But Seek His Kingdom

Luke 12:22-34

Key verse 31

“But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well”

**Introduction**

 After the parable of the rich fool, Jesus continued to teach his disciples. Jesus’ disciples were poor for they left everything to follow Jesus. They worried about what they would eat and what they would wear. Jesus taught them how they could overcome their worries and what to seek. May the Lord help us to grow as men and women of faith through accepting Jesus’ words.

1. Read verses 22 - 26. What did Jesus tell his disciples not to worry about and why? (22, 23) How did Jesus assure them? (24) How did Jesus explain the uselessness of worrying? (25, 26)

1-1, Read verses 22 - 26.

 22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

1-2, What did Jesus tell his disciples not to worry about and why? (22, 23)

*“****Do not worry about your life****,* ***what you will eat****; or* ***about your body, what you will wear.*** *For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes”*

* We should not worry about what we will eat to sustain our life. We should not worry about what we will wear to protect our body.
* Food and clothes are necessary things for our life and body. So when we don’t have food or clothes we become anxious and worry about it immediately.
* We work hard to make money to buy food and clothes. Then it seems to us that our life is all about food and clothes and we live for them.
* Actually people are excessively concerned about material possessions or how to get a job.
* Even after they make enough money to buy food and clothes, they want to make more money to buy other things. In this way we are living in a highly materialistic society.

*“****For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes****”*

* Even though food is necessary for us to survive, still our life is more important than food. If we live only for food, we are no different than animals.
* God didn’t create us just to live for food. God created us to live to glorify and worship him and bear much fruit.

Jesus says in Matthew 4:4,

 “It is written: ‘**Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God**.’”

* Just having enough bread is not enough. We need the word of God to live a blessed life that God wants us to live for it gives us true life and leads us to live a life that pleases God.
* God not only gave us our life and body, but he also gives us what we need to sustain our life.

1-3 How did Jesus assure them? (24)

***“Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!”***

* Jesus didn’t just tell them not to worry about their food; rather he assured his disciples that God would provide the food for them as much as they need.
* God doesn’t ignore what we need for our practical life and push us to do what he wants. He is always ready to provide what we need.
* Ravens and other animals didn’t try to produce or save their food. They just go out to look for food whenever they are in need and God provides for them. It is because God cares them and knows what they need.
* God is the Creator. As the Creator, God really cares for all his creatures and feeds them with his almighty power.
* God cares even for small birds or small bugs and he never fails to feed them.

**And how much more valuable you are than birds!”**

* The value of birds can’t be compared to the value of a human. Man is the crown of God’s creation that has God’s glorious image and His likeness.

Luke 12:6-7 read,

 “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

* God doesn’t ignore even one sparrow. How much more he would care for us and our needs.
* How much does he care for us? He cares for us so much that he gave us his one and only son.
* When we truly believe that God cares for us, we would cease worrying about our life and our needs such as food or clothes.
* We need practical faith in God for our practical needs.

1-4 How did Jesus explain the uselessness of worrying? (25, 26)

***“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”***

* Worrying cannot make our life even one second longer. We worry about our life because we love our life so much. We worry because we want to keep our life safe.
* But worrying itself can’t do anything for our life. Actually worrying causes a negative impact on our spiritual and physical health.
* Research clearly shows that stress deteriorates our immune systems; people under constant or high stress show lower T cell counts, essential for immune response. Stress has a definite affect on fertility. Prolonged stress has been shown to affect the brain, making a person less capable to respond to future stress. And stress is also related to sudden heart failure.
* The concern many people have over the material things of life is rooted in a low understanding of their value before God. They don’t comprehend how much He loves and cares for them.
* Worrying is useless and it stems from our lack of understanding about God.

2. Read verses 27 - 28. What lesson did Jesus teach them from the wild flowers and the grass of the field? What causes us to worry? (28b)

2-1, Read verses 27 - 28.

 “Consider how the wildflowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 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!

2-2, What lesson did Jesus teach them from the wild flowers and the grass of the field?

* **The flowers do not labor or spin for their beauty. And they can be thrown into the fire any time. But God clothes them better than Solomon’s splendor.**
* If God clothes the wildflowers of the field, how much more will he clothe us?
* God’s clothing for us can be more glorious than any clothing that any man can make with his own wealth and work.
* Once God clothes us, our clothes are far better than any rich king or president in this world.
* God never lets his children be naked in coldness and shame.
* God clothes his children with the clothes of righteousness that are more glorious than any other clothes
* To clothe us with righteousness, God sacrificed his son until he shed his blood on the cross to save us from sin and death.
* When we see the flowers and the grass in the field, we should be assured that God would clothe us and we can overcome all worries in our heart.

2-3. What causes us to worry? (28b)

***—you of little faith!***

* The root of our worry is our lack of faith.
* We worry simply because we don’t truly believe the fact that God cares for us and provides us with what we need.
* The problem is not our situation where we lack something, the real problem is our lack of faith. We’d better off having faith first instead of worrying about material things.
* The disciples had some faith but their faith was not enough to overcome their worries. We need to have enough faith to overcome all the worries of this world.
* Faith is the one and only remedy for our worries.

3. Read verse 29 - 31. What should we not set our heart on and why? (29, 30) What did Jesus tell his disciple to seek? (31a) What would happen to those who seek God’s kingdom? (31b)

3-1. Read verse 29 - 31.

 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

3-2. What should we not set our heart on and why? (29, 30)

 ***“do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it”***

* We should not set our heart on what we will eat or drink. We should set our heart on seeking the kingdom of God.
* We should not set our heart on mere food or other things even though they are necessary for our survival. We should set our heart on what we really need for our life.

 ***For the pagan world run after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.***

* The pagans run after food and drink because they don’t believe God. When people don’t believe God, they cannot have any assurance about food and other things that they need. So they cannot help but worry about them.
* Jesus contrasted the life of those who do not know God and are separated from Him with those who do know God and receive His loving care.
* Pagans run after food and drink because they don’t have any real hope, which is the kingdom of God. They say, “Let’s eat and drink, tomorrow we will die”
* The pagans seek the things of this world because they don’t have the hope of the kingdom of God that only believers can have.
* If we run after food and drink and the things of this world only, we are the same as the pagans.
* When we really believe that God will provide for us, we can behave differently and not run after food or other things in this world. Rather we would seek what God really wants us to seek for our life.

3-3. What did Jesus tell his disciples to seek? (31a)

***But seek his kingdom***

* What God really wants us to do is to seek His kingdom.
* We have to set our heart on his kingdom and run for it.
* God sacrificed his only son on the cross to give us his kingdom
* Jesus came to this world to give us his kingdom.
* When we have the kingdom of God we can enjoy true life, true satisfaction, peace, and a joy that food or drink or any other things of this world cannot give us.
* We should live for God’s kingdom; to earn his kingdom and expand his kingdom.
* When we live for his kingdom and his kingdom dwells in us, the kingdom keeps growing so that other people also can enjoy the kingdom.
* We have to use our time and energy and any resources we have to seek God’s kingdom instead of using them only for the things of this world.

3-4, What would happen to those who seek God’s kingdom? (31b)

 ***and these things will be given to you as well***

* God assured his disciples again that he will give them all the things they need if they seek his kingdom.
* God gave them the promise again to seek God’s kingdom by trusting God for His provision.
* God doesn’t ignore our practical need such as food, clothes and other things and provides as much as we need.
* God wants us to seek his kingdom by believing in his provision.

4. Read verses 32 - 34. How does the reward of the Father contrast with the rewards the world offers? How did Jesus teach us to have treasure in heaven? Why is it so important to guard our hearts?

4-1, Read verses 32 - 34.

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

4-2. How does the reward of the Father contrast with the rewards the world offers?

 ***“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.***

* God is pleased to give us his kingdom. He is really willing to give us his kingdom
* If anyone comes to God for his kingdom, God is so happy to give him/her his kingdom. Earning God’s kingdom is not difficult. Any time we come to God through Jesus with faith and repentance, God gives us his kingdom. By keeping our faith and obeying his word, we can enjoy his kingdom all the time.
* The life of enjoying the kingdom of God is the life that God wants us to live.

4-3. How did Jesus teach us to have treasure in heaven?

 ***“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.”***

* By sharing what we have with the poor we can store our treasures in heaven.
* We can seek the kingdom of God by serving others with what we have.
* When we have faith in God and have hope in the kingdom of God, we can share what we have with others generously.
* When we serve others with what we have, we can experience the kingdom of God and store our treasure in heaven.
* The treasure in heaven will be secure for no thief can take it away and no moth can destroy it.

4-4, Why is it so important to guard our hearts?

***“ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”***

* If we live for the treasure in heaven, we can set our heart on the kingdom of God and we can enjoy his kingdom.
* Our hearts follow what we seek. When we seek the things of this world, our hearts can be corrupted and become full of darkness.
* We have to think about where our treasure is; on earth or in heaven. We may ask to ourselves, “What do we pursue daily and work for?”
* If our heavenly pursuits are low, we are poor even though we may have something on earth. But if our heavenly pursuits are full of treasure and meaning, than we are rich even though we might not have much in this world.

**Conclusion**

 Jesus wants his disciples to overcome their worry and concern for things that they need by faith. For God is ready to provide anything for them if necessary. Jesus wants his disciples to seek God’s kingdom instead of running after the things of this world. We can find true life and happiness in the kingdom of God. May God help us to seek God’s kingdom first by faith so that we can enjoy his kingdom and expand his kingdom.

**One word: Seek His Kingdom!**