and preserves you. He protects and guards you from the deceptive wolves of the devil and that lying sinful nature. Do not be afraid because the Father's will and desire is to give you his kingdom.

This has been the Father's will since before the creation of the world. Despite our not trusting God's promises, our idol-making, our sin separating us from him, the Father went to work for you. Paul writes in Galatians 4:4-7 **“But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. <sup>6</sup> Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.”** At that specific time in history, God sent his Son to live under his law to buy you back from sin. Jesus lived perfectly always trusting and upholding his Father's will, never worrying whether or not the Father would provide. He believed, trusted, and was confident the Father would. He did this not to give you a blue-print to follow, but to save you. He placed his will alongside his Father's going to the cross to provide you with the forgiveness of sins paid for with his blood. He gave his spirit into the Father's hands knowing and trusting that in three days he would be raised again. And because he died and rose you who were dead and a slave to sin have been raised to be God's child through faith in Christ Jesus. For you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Jesus perfection, his holy life, and are heirs to God's kingdom. Because you are clothed in Jesus, the Father doesn't see any failures or false god following. He only sees someone to whom he wants to give the kingdom. God be praised, you don't have to try and earn it, gain it, or even keeping this kingdom is not dependent on how strong of Christian you might be. The Father gives it.

And through faith, that kingdom is already yours. That's why we would be willing to, as Jesus says in v.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.** It's not about the comforts and pleasures of this world; it's not about what you have today and can be gone tomorrow. Are those things nice? Of course. Is it wrong to want nice things? Not at all. But where is your treasure being stored up? Because where you treasure is, there your heart is also. What is your attitude and motivation with the things you have in this world?

Store up your treasures in heaven instead trusting God's promises. Study God's Word so you grow in your learning of your Father's will and his kingdom continues to rule in your hearts and lives. Be in God's Word and be fed with the Sacrament. Store up treasures with our Father in heaven by serving God with our possessions and not ourselves. More treasures are stored up as we use those things to serve each other. It's not just the great, grandiose acts of service or amounts of money given. It's the small glass of water. It's the offerings you regularly put in the plate. Because you are God's child, whatever you do in Jesus' name is storing up treasures in heaven. When our treasures are in heaven, our hearts are set on eternal things, and then we see there is nothing to worry about. The Father who takes care of those flowers is of course going to abundantly provide for you, his dearly loved children. Do not worry, in Jesus you have a far greater treasure awaiting you in heaven. Amen.