

(Luke) 35 - Characteristics of Life

by Ed Miller

Jesus teaches that the essence of life is spiritual, and that we should prioritize spiritual life over material possessions and trust in God's sovereignty.

Duration: 53:09

Scripture: Luke 12:1-13

Topics: "Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the teachings of Jesus on various topics. The sermon is divided into different sections, starting with the attitude towards those who disbelieve, followed by discipleship, missions, and prayer. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus is the friend, teacher, and savior of all mankind. The sermon also highlights the use of word pictures and metaphors in Jesus' teachings, such as the parable of the unfruitful fig tree and the building of great storage barn. The overall message is about living a meaningful and fulfilling life, focusing on treasures in heaven rather than earthly riches.

Transcript

We're in Luke and chapter 12, so if you'll turn to Luke chapter 12, please. This is the section we call the Parian ministry. Good morning.

The Parian ministry of our Lord Jesus. It really is a big section in Luke. It starts in chapter 9, verse 51, and it goes all the way to chapter 19 and verse 27.

Luke divides our Lord's ministry into several sections. He's the friend of all mankind, the teacher of all mankind, and the savior of all mankind. We're in the section on teacher.

And in order, because in teaching there's a lot of discourses and not so much stories, but just discourses. And so I thought the best way to do it is to divide it into topics. And we have finished discussing four topics.

We started in chapter 9, the attitude toward those who disbelieve. And then in chapter 9, verse 57, the topic of discipleship. And then in chapter 10, the topic of missions.

And for the last several weeks we've been in chapter 11, the topic of prayer. And last week I just introduced you to the fifth topic. We just called it life.

The topic of life, or really it's kingdom living, kingdom life, or just to make it simple as pie, the Christian life. That's what he's talking about. And he really gets down into the heart of it.

Now, I told you last week as we closed what a master teacher our Lord Jesus was. Because this great discourse that he gave is really broken up by interruption. It would be as if while I'm teaching, several people came into the room and asked unrelated questions.

Someone might say, what do you think about the traffic jam down Broadway? Or someone else would ask about politics or something like that. Right in the middle of his message. But our Lord Jesus did not take those as interruptions.

He was able to thread them all together and weave them into his great design and this great topic of life. I don't think I could ever teach like that. One rabbit trail and I'm gone.

That's why I have so many notes here. So I can sort of stick on the subject. I used to teach in a small Bible school.

And the kids used to know that. And so they would try on purpose to get me off on something. And once they got me off, that was the end of the class.

Because I didn't know my way back. That's why I usually say, wait until the end. And say, any comments or questions? And I sort of wait until the end.

I figure if I get lost at the end, at least I'm lost after I've arrived. And that makes it a little easier. Glance please at these verses.

Just to illustrate that point. In chapter 12, verse 1. He began saying to his disciples. And then notice verse 13.

Someone in the crowd. And there was an interruption. And then he comes back in verse 22.

And he said to his disciples. And then verse 41. Guess who interrupts? Sweet Peter.

And then Peter interrupts. And then in 54. He addresses everybody.

And he began saying to the multitude. And then in 13.1. Somebody comes and asks a question about an emergency that took place. And so there's all of these interruptions.

I can't imagine, like I said, if that would happen to me. Look in verse 13, for example. In the middle of his message.

Someone in the crowd said to him. Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me. That was right in the middle of his conversation.

I would have said, you know, please see me later. Or maybe we can discuss it at another time. But Jesus was able to take all of these so-called interruptions.

I don't think he viewed them as interruptions. In fact, I don't think you could have interrupted his life. Sometimes, you know, I just say.

Oh, I'm real busy right now. I think I ought to be real careful. Because sometimes those interruptions are divine interruptions.

And what I think is the sidetrack might be the main path. And very often those little details are where God is really doing some wonderful things. So we ought to be alert about that.

I don't think we could make an ironclad rule about it. Because some people just like to interrupt. And you need to send someone like Lillian.

She's my guard dog. And she protects me so I can study. Now let me make a couple of observations about this wonderful discourse as a whole.

In addition to its topic being about life. And it's riddled with interruptions. One thing I noticed about this discourse is that it's filled with word pictures.

And every word picture contains a truth. Now obviously we can't go through all of those many truths together. Short word pictures are usually metaphors.

He loves metaphors. Sometimes he extends a metaphor. We call that a parable.

Now just glance at the text and you'll see what I mean. Let me sort of give these machine gun style. Just as pictures.

Verse 1. The leaven of the Pharisees. Verse 6. Five sparrows. Verse 7. The hairs of your head.

Verse 21. Treasures on earth. Over against treasures in heaven.

You also have that in verse 33 and 34. Verse 24. Ravens.

Verse 27. The lilies of the field. Verse 32.

Little flock. Verse 35. Burning lamps.

Verse 49. Fire cast onto the earth. Verse 54 to 56.

The cloudy sky. Everything tells a story. And so he's not only telling one thing.

He just throws in so many things. All these little gems. Now in addition to that, in this discourse, he also includes three parables.

Verse 16 to 21 is the parable of building great storage barns. In verse 35 to 48, the parable of the returning Lord. The master of the house is coming back.

He's on a trip and he's coming back. And then in verse 6 to 9 of chapter 13, you have this parable of the unfruitful fig tree. I don't know why I was sharing this with my son.

And I tried to say unfruitful fig tree. And that's a tongue twister a little bit. You get your tongue tangled in your mouth there.

The central section of this discourse includes that first parable. The building of great storage barn. In verses 13 to 34, the central section is really this contrast between treasures on earth and treasures in heaven.

Being rich in this world over against being rich toward God. And he spends a lot of time on that. Now in order that we can take a discourse so full and with so many word pictures and parables and interruptions and still have some logical connection, let me suggest the way we'll look at it.

A very simple little outline. In the first section, chapter 12, 1 to 12, he gives us what I call the essence of life. And I mean life with a capital L. Not just existence.

Thousands of people exist and they have never lived. We're talking about real life. And so in the first 12 verses, he says this is life.

And then in verses 13 to 58, he gives three great characteristics of life with a capital L. In other words, if I'm really living, if I'm having a life that's rich toward God, what will my life look like? And there are three great things he emphasizes. He overlaps, of course, and there's many other things, but three big things. We'll touch on those.

And then finally in the end, chapter 13, 1 to 9, he gives an invitation to live. And he invites us all to come live that kind of life. So basically that's what we're going to look at.

What is life and what are the characteristics of life and how can I respond to his invitation to live that kind of a life? This morning, of course, we'll not be able to touch all of that, so we'll break it up into several sessions. Also, as I've suggested, that in a running commentary like this, there's going to be a lot of overlapping. And so even though I'm dividing it, saying this is life, he also says this is life in other places and so on.

Follow along, please, beginning at verse 1 of chapter 12. Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, he began saying to his disciples, first of all, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There's nothing covered up that will not be revealed and hidden that will not be known.

Accordingly, whatever you've said in the dark will be heard in the light. And what you've whispered in the inner room will be proclaimed upon the housetop. I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who can kill the body, and after that, they have no more that they can do.

I'll warn you whom to fear. Fear the one who, after he's killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear.

You are more valuable than many sparrows. And I say to you, everyone who confesses me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God. But he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him. When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense or what you are to say.

For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that hour what you ought to say. And then two more verses. Verse 32, please.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. And then verse 31, the verse before that. But seek His kingdom, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Go back again, please. Chapter 12, verse 1. As you see, Jesus is addressing His disciples in this verse. And thousands of people have gathered around.

So much, the Bible says, they're stepping on one another. They're just a mob. Everybody is there.

And even though He's surrounded by thousands of people, He's talking to His disciples. He's teaching them something. Everyone is listening in, but He's talking to His disciples.

And the first thing He says is, in verse 1, Beware the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is unreality. It's faking.

It's going through the motion. It's missing the reality and the substance. Now, we can sort of read these things blah, blah, blah, and sort of miss what they heard.

Remember, they were living during the time of great persecution. And the reality is, all but one of those He was addressing was going to die a violent death, a martyr's death. You know, the Bible says that we're to be witnesses to the Lord.

You know the Greek word for witness? The Greek word for witness is martyros, where we get our martyr. Every Christian is a potential martyr. Every Christian is a witness, and a witness is a martyr, and so on.

And when Jesus addressed these disciples, He knew that almost all of them were going to die a violent death. And it's in that background that He says, You better really understand what life is, because what many think life is, you're going to have snatched from you. And if you've got your attachment to this life, you're going to be very, very disappointed.

Now let me just state it for you, and then illustrate it from the text. What is real life? What's the essence of life? In one word, it's spiritual. That's what life is.

It's spiritual, over against physical, over against material. And all through this section, He calls attention to, there is a spirit, and there is an eternal, an immortal spirit. And real life has to do with the Holy Spirit's union with the human spirit.

Has to do with fellowship with God. Spirit. See, hypocrisy is saying, they're trying to say, that what you see, is what's on the inside.

But the hypocrite, is not picturing what's on the inside. He doesn't have anything on the inside, so he's just putting on a show. And he's saying, he's pretending, that that's what's on the inside.

Jesus says, You better be careful of the leaven of the Pharisees. Leaven, you know, is so small, and it's spread. And a little hypocrisy is going to spread into everything.

There's a very powerful passage here, in verses 4 to 7. If any passage teaches the essence of life, this does. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body. And after that, there's no more they can do.

I don't want to be gory, but I've read Foxe's Book of Martyrs, and I've studied the Inquisition and all. And I don't know if you've ever read much about the cruelties of man to man. But it's an awful thing to realize the imagination of sinful man, depraved man, and how he can invent ways to hurt, to kill, to torture men.

But Jesus' point is this, because he's talking to those who'll die that way. And he said, Do not fear those who kill the body. And after that, there's no more they can do.

And it's such a beautiful thing, because of all these monstrous ways man has invented to torture the body, once a person dies, their chains and their fetters cannot hold that person anymore. Once a person dies, their racks and their swords and their pincers and their rollers and their presses and their wheel cars can't hurt. You can't take a dead body and throw it into the fire and think you're doing more damage.

You can't take a dead body and put it in the water and think that you're going to hurt it by drowning it. You can't crush it or bury it under a mountain. It's over.

Once they've killed you, it's over. Then Jesus said, I warn you who to fear. Fear the one who, after you're dead, has the power to take you and cast you in the hell.

What a powerful thing that is. All of mankind can only take you to death and then they can't touch you. You better learn to fear the Lord because there's more.

Death doesn't end it and there's more after that. If ever a passage shared or showed the power of God, it's right here. A man's power can go so far and it can't go beyond that.

We're in Luke chapter 12. Do you realize that every spirit that God has ever made will live forever? God made a lot of things. They're going to pass away.

Spirit is immortal. Whether that is angel spirit, cherubim, seraphim, they're going to live forever. And because he made man with a spirit, the question is not will man live forever? That's not the question.

The question is where will man live forever? Spirit can't die. It's not possible. And so he's saying the essence of life is this immortal spirit.

A glance if you would at chapter 12, 6 and 7 for years I missed his point here. He said, Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Matthew 10 in verse 29 says two sparrows are sold for a cent. All you got to do is the math there and you'll figure out what he's talking about in Luke.

You know you get the deal. You get five for two cents. The one is thrown in free.

And his point is how valuable are sparrows? What about the one thrown in free? How worthless is that? This is the extra sparrow. And his point is that God has concern even over the one that's thrown in for free. The bargain sparrow.

The point is if he's concerned about the worthless sparrow even the one thrown in for free he pays attention every time a sparrow falls to the ground. Then he says to these who he knows will die a violent death. Do not fear.

Are you not worth much more than the sparrows? We went through this last week. How much more? Ten times more? Twenty times more? Hundred times more? Infinitely more because you have been created in me. You have a spirit.

You are a spirit. You don't have one. You are.

The real you is spirit. I used to misunderstand this and think well I'm going through trouble and God says he knows when all the sparrows fall. And every time a sparrow falls he knows.

And I don't want to be irreverent but I thought it was a big deal. It doesn't really encourage me if I'm going through a hard time and God said 7,811 sparrows fell and I know it. I said well that really doesn't help me much.

What good does that do knowing that God knows every time a sparrow falls? That's not what he's saying. Look at verse 29. He says Not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father.

What does that mean? Apart from your father. What it means is apart from your father's permission. Apart from your father's sovereignty.

In other words God isn't saying I care for sparrows. You're worth more than sparrows. I'll protect you.

This is not a promise to protect. This is saying no sparrow falls without my permission and you won't fall without my permission. Doesn't say you won't fall.

He just says you won't fall without my permission. You won't be martyred apart from my sovereignty. And so God is encouraging them to lay hold of the essence of life.

And then he tells us every hair on our head is numbered. He has to keep track of some men I think because increasingly the number diminishes. But what intimate concern if you really believe that.

Now see don't forget when you're talking about God there's no such thing as a hyperbole. You can't exaggerate God. A hyperbole is a figure of speech and obvious exaggeration.

Does God omniscient God literally know the numbers of hairs on your head? Exactly so. He certainly does. And you know what's even more than that? I think the one more powerful description of God's care for each of us is found in Psalm 139 verse 17 and 18.

He said how precious are your thoughts toward me O God. How great is the sum of them if I should count them they are more in number than the sand. Not just the beaches the deserts of the earth.

How many grains of sand are on the earth? God thinks about you. This is not a figure of speech. In fact the reality is always greater than the picture.

How much greater? Ten times greater? Hundred times greater? Infinitely greater. You take literally all the grains of sand that are on the earth multiply that times infinity and that's how much God thinks about you all the time. Pull out all the stars and believe that with all your heart.

Every hair on your head's number. He thinks about you more than the grains of sand. Now you say boy I I could list my troubles.

Go ahead list your troubles. You couldn't come up with a cup full of sand. If you listed every trouble individually.

Even if you broke it down. You couldn't. You don't have.

You couldn't think about yourself as selfish as you are. Selfish as I am. You couldn't think about yourself as much as God thinks about you.

It's just a tremendous thing. So what's the essence of life? It's spirit. And no matter what happens the spirit is immortal.

By calling attention to life after death and by calling attention to God acknowledging us before angels and by calling attention to the Holy Spirit and don't worry about what you're going to speak because the spirit will speak for you. He keeps pointing us to the spirit, the spirit, the spirit. Now look at verse 9 if you would.

Since there are many questions about verse 9 I'm going to take a minute to lift it out of its context and discuss it and then put it back in its context and tell you how it's connected here. Verse 9 is that passage that warns against the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The unforgivable sin.

What is the sin against the Holy Spirit? What is the sin called the unforgivable sin that there is no forgiveness in this earth or in the world to come? Have you ever known anyone who thought they had committed this sin or who claimed they had committed this sin? I knew two people that claimed they had committed this sin. One was a man that was so distressed at the thoughts of being forsaken by the Lord and committing an unforgivable sin he ended up in a mental ward and he went into a cataconic stupor. I used to go visit him and he would sit there with a fishing pole in a pail and he just dropped out of reality.

There was no communication with this man. And the reason was he had committed the unforgivable sin he said. And then I had another friend who was a woman in her mid-fifties and she said she had committed the unforgivable sin.

She made three attempts on her own life to kill herself and in her fourth attempt she succeeded but she actually starved herself to death. Now both of these people tried to take their lives because of that verse. Because they thought they had committed that unforgivable sin.

The reality is neither one of them had actually committed the sin. Now let me show you a verse from Mark 3 that sheds light on this. Mark 3, 28.

Mark 3, 28-30 describes exactly what Luke described but then adds this. They are guilty of an eternal sin. Guilty of an eternal sin.

Why is the unpardonable sin called an eternal sin? The answer is because those who commit that sin never stop committing it. Forever and ever and ever all through the ages of eternity they are still committing that sin. What is that sin? That they could commit forever and ever and ever.

Now the man I mentioned thought he had committed the sin blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because one day in anger he shook his fist at God and he asked God to damn the Holy Spirit. And he felt like that was the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The woman I mentioned thought she had committed it because God wouldn't answer her prayer to be healed from a severe case of rheumatoid arthritis.

Someone had told her if she was truly God's child then God would hear her prayer and if she wasn't healed she wasn't a child of God. And since she cried out to God and he didn't heal she concluded she was not God's child. Now you don't need a degree from a theological institute to realize it's the precious Holy Spirit the third person of the Godhead whose, I don't want to call it a job, but whose ministry it is to open our eyes to the Gospel.

In other words, if you've ever seen that you're a sinner thank the Holy Spirit. He's the one that showed you that. If you've ever seen that Jesus was your substitute thank the Holy Spirit.

You couldn't know that unless God showed you that. And it's the Holy Spirit whose ministry it is to show you your salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. He shows us we're sinners.

He shows us that we need a Savior and that Jesus is the Savior. That's his ministry. In my life, the Gospels presented and I have a chance to receive Jesus and the Holy Spirit shows me that it's Him and I say no.

Have I committed the sin against the Holy Spirit? Not necessarily so. Even if I said no a thousand times I have not committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the final no to Jesus.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to show you Christ and when you say no finally you reject Christ, you die saying no. You will say no for all eternity. It's an eternal sin.

You'll never say yes. One of the most shocking teachings of the Bible is this. By the way, those who die saying no they would never say yes if they lived a million years under the most sound Gospel teaching.

Nobody dies saying no who would say yes. Here's the other side. Wouldn't you think that after a million years somebody dies without the Lord and they've rejected the Lord? Let's say, and I speak as a fool because this is not in the Bible, but let's say after a million years Jesus were to go into hell and say okay now if anybody repents I'll take you to heaven.

You realize the Bible teaches not one person would repent even after a million years of suffering. They would not repent from their sin. They blaspheme Him.

When they say their final no it's an everlasting no. Read Revelation 16, 9-11 and you'll get that picture of how suffering causes people to get harder and those who are against the Lord blaspheme all the more. Only a final no is unforgivable.

How do I know my two friends didn't commit the unpardonable sin? Because they were still alive and they wanted to say yes. They hadn't said their final no. They still had a chance to say yes to the Lord and they were deceived into thinking they had committed their sin.

There's only one unforgivable sin and that's saying a final no to God's salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's what that sin is. Now let's get back into the context.

That was sort of a bypass here. The first part of this discourse what's the essence of life? And the essence of life is spirit. It's a spiritual life and it has to do with a relationship to Him.

The second part of his discourse gives us, we'll only look at a couple, but it gives us three great characteristics of spiritual life. The first characteristic, let me mention the first one and then illustrate it. If I'm really spiritual, I'm a Christian by being rightly related to Christ.

That's in the word Christian. I'm spiritual when I'm rightly related to the Spirit of God. That's what it means to be spiritual.

And if I'm really spiritual and rightly related to God through the Holy Spirit, one characteristic is my heart, my life, my direction will be free from greed. Free from greed. Notice in verse 13, someone in the crowd said to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.

Now we don't know the whole situation. Maybe he got left out of the will or something. We don't know the whole situation.

But he was trying to get Jesus. But don't forget, now he's not asking Jesus to be the arbiter in the sense of, let's talk it over and do what's fair. He's trying to get Jesus to decide against his brother in behalf of him.

That's what he's doing. Jesus' answer shows that this man was looking for a little bit more than justice. Look at verse 15.

He said to him, Beware. Be on your guard against every form of greed. For not even when one has an abundance does his life consist in his possessions.

What a verse that is. That verse, you don't see, you see a lot of these plaque verses. There's a lot of verses I'd love to see on plaques.

And that's one of those plaque verses. Life does not consist, I mean real life, big L, in possessions, in things, in stuff, in junk. That is not life.

Add them all together and it doesn't have life. Evidently this man was grasping for the inheritance in an unhealthy way in order to be a source of his happiness and contentment rather than an expression. Now the whole balance of Scripture, this is just one side, the balance of Scripture says, God has freely given us all things to enjoy.

He's not against things. He's against things as a goal. He's against things as the source of contentment.

But as God's provision, He's not against that. So things can be an expression of our joy but not the source of our joy. What good is it if our barns are bursting at the seams and we're poor toward God.

We're not rightly related to Him. Jesus then tells this parable, this wonderful story. I'll save a little time and just tell it to you but you can read it later.

About this rich man who gathered up so many things and not in a wrong way. God blessed him. And he had prospered.

His soil was good and so on. And he didn't know what to do with it all. And he had put it in all of his barns, plural.

And so he said, I know what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and I'll build bigger ones. Larger storage barns.

And then you can see his heart. He said, Then I'll retire, eat, drink, and be merry and selflessly, or selfishly rather, selfishly indulge for the rest of my days. It was all, this world was his life.

But it's not going to work. Jesus said in verse 20, God said to him, You fool, this very night your soul is required of you. Now who will own what you've prepared? So is the man who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

Rich toward God. See, he had made things his life. He wasn't rich toward God.

And then the day came he had to die and left it all. That's how it goes. The person who's really learned that life is spirit and it's relationship to God.

He's not going to be grasping after things as if to make up his life. His life doesn't consist of that. Don't forget now when we read these things.

For the Christian, I'm assuming God has done a work in your heart and taken you pretty far down the road. What is greed? Let me give you a definition of greed. What is greed for the Christian? Greed, see for the world it's just wanting things that's in the world.

But for the Christian, greed is wanting anything Jesus doesn't want you to have. That's what greed is. Anything he doesn't want me to have, if I desire that, that's greed.

The person who has learned life is rightly related to the Lord and he's not consumed with things. Alright, here's the second characteristic. Not greedy, but here's the second characteristic.

The person who is really living is also not anxious about things. You know verse 22 to 32? Hope you got a big wall. It's a big plaque.

These verses are so wonderful. I hope God leads you to meditate often on this precious section of Scripture. Follow along please as I read from verse 22.

He said to his disciples, for this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life as to what you'll eat, nor for your body as to what you'll put on. Life is more than food, body more than clothing. Consider the raven.

They neither sow nor reap. They have no storeroom or barn, yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than the bird? Ten times more.

And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? Consider the lily. How they grow. They neither toil nor spin.

But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. If God so clothes the grass and the field which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will he clothe you? Ten times more? A hundred times more? You men of little faith, do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink. Do not keep worrying.

For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek. Your heavenly Father knows you need these things. Seek his kingdom and these things will be added to you.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. If God is your life, spiritual life, if you are rich toward God, you are not going to be greedy after the things of this world and you are not going to be anxious, worrying, fretting, concerned. And verse 30, your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things.

He is going to provide. And then to illustrate it, he says, consider. Two things.

Verse 24, consider the ravens. And in verse 27, consider the lilies. What did he want you to consider about the birds? What did he want you to consider about the ravens? They are two different things.

I mean about the lilies. They are two different things. The birds are dependent on God and the Lord feeds them.

They cannot work. They are comparatively worthless. I know a couple of friends of mine love to take this passage and say, God doesn't want me to work.

He wants me to quit my job. Be like the birds, you know. Caroling says to the birds, be lazy.

The birds are not an illustration of idleness. They are an illustration of freedom from anxiety. They don't worry about where their next worm is coming from.

Their Heavenly Father feeds them. Now Luke is showing the tremendous comprehensiveness of the care of God watching over the birds like that. Jesus actually gives two reasons, not the word.

Number one, it's needless because you have a Heavenly Father. And number two, it's useless. Did you see that in verse 25? It's not going to help.

It's like that person in the rocking chair. She said, worrying is like rocking in a rocking chair. It doesn't get you any place, but it gives you something to do.

The birds picture dependence on the Lord and you don't have to work. But then he said, consider the lilies. Now watch, it's different.

The birds illustrate dependence. They don't worry. What does the lily illustrate? Notice verse 27.

Consider the lilies, how they grow. That's what he wanted you to look at. He didn't want you to see how beautiful it was.

He wanted you to see how they grow. How does a lily grow? See, a lily is just a receiver. That's all it does.

It takes in the sunshine, takes in the rain, sucks up the nutrients from the soil. It's just a taker. And what he's saying is, look, consider the birds.

They depend on the Lord. Consider the lilies. They just take and take and take and take.

You have no reason, little flock, to doubt God. When you grow like the lily, when you're just a receiver, when you're dependent like the birds, God's going to take care of you. In verse 27, Jesus contrasted the beauty of the lily with the glory of Solomon, King Solomon, in his most kingly robe.

He said that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these lilies. If you don't believe that's true, here's a little experiment. Of course, you wouldn't get close to Solomon, so it would be hard to do.

But you can imagine. Take the richest person in the world and the most delicate garment that man has ever put together and cut a swath of that, put it under a microscope, and then take the petal of a lily and put it under a microscope. And I'll tell you, that royal garment will look like burlap, like sackcloth.

See what he's saying? When Christians grow like the lily grows, they're the most beautiful things in all the earth. When you grow like the lily, that's life. Life is depending on the Lord.

Life is receiving from the Lord. Life is union with the Lord. It's relationship with the Lord.

Now, let me tie this all together. When I started, I said the theme of this discourse is life. And then I said kingdom life.

He keeps coming back to this idea of the kingdom. See, he started it when he had us pray, Thy kingdom come. And he introduced us to this idea.

That's not just pray for the second coming of the Savior. That's pray for a present extension of His kingdom right now. Thy kingdom come.

Notice, if you would, verse 31. Seek first His kingdom and all these things will be added unto you. Verse 32.

Do not be afraid, little flock. Your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Why is he talking about the kingdom? See, he's introducing it now because later he's going to get into kingdom parables.

And then he'll unfold it. But now, he's sort of introducing it. What is a kingdom? And the answer is, a kingdom is a sphere of rule.

That's what a kingdom is. It's the dominion over which the king reigns. Over which the king rules.

When he said to pray, Thy kingdom come, what you're saying is, Lord, I want you to be Lord over more area in my life. Thy kingdom increase. Thy kingdom come.

Until we finally get to Revelation. And it says the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ. When He finally takes everything.

But right now, it's gradual. And so, His kingdom is coming. Now, why does he call attention to this? See, I look in the mirror.

Or in the eyes of Lillian or my family. Or I look at myself and I say, a Christian is not supposed to be greedy. And I am greedy.

And so, I start working on greed. I'm not going to be greedy anymore. I'm not going to care about stuff.

A Christian is not anxious. He doesn't worry. I look in the mirror and I say, Uh-oh.

How come I'm still worried? How come I'm still fretting? A Christian is not supposed to do that. And I'm still doing it. I'm going to have to try to stop worrying.

Do you ever worry over your worry? Do you ever get anxious over your anxiety and fret over your fretting? I've actually wept. Because I couldn't weep. Dumb things we go through.

See what he's saying here? He said, a real Christian is not greedy after things and he's not anxious. He didn't say, seek an anxious free life. He said, seek the kingdom.

He didn't say, stop trying to be greedy. He said, seek first the kingdom. And all these things are added.

How do I get rid of anxiety in my life? By trying not to be fretful? No. To go forward in the Lordship of Christ. The more He reigns, the more I know Him as Lord.

I just say, Lord, rule my life. Take over my life. And the more I enter into His kingship, the more everything else falls into place.

And so over and over again in this discourse, He's going to bring us back to His kingship. We run after the Lord and He's going to take care of everything else. It's impossible to crown Christ Lord in reality.

Do you realize anxiety is really a practical denial of the Lordship of Christ? Do you see how that's so? That's so because you're saying, God has nothing to do with this. That's why I'm anxious. God has everything to do with everything in your life.

More than the sands that are on the earth. He has everything to do with it. And so the more we know Him as Lord, and the more we enter into that, the more we'll be free from those things.

Look at verse 33, 34. We'll close with this. Sell your possessions.

That's not literal. He's talking spiritually here. Sell your possessions.

I'll prove it to you. And give to charity. Make yourself money belts that do not wear out.

Do you have a money belt that doesn't wear out? He's saying be rich toward God. Be spiritually rich. And by selling your possessions, it may be literal.

He may call you to do that. But the point he's making here, don't set your heart on that. Notice how he finishes.

Make yourself money belts which do not wear out. An unfailing treasure in heaven where no thief comes, no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there is your heart also.

Don't answer. Do you have a money belt that doesn't wear out? Can rust get to your treasure? Can moth destroy? Can thieves break in and steal? Are you enjoying life with a capital L? Where's your treasure? Because that's where your heart will be. That's where your heart... That's why God has to be your treasure.

That's why the Lord... That's why this whole thing is spiritual. Let me close with my plaque verse. Verse 32.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Isn't that a great verse? Isn't that a great verse? He's not only committed to it. He's not only willing to do it.

It's His greatest delight, gladly, to give you the kingdom. Well, actually, before we pray, let me ask any comments or questions. Okay, little flock.

Let's bow down. Our Father, we thank You for Your precious Word and how comforting it is to realize that You are our Heavenly Father, that we are related to You by the Holy Spirit, that You've taught us to live with a capital L and to have our heart where our treasure is. Lord, we know the more You reign as King, the more we yield up the crown rights to You, the less we'll be greedy and the less we'll fret.

And so work that in our hearts even now and as we prepare to look at the rest of Your great discourse, just prepare our hearts for what You want to communicate. We pray in Jesus. Now, before you leave, we have a little gift that we'd like to give each of you.

And then we're... It's a little book and we just pray that some of the meditations in there will just help you see the Lord. And then you know next week we'll not meet and then we will come back the last week of March. Hello? Are you doing it? I'm doing it.

Two heads are better than one.

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