

Don't Worry; We're with G-O-D

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our text is from the Gospel reading. Jesus said to his disciples, **“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”** Here ends our text.

Some years ago there was a popular commercial on television. A mom and dad were sleeping soundly in bed when their young son came to their doorway and woke them up. The mom asks him, “Did you have a nightmare?” “No,” he answers, “I’m worried about this family’s financial future. Does your retirement plan provide predictability of income and protection against market risk? Do you have good supplemental health insurance? What about estate planning, car insurance? Dents are easy to fix but liability’s a nightmare.” But the father assures him, “Don’t worry, buddy, we’re with AIG.” “Oh,” the boy exclaims. He turns around and says, “Ah, don’t get up. I’ll tuck myself in.” The commercial concludes with the words. “The AIG companies, the strength to be there.”

Now there’re three things that are rather ironic about this commercial. The first thing that’s ironic, or opposite of what you’d think, is this little boy who can’t sleep because he’s worried about the family’s financial future. Now some kids may worry and be afraid of lightning and storms or what may be concealed under their bed in the darkness. But I’ve never seen a small child unable to sleep because he’s worried about the family’s financial future. Where is the money going to come from to put food on the table or shoes on their feet? Kids just learn from infancy that mom and dad are always there to provide what they need. Mom and dad can discern a child’s wants from his needs. They know that their child needs food and clothing and shelter, and it’s their top priority in life to provide these things for them. No one has to remind mom that her crying baby needs feeding or that the kids need supper. She’s always right there spooning it in or dishing up their plate. And no one has to remind dad that his child needs a cradle or bed to sleep in. He works to provide it or even makes it himself. The child doesn’t know exactly how or where these things come from other than that mom and dad provide them. Children learn that mom and dad love them and give them these things. They learn to trust them. Kids can be asleep in a heartbeat. They sleep deep sleep. You can hardly rouse them in the morning. They don’t worry about food and clothing and shelter for that day and certainly not insurance and financial markets and estate planning years in the future. They simply trust mom and dad.

The second thing that’s ironic about this commercial is that the parents are sleeping soundly with seemingly not a worry in the world. But we’re usually the ones who are tossing and turning about the future. We’re the ones who do worry. Where’s the money going to come from to pay the grocery bill, the utility bills, the mortgage? We worry about job security, health insurance, our retirement plan. But this couple is not worried a bit, because they’re with AIG.

And that’s the final irony. They weren’t worried because they’re with AIG. But they should’ve been. Shortly after running these commercials, the AIG insurance company, needed a 85 billion dollar government bailout to keep them solvent. It turns out that those who trusted in AIG had a real reason to worry.

What the couple should have said to their son is, “Don’t worry, Buddy. We’re with G-O-D. And because of his S-O-N, he gives us all we need. Then the whole family could’ve rested easy because God never needs a bailout. He has the strength to be there.

You’d think that we’d learn. Just like an infant learns that mom and dad are always there to provide for his needs, you’d think we’d learn that God is always there to provide for our needs. How many times have you ever gone without food, clothing, and shelter in your lifetime? You’re alive and here today because day after day, year after year, God has given you what you needed. Like a good parent, he may not have given you what you wanted but what you needed. God isn’t ignorant of our daily needs, and he certainly isn’t without the strength or compassion to provide them. If we, though we’re sinful by nature, can remember the needs of our children, how much more will the holy God, our Father, remember the needs of his children. You’d think we’d learn to trust him.

9th Sunday after Pentecost

August 7, 2022

Luke 12:22-34

But instead we worry. We of little faith. For worry is the opposite of faith. It's the opposite of trust. And what's worse is that worry does us no good. Worry can't put food on the table or a roof over our head. Instead, it steals our time and saps our strength. It paralyzes us and brings us to despair. Worry can't add a single hour to our life. If anything, it shortens our life. But trust can help. Trust turns to God and asks for help. Trust prays.

There once was a man who worked in a manufacturing plant. His boss had given him a project to fabricate with a tight deadline. The man worked hard, but as the deadline approached, he realized he'd never be able to get all the work done himself. He went home that night and tossed and turned and worried about his problem. But when he came to work the next day, the project hadn't gotten any further along. Worrying hadn't done him any good. So he told his boss the problem with the deadline and asked for more help. Then he didn't worry about it anymore. He still worked hard, but now it was his boss's problem. Now it was his worry. The boss could see that the man needed help, so he shifted some of his manpower and assigned more workers to the task. The project got completed on time. After the man asked for help, there was nothing to worry about.

And the same is true for us. Instead of wasting our time worrying about one of our needs, we might instead trust God, spend our time in prayer, and ask for help. Then we don't need to worry about it anymore. It's God's problem now. It's his worry. He'll take care of it.

But this doesn't mean that after we've made our request that we sit down on the job, put our feet up, and waste the day away waiting for someone to bring us dinner. We don't let our kids get away with laziness and why would God? Remember, God never tells us not to work, but not to worry. "Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord." Even before the fall into sin, God put Adam in the garden to work it and take care of it. God expects that if we're able, we should work for the things we need. God never said, "Don't work," but "Don't worry." Instead, trust him. Pray to him. Make our request. Then get on about our daily business. Let God do the worrying.

There once was a shepherd who was leading sheep to his father's green pastures. As they journeyed through the wilderness, they experienced many trials. But the shepherd said, "Fear not, little flock, for it's my father's good pleasure to give you his pastureland." And if that's his pleasure, I'll certainly sustain you until we get there. And so the shepherd made sure that each day the flock had water to drink and food to graze. While they slept peacefully each night, he guarded them. He even risked his life warding off any wild beasts. But though the shepherd gave the flock their daily needs, some of the sheep were still worried. The next day some refused to budge. They didn't want to leave the little trickle of water or the stubble of grass that grew along the path. Others gulped up gallons of water and gorged themselves on the grass until they couldn't even waddle and had to lie down, bloated along the path. They wanted to make sure they weren't hungry the next day. But other sheep trusted the shepherd to provide their daily needs and followed him. Finally the day arrived when the shepherd led his flock through a mountain pass, and they looked down on a lush valley with streams of water and much pasture. The shepherd announced to the flock, "Behold my father's pasture given to you where you'll never be in need again."

Our Good Shepherd is also leading us to his Father's kingdom. As we journey through this wilderness on earth, we face many trials. But Jesus says, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. And if that's his good pleasure, I'll certainly sustain you until you get there." Our Good Shepherd provides all our daily needs. He not only risked his life, but he gave his life to bring us into his Father's kingdom. And if so, why would he let us perish along the way?

In this life, food spoils, clothes fade, houses need maintenance, banks and businesses flounder and fail. Why would we cling to these things, worry about them, or trust in them when our Good Shepherd promises to lead us into his Father's kingdom which lasts forever. Don't be anxious and worried about your life here on earth, for life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Set your hearts on the real treasure, Jesus Christ and the eternal life he gives. That is the one thing we are anxious about. We anxiously await our Good Shepherd's announcement on the Last Day, "Behold my Father's kingdom given to you where you'll never be in need again." So don't worry; we're with G-O-D. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.