

Part one of a two week sermon series:  
SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE

8/4 **Luke 12:13-22** – when times are good and we're too relaxed

8/11 **Luke 12:23-34** – when times are bad and we're too anxious

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Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. Amen. (1 Peter 1:3–4)

Today we continue a two part series from Luke chapter 12: SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE. In last week's text Jesus addresses that attitude within us which arises when things have gone well for us and we find our comfort and security in the things of this world. Today Jesus addresses the opposite attitude. This attitude arises when things go poorly for us, at least from an earthly standpoint, and anxiety about the future injures our trust in the LORD.

That portion of Scripture we consider which the Holy Spirit has caused to be written that your mind would be directed to things above comes from,

*Luke 12:22–34 22 Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23 Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? 25 And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 26 If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? 29 “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. 30 For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. 31 But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. 32 “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

**Give us this day our daily bread ...  
but first,  
LET THY KINGDOM COME**

“As dear children ask their dear father” – so Martin Luther explains the address to the Lord’s prayer. We pray to “our Father in heaven.” Indeed, today we become as little children. Of course it is possible that you’ve not had such a good experience with your father growing up. Maybe he let you down. Maybe he was outright never there. So goes the reliance of human relationships, earthly things, and worldly ideas. They are prone to letting you down. But not so with God. He is your dear heavenly Father. We address Him who was willing to sacrifice His own Son that we might be adopted into His heavenly family. He now calls us dear children. His gracious work in our lives will never let us down. He will always be there – in good times and bad. And so we are called to look up. This is not a prayer to an earthly father for earthly things. We look up to heaven, to a kingdom which brings treasures that never wear out and will never fail.

And so our prayer today is: **Give us this day our daily bread ... but first, dear Father, let Thy kingdom come.**

## **1. Give us this day our daily bread**

You know the fourth petition of the Lord’s prayer well: Give us this day our daily bread. But just what are you asking God to give you? We use the phrase “daily bread” to refer to more than just yeast and flour.

In Catechism Class we learn to pray “daily bread” in terms of everything we need for our bodily life here on earth. Anything beyond our bodily needs on earth are simply fixings on the table of God’s blessings. But we pray for daily bread.

God gives daily bread without our asking; even to birds as Jesus points out. **24**  
*Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?*

We’ve put out a few bird feeders – primarily for finches. Regularly for breakfast, lunch, and dinner these birds will arrive at the feeders. They did not put up the feeder; they did not pay for the seed; they do not re-fill the feeder when it is empty. They are fed nonetheless.

God gives daily bread without our asking, even to unbelievers. *Matthew 5:45 45 ... He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.*

God's blessings are undeserved. They comes to us whether we appreciate them or not. Even when atheists argue that the sliced watermelon they're biting into is product of random chance, God still gives them that juicy, tasty fruit. Even when Adam and Eve had rebelled against Him, God still gave. *Genesis 3:21 21 Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.*

God gives daily bread even before we ask, but we pray in this petition that He would teach us to realize this and receive these underserved gifts with thanksgiving.

We pray that God would teach us to recognize the sins of anxiety in our life. Down deep we are all control freaks. The natural man within us thrives on having control. Much of our anxiety stems from a natural work righteousness attitude within us. To rely on God's grace alone through a Spirit created faith alone for every good thing requires that things are completely out of our hands. By nature we just won't give up that control. We want to have a say in what things we have, what problems we face, what clothes we wear, what food we eat, and especially what role we play in our path toward heaven. When things start getting out of hand and we start to lose control over our future, we get anxious; we become troubled about what God is doing or not doing in our life.

But as Jeus says, v.26, "You are not able to do the least." That's why we worry. Ultimately nothing is in our control; everything can be taken from us in an instant.

Yet somehow ... the bird feeder keeps getting filled. Somehow ... when this feeder runs out another one is put up next door. Somehow ... God continues to pour out the greatest of blessings to us who do not deserve even the least.

We pray in this petition that God would lead us to let go of our worries so we might cling to Him in faith. We pray that God would bring us out of our comfort zone where we are content only in our anxiety and that He would humble us to place all things in His hands. We pray not just for daily bread, but even more so for daily repentance, daily forgiveness, daily thankfulness. And these are things that come only by the peaceful rule of God's kingdom

*Philippians 4:6–7 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

**We pray for daily bread, but first we pray – “Let Thy kingdom come.”**

## **2. But first – let Thy kingdom come.**

First things first. Apart from the kingdom of God, our daily bread might as well be filled with arsenic. Outside of God’s kingdom, we are already dead. Outside of His kingdom we are enemies of God, estranged, fighting a battle we have lost already.

However, Jesus says, *32 “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

“Jesus did not come to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). We heard of this in our Old Testament reading concerning Abram. *“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” (Gen. 15:1).* He had not yet received a son and descendant to preserve the promise of a Savior. He had not yet received a homeland to call his own. All Abram had to rest his confidence in was a voice, a spoken promise – “Look now toward heaven and count the stars ... so shall your descendants be.”

In this word, Abram was already rich. He was rich in righteousness. The word was Abram’s protection. The word was the guarantee of God’s blessing – that He would feed him, clothe him, and save him from sin. For this is how God brings His kingdom to us – in a voice; As He speaks, so He rules. A kingdom is not defined by some the ownership of property or people – the kingdom is recognized by the exercise of power. God’s kingdom was not known to Abram because his wife had given birth to a son nor because he had yet received the promised land or because he had seen his Savior. The kingdom was known to Abram in the power of God’s spoken word – a rule of the Spirit in his heart, causing him to believe. So also God gives you His kingdom.

*27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?*

How much more will He clothe you? Oh how He has clothed you. The Word brought you into this divine realm of God’s grace through a washing of rebirth. Hidden in the

waters of baptism is your divine title: child of God. You are a member of His “little flock.” It is His pleasure to forgive all your sins, to proclaim you righteous, to clothe you with Jesus in that water. *Galatians 3:27 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ ... 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* As Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Born of water and the Spirit, you have entered the kingdom of God” (John 3).

We couldn't perform the least of all these great spiritual accomplishments. Why should we worry about the rest? God has done it all. Jesus has risen. Should we live our lives as if He were dead?

By worrying you will not grow one cubit nor add one hour to your life. By faith, however, you do grow and you do live. Consider those lilies and the beauty they bring forth each spring. How much more the beauty that God has given to your soul and the beauty with which He will clothe your body in the final resurrection. How much more will He cause you to grow as you are fed with His word daily, as you are led to treasure His kingdom above all else.

We read in our earlier reading from Hebrews: *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (11:8)* We walk onward toward that promised land with Abraham. And all we have to cling to is a voice; an unseen reality. The only place to receive such confidence are the promises of God.

***Luke 12:33 33 Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.***

Like Abram, sometimes it seems we are going forth not knowing where God is taking us; but “Your Father knows.” He knows the end of all these troubles, the end of all these sorrows. He knows the good He will accomplish both in your life, in others lives, and in the life to come.

When you walk in those sanctuary doors, it is to empty your pockets. But Jesus is not just talking about the offering plate. He's talking about emptying your pockets of those earthly things that we cling to. He's talking about emptying your pockets of anxiety and doubt and of the sins that you carried in here. He's talking about investing your money, your time, your priorities in His good will and grace. When you walk out those sanctuary doors today – you do so with new pockets, one's that will never wear out, one's stitched with Christ's love and righteousness. You return to your vocation, your

job, your calling, your God-given responsibilities; you go back to being a grandparent, a father, a mother, a son or daughter, a brother or sister, a pastor, a teacher, an employee or employer – you go back with hearts filled with the treasures of God's kingdom. You go forth as a mouthpiece of His hidden rule. Perhaps you don't know where you are going tomorrow, but you know where you will end up.

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

Now you're looking up. Now you've become as a dear child looking to his dear Father for guidance, for protection, for everything needful. And He will never let you down. Let us pray, **Give us this day our daily bread, but first – let Thy kingdom come.**  
Amen.