

Enough?

Passage: Luke 12:22–34 | From the series: Luke

Preacher: Cormac Parker Jr. ▾

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I had just come home to Kentucky after my first year of college, and I was sitting at a restaurant waiting for my mentor, Mr. Lacey, to show up. I was excited because, for the first time ever, I was treating. Lunch was on me. Mr. Lacey had poured into me. He had invested in me. But I had gone away to college for a year, so I was "grown now," or so I thought. I had saved up some money, and I had done the math. I had already looked at the menu. I knew what I was getting: burger, fries, drink. I figured Mr. Lacey would probably get something similar. Calculate the tax and tip. I had a plan.

Everything was going according to plan until we started ordering. Apparently, Mr. Lacey had not received a copy of my budget. As he ordered, I did the math in my head. "I'll have this..." Okay... "And we'll get this appetizer..." Wait a minute... "Oh, and do you have any specials today?" Somewhere along the way, I realized: I don't have enough money to pay for this meal.

I started to panic, and for the whole meal, all I could think about was what would happen when the check came. How embarrassed was I going to be? I had invited him. I told him I was paying. I was having a conversation with him, but it was kind of on autopilot because everything in my brain was occupied with the fact that I didn't have enough. Worry was an understatement. *Uh huh, that's crazy, wow...* I was responding, but truth is, my body was at the table. My mind was at the check. Because worry has a way of pulling you out of the moment you're in and into a moment that hasn't happened yet.

Economists and psychologists have studied what scarcity does to our minds. When we believe we don't have enough, that fear starts consuming our mental bandwidth. They call it tunneling. The thing you're worried about moves to the center of your vision, and everything else gets pushed to the edges. That's exactly what was happening to me. Mr. Lacey was sitting right across from me. All I could see was the bill.

I wonder how many of us are asking that same question: *Do I have enough?*

Enough saved if there's another round of layoffs? Enough skills if AI changes my job? Am I doing enough as a parent? Am I doing enough to keep up with everyone else? Am I smart enough to get into the school? Underneath so much of our worry is this haunting question: *Will there be enough?* In a culture built around more, "enough" can become a finish line that keeps moving.

In fact, that's exactly where Jesus takes us in this passage. Jesus has just finished telling the parable of the rich fool, a man who doesn't just have possessions; his possessions have him. His

land produces more than he can store, so he decides to tear down his barns and build bigger ones. More storage. More possessions. And yet, when his life comes to an end, none of it can go with him. I've never seen a U-Haul behind a hearse. Jesus says the same is true for the person who stores up for himself and is not rich toward God.

Then Jesus turns to his disciples, because the rich fool's problem isn't only a rich-person problem. You don't need bigger barns to spend your whole life afraid there won't be enough. So here's the question hanging over this text: **What do you do when you're afraid there won't be enough?**

Jesus doesn't give his disciples a budget. He lifts their eyes up to the birds and down to the flowers, and he says, *Look!* Before he changes how we live, he changes what we see. (Luke 12:22-24)

And he 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. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!"

Jesus says *therefore*, do not be anxious about life. He connects what he's about to say to what he has just said about the rich fool. The rich fool tried to secure his future by accumulating more. Now Jesus turns to his disciples and says: Don't spend your life consumed with securing yourself.

Jesus isn't talking about some abstract anxiety. He specifically names food and clothing, the necessities of life. "Do not be anxious," or do not worry, is written in the present imperative. It's a command that calls for an ongoing posture. Jesus isn't promoting irresponsibility. He isn't telling his disciples not to work, plan, save, or prepare. He's describing a life that refuses to be governed by worry.

Then Jesus does something interesting. He tells them where to look: "Consider the ravens." Remember what worry does. Worry tunnels our vision. It makes the thing we're afraid of the only thing we can see. And Jesus says: Look again. Consider the ravens. Luke specifically mentions ravens. According to the Hebrew Scriptures, ravens were considered unclean animals. In antiquity, they were the least respected birds. And yet Jesus says they don't sow, they don't reap, they don't have storehouses, they don't have barns, and God feeds them.

Notice that word again: *barns*. Jesus has just told them about a man obsessed with building bigger barns. Now he points toward birds who don't have barns at all, and yet God feeds them. Then Jesus asks, "Of how much more value are you than the birds?" In other words: If God has not forgotten the raven, what makes you think he has forgotten you?

Then he pauses from birdwatching to ask, by the way, can being anxious add a single hour to your life? (Luke 12:25-26)

25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?

Worrying can't add any extra time to our lives. We have no control over when we will die. Even for those who exercise and eat all the avocado toast, the mortality rate, last time I checked, is holding strong at 100%. Worrying can even cut our lives short and make them miserable along the way.

In other words, worrying is wasted energy. Nothing is gained from it.

It has been said, "Worrying is like a rocking chair. It will get you moving but won't take you anywhere." The mind is moving, the heart is moving, but we've gone nowhere.

Then Jesus looks out on the field of flowers. (Luke 12:27-30)

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

To keep painting his picture, Jesus turns from birdwatching to observing the flowers of the field. These flowers don't work and don't spin fabric, but they are clothed in beauty. He says Solomon, the wealthiest king in all of Israel, a picture of royal splendor, couldn't tie the shoes of how beautiful these flowers were. "The grass of the field" was a common phrase pointing to dried grass used as fuel in ancient Palestine. The grass is transient: here today, gone tomorrow. And yet God clothes it. Again, *how much more* will he clothe you? This lesser-to-greater construction emphasizes the lesson he is giving.

Don't miss the reference to God: *your Father*. We saw this several weeks ago when we unpacked the Lord's Prayer. Luke has already shown us the intimate, close relationship the disciples have with God. Those who are not in relationship with him have bought into the lie that they need to spend their whole lives anxiously seeking. The difference is that we pray to our *Father* that he would give us our *daily bread*. A Father who sees, who knows, who provides, and a Father who cares.

So what do we do when we face the fear of not enough?

1. Look to Your Father

It reminds me of being on a plane when you hit turbulence. I don't know if anyone else does this, but when the plane starts shaking, I immediately look at the flight attendant. I don't know what that sound was, and I don't know how much turbulence is too much. But I do know this: if the flight attendant is still casually pouring Diet Coke, we're probably OK. The turbulence doesn't change in that moment. What changes is what I'm looking at.

Counselors call this grounding: pulling your attention out of the thing your mind has fixated on and back onto what's steady. What do you see? What do you smell? What do you notice?

That's what Jesus is doing. After all, he is the great counselor. Worried about what you will eat? Look at the ravens. Worried about what you'll wear? Look at the lilies. Jesus keeps redirecting their attention. Looking at the birds and the flowers can calm our anxiety, but looking *through* them can cure it. Behind the birds and the flowers, look at the One who feeds them and clothes them. Your Father knows what you need.

What has captured your attention? What is the bill you can't stop staring at? Where has worry narrowed your vision until it's become difficult to see anything else? Sometimes the first move of faith isn't pretending the bill isn't real. It's remembering who is sitting at the table with you. Try jotting down what is true right now. What has God already provided? Where has he been faithful?

Then Jesus makes a turn. He doesn't simply tell us what not to seek. He gives us something better to seek.

2. Live for His Kingdom

Luke 12:31-32

Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

That word *seek* carries the idea of an ongoing pursuit. It is to become the continual habit, the orientation of the disciple.

To first-century ears, kingdom language is allegiance language. A kingdom has a king. To seek God's kingdom means submitting our lives to God's reign: his purposes, priorities, ways, and will. It means bringing more of our lives under the rule and reign of God.

As N.T. Wright puts it, "what matters is that the kingdom of God is bringing the values and priorities of God himself to bear on the greed and anxiety of the world."

Seeking his kingdom means making the priorities and purposes of God the center of our lives. And Jesus doesn't leave "seek the kingdom" abstract. He gets painfully practical: (Luke 12:33-34)

Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

These are not the words of a political elephant or donkey. These are the words of the Lamb of God.

Wait. Jesus, we just spent all this time talking about how I'm worried I won't have enough, and your next instruction is to give some of it away? Yes, because generosity trains our hearts to believe there will still be enough.

Jesus describes storing treasure in heaven as using what we've been given on earth for the good of others: giving to those in need, practicing acts of generosity, caring for the vulnerable. Pursuing

the kingdom means caring not only about whether I have enough, but also about whether my neighbor does.

This isn't new. It's woven throughout the Scriptures. Israel was commanded not to harvest every edge of its fields so that immigrants, orphans, widows, and the poor could gather food. The prophets repeatedly confronted God's people when they accumulated abundance while ignoring vulnerable neighbors. Why? Because generosity has always been connected to God's heart. What we do with our resources says something about what we believe about God.

Ancient Jewish teaching often understood generosity as involving three parties: the giver, the recipient, and God. Proverbs says that whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord. Jesus will say elsewhere that what is done for "the least of these" is done unto him. So generosity isn't simply money moving from one person's account to another. It's an act of worship. It's using what God has placed in our hands to participate in what God cares about in the world.

The rich fool spent his life accumulating treasure for himself. Jesus invites his disciples to live toward a treasure that cannot be stolen, consumed, or left behind at death.

Look to your Father. Live for his kingdom. When I trust that my Father knows what I need, I don't have to spend my entire life trying to make sure there's enough for me. I am free to ask: What has God placed in my hands that could become enough for somebody else?

I remember sitting in Raising Cane's just the other day. I had my stuff out, reading, studying, doing something "very spiritual." A guy came up to me and asked if I would buy him something to eat. If I'm honest, I hesitated. I wish I could tell you I immediately said, "Absolutely, brother. The Lord has provided!" No. A part of me started calculating. Do I want to do this? Is this legitimate? How much is he about to order? I'm trying to get my work done. And I almost missed it. I was so busy studying the things of God that I nearly missed an opportunity to care about something God cares about. I remember feeling convicted: *Cormac, what do you think seeking my kingdom looks like?*

It's not just reading about the kingdom. It's not just knowing about the kingdom. Seeking his kingdom means going after what God goes after. Caring about what God cares about.

A person in front of me was hungry, and I had enough to buy him lunch.

What is one thing you could do this week to give to someone in need? Help a family struggling with childcare. Support someone who just lost a job. Give generously to an organization doing good in our community. For a lot of us, living into this reality will mean spending less on our wants so we can spend on others.

Back at that lunch with Mr. Lacey, the bill finally came to the table. We were still enjoying lunch, or at least he was. I guess he saw me staring very intently at the bill and put two and two together, because he stopped the conversation. He said, "Cormac, don't worry about the bill. It's already paid for. I have a tab with the restaurant. It was very kind of you to offer, but I already had it

covered." It was in that moment that I realized my worry was inextricably tied to the fact that I thought the bill being paid was on me, not knowing that one greater than me was providing.

I wonder how many of us are living our lives staring at the bill, wondering if we have enough, if we've done enough, if God is really going to take care of us.

The birds have a Father. The flowers have a Father. And so do we. The ultimate proof that you can trust your Father is the gospel. When sin left us with a debt we could never pay, Jesus paid it at the cross. He gave himself for us, carried our sin, and rose again in victory.

If God has already taken care of our greatest need, we can trust him with our daily needs. He does not promise to tell us what will happen, but we don't have to worry about what tomorrow will bring, because we know who holds tomorrow.

So stop staring at the bill. Look to your Father. Live for his kingdom.

Amen.