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Luke

Chapter 12 - An Unforeseen Disclosure
The Cure for Anxiety Disclosed (vs. 22-34)

Luke 12:22-34: And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life’s span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? Consider the lilies, 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. But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. For all these

things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. But 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. Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Well, little did I know that the testimonies would be a precursor to my message. But that's a good thing. I appreciate those wonderful testimonies. Luke 12 is about Christ revealing, uncovering, disclosing things.

If you look in Luke 12:2, His declaration is,

(Luke 12:2) “But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”

(Luke 12:3) Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have

whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops."

He then goes on in this chapter and reveals different things.

So, one of the things that He reveals right at the very beginning is the contagious disease that really haunts man, and that is the disease of hypocrisy. We don't see it as such, but how it destroys and how it permeates and how it before long begins to rule your life, it runs your life. You begin to live a lie; you begin to live that lifestyle. There is a fear of man and it's directly attached to, and so He exposes that and there's a miscalculation on what I should do with these feelings and He exposes that. And ultimately, as we come to this particular passage, He begins to reveal and disclose the cure for anxiety. And it's all inextricably tied together, that is to say, that there is a reason for your anxiety, and really this whole chapter is talking about it. It's talking about what brings it on and talking about ultimately what will cure it.

As you look at the very beginning of this, as He starts off, it is in a setting, and Scripture wants us to pay attention

to the settings. The setting is that there are a multitude of people and they're clamoring, they're trampling on one another, and they're clawing for some kind of relief. The passage tells us that they were stepping on one another, if you look in Luke 12:1. So, the setting is such that we live in a world in which people are clamoring for some kind of relief. Why are they trampling one another? Well, they're trying to get to Jesus. They're trying to find some kind of way to find peace in their lives. And so, there they are. And we're in the midst of a world that doesn't know what is right, but they see any sign of hope and they begin to stomp and flock to Him. And so, you see that nature of man to pursue those kind of things. And the confusion that exists among us, it's just uncanny, isn't it? And out of that confusion, we began to seek answers. And unfortunately, oftentimes, I think we began to try to seek from what we perceive to be experts. In this particular case, in this particular setting, it's the Pharisees and it's the religious leaders. And unfortunately, they don't give any hope because the only thing they really give is a sense of hypocrisy or a mask. Put on a mask and you'll feel better, so to speak.

Ultimately, Jesus reveals the hidden problem, and it's all part of the uncovering, and that is that we fear man more than we fear God. Once again, the testimony that was given earlier (during the offeratory), what was the problem? It was the fear of man. And we begin to fear man, and we begin to be concerned about what he thinks, and we begin to be concerned about what he might say or what he might do to us. The Psalm is full of Psalms that say, "Why should I fear a man?" And yet, we do. We do. It is a natural thing.

I think it's one of the emphasis of the Book of Galatians. And of course, in Galatians 2, Paul says, "That these people are of reputation makes no difference to me." Unfortunately, it made a difference to Peter, and he began to acquiesce to the things that man was saying, because once again, we fear the things that man says or does or his opinion upon us. And so, we actually work our life around that. Unfortunately, when you begin to try to live according to what you think other people expect of you or you think other people need to see from you, begin to not only compromise, but you begin to put on

masks yourself. So, then ultimately our solution is we pretend to be somebody that we're not. We begin to act the way that fits in with a particular situation. We begin to speak words that we actually don't mean. And we find ourselves compromising in things that we know aren't right. It is in that particular realm that we find ourselves literally suppressing the truth. As Romans 1 will say, we suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Of course, a mask is exactly what a lie is all about. And you sear your conscience. You no longer begin to feel things. You no longer begin to care about things. You become callous. Of course, you're not living in the realm of real. And when we're talking about in the realm of real, what we're talking about is that you've detached yourself from God. Because God is real, and God is truth, and God is sincere. And when you detach yourself from God, you put yourself in a realm of callousness and hardness and detachment. And once you begin to feel that, then you desperately seek to fill this void.

What we're doing is walking through Chapter 12. I mean, if you look at the passage, He says in verse 5,

(Luke 12:5) “But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!”

But in verse 4,

(Luke 12:4) “I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.”

Don't be afraid of man. Well, what He's telling you is that's the problem. That's what starts it. And then you begin to play act, and you begin to go into this particular realm. And so, you think that, “Hey, maybe this works.” And then you find yourself going, “But I feel empty.” So, what do you do? Well, you begin substituting because you're not dealing with real, right? So, you begin to substitute, and you substitute wealth for relationships.

If you look in Chapter 12,

(Luke 12:13) “Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.””

And then Jesus' warning to him, of course, in verse 15,

(Luke 12:15) “Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed...”

Well, the point of the matter is that we begin to try to find some sort of significance in the things that we possess. And ultimately, as Christ will say, that you need to consider that life is more than just the things that you possess. And so, unfortunately, we don't listen to God and we just hunker down. And so, if in fact this stuff that we accumulated somehow didn't bring us peace, it didn't bring us fulfillment, it didn't bring us joy, our solution is maybe more will. And so, as He gives this interesting story, he tears down the barns and builds bigger barns, because this is what's going to bring some sort of relief.

It is in the context of this that Jesus turns to His disciples, and this is where we pick up today in verse 22,

(Luke 12:22) “And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you...”

Now, what He's doing is He's drawing upon the ways that man deals with his emptiness and of course how he got there, but now He begins to say, “This is not bringing you hope, this is not bringing you joy, this is not bringing you

fulfillment, but what this is bringing you is anxiety.” And He'll use this word repetitively within the passage and also tie it with other words that kind of convey what that anxiety is about. But if you think about it, the thought is that “Maybe I'll lay more treasures on the earth,” and we find out, no, that's not only an empty pursuit, but in the end, it is not that which follows us.

And so, His ultimate declaration of verse 21 is,

(Luke 12:21) “So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Now, His point now will be, when a man is not rich towards God, he lives in anxiety.

You can debate all you want to about where anxiety comes from. And of course, there's been a lot of research and stuff like this. And quite frankly, most psychologists today will say something like, “It's not your fault.” And I suppose you can feel a little bit better about it as you take your medication. But the fact of the matter is that you made wrong decisions, and you're there for a reason.

So, as He turns to His disciples and He goes, literally at this point, “For this reason I say, do not be anxious.” The word that He uses, “*merimnaō*,” within the passage, is talking about having unsettling thoughts. It is the connotation of somebody that keeps stirring up in their mind and they just can't seem to find rest. It's kind of like in Isaiah where it says, the wicked just can't seem to keep quiet. It's just like the restless sea that stirs up refuse at the bottom and there is no peace for the wicked. What does “wicked” mean, really? Well, wicked really has the point of leaving God out of the picture. It is pursuing a life that says, “I don't need God in my life.” And so, wicked is actually leaving God. It would be different than perhaps the word “evil,” which talks about the calamity and the pain and the suffering that comes. But wickedness would actually be, you have rebelled against God, you have left God, and you have left Him out of the picture. And that's where your anxiety has come from. So, though you might think that, you know, “Somehow the possessions that I own or the things that I can accumulate throughout life can bring me happiness, and if that doesn't work, then I just make more or get more,” and you realize that doesn't

work because you still have those unsettling thoughts, those haunting thoughts that come into your life. So, if you look in the passage, He'll use that in verse 22.

If you look in verse 25,

(Luke 12:25) “And which of you by worrying...”

Once again, He'll emphasize that in verse 26.

(Luke 12:26) “If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?”

So, once again, He's repeating this. You have these unsettling thoughts, these troubling thoughts that are in your mind. You just can't keep them out. They keep stirring up. And the focus of anxiety usually, and almost always when made mention of, focuses specifically on thinking about yourself. And once again, probably one of the great reasons why people live in anxiety is because they can't stop thinking about themselves. And you say, “Why are they thinking about themselves so much?”

Because they don't believe anybody else is going to take care of them. You have to look out for #1. Isn't that what they say? And who is #1? Well, it should be God. But our

faith is, we know that if we're pleasing to Him, that He's the one that is the supplier of all things. He takes care of us. And our trust is in Him. He ultimately says in this passage, if you seek His kingdom, He'll take care of you. And that's one of the great themes of this passage. So, He starts off by trying to get man to consider what's really important.

His statement is, if you look in verse 23,

(Luke 12:23) “For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.”

One of the reasons why we get so uptight and tense is that we get focused on the things that aren't important. It reminds us of the incident with Mary and Martha, “Martha, Martha, you're busy about so many things. Very few things are important. Really only one.” And here is Mary at the feet of Jesus. So, the point of the matter is that we begin to get fixated on certain things in our life. And why is that true? Well, I say it's true because the world is telling us that we should be worried. I mean, turn on the TV, “Oh, the prices of this are going up.” And “Oh, no.” I mean, I remember a number of years ago, a

television host said that they were going to have a shortage of toilet paper. And everybody rushed to the stores and bought up all the toilet paper, which was just a farce, but nevertheless, it just shows that people get focused on the wrong things and they begin to worry about those things.

If you'll look with me, Jeremiah 10 actually points us in this direction as it begins to remind us that the world has taught us to be afraid.

The statement is,

(Jeremiah 10:1) “Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.

(Jeremiah 10:2) Thus says the LORD, “Do not learn the way of the nations,

And do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens
Although the nations are terrified by them.”

He then goes on in this particular text, and he begins to talk about all the idols that they make. And we have all kinds of idols. We have technology, we have medications, we have all kinds of idols that we trust in. “Trust in these

things; these things will make you better,” instead of turning to the Lord.

If you back up into Chapter 9 of Jeremiah and you look at verse 23,

(Jeremiah 9:23) “Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches;

(Jeremiah 9:24) but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me...”

It's about the relationship with the Lord. It's about being right with God. It's about trusting in Him.

Unfortunately, the world has called upon us to trust in all kinds of other things, and we do that, and maybe they don't work at first, so we just buy more. But it still doesn't work. Why doesn't it work? Man is feeding you a bunch of lines here, because he can't promise you peace. He can't give you fulfillment. He can't give you all of these things. I mean, they make it look like if you just take a trip on a cruise liner, that your whole life is going to be great the rest of your life. It's just not true.

So, as you look at this passage, Jesus is beginning to reveal to them, “You're focused literally on the wrong stuff. If you want to ditch the whole anxiety thing, stop focusing on the menial things. Stop focusing on the food.” And now, He's actually going to tell you why you can stop focusing on it. So, it's good to know that He actually tells us why.

He goes on and says this in verse 24,

(Luke 12:24) “Consider...”

Now, when He talks to us about considering, that just simply means that He just wants us to pay attention to things that we wouldn't probably normally pay attention to.

And He's going to make reference to this in verse 24,

“Consider the ravens...”

(Luke 12:27) “Consider the lilies...”

Obviously, it's taken for granted.

(Luke 12:23) “For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.”

Consider that.

Verse 24 starts off,

“Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!”

Well, that's plain spoken just by itself.

I do think it's interesting that this particular text is not making reference to sparrows, but it's making reference to a raven. Now, it's an interesting point and one that we probably should dig a little bit deeper in. From what I understand, ravens are the most intelligent birds that exist. They are the most intelligent birds that exist. Well, what we understand is that they have processing ability of reasoning skills and actually they can make tools for themselves and have been known to do such a thing. They are what is called omnivorous birds. That means that they eat both fruit and vegetables and meat. So, in many respects, they're human-like. In fact, they seem to have an ability of thought up to a 12-year-old, they say. Strangely enough, just to let you know, they do carry grudges. And remarkably so, they remember faces. So, here you have this bird that Jesus chooses to make

mention of, and the question is, why would He make mention of a raven? And the answer is because he has these skills. The answer is, because when God says, "I want you to depend on Me," He's not saying, "I don't want you to use your skills." So, when He's talking about this, He said, "Now, you need to trust in Me, but you also need to use your skills."

Now, the problem here is that when fear comes into our life, we begin to worry and do all kinds of stupid stuff, like stocking up on the wrong kinds of things, or maybe going after the wrong kind of thing, or worrying. And once you get into that whole worry mode, that whole anxiety thing, once you begin to have these unsettling and troubling thoughts, you have no reasoning skills. You actually stop thinking. It paralyzes you. And so, Christ is wanting them to actually put in the picture a bird that He cares for, that He supplies for them, but they have to use their reasoning skills in order to get it. And "He says, "One of your problems is you're not thinking. You're just so immersed in your fears that you don't see the blessings of God around you. God has supplied you with this; He's supplied

you with that.” And I have an example. And I know that you're probably saying, “I sure would like to see an example of that.” And I actually knew that you would say that before you said it.

So, if you turn with me to Genesis 21, and you should be familiar with this because we were actually there not too long ago, in the Book of Genesis. But in Genesis 21, if you remember, Ishmael is born by Hagar, the maidservant of Sarah, now grows big enough to where Sarah wants him out of the house because of the fact that now that they have Isaac, he has become a source of problems. And so, she goes, “Get this kid out of my house.” Abraham doesn't want to do that. He doesn't want Ishmael to go. He's lived with this young man, and he doesn't want to see him go. God says, “No, listen to Sarah. He's got to go.” So, they're kind of put out in the wilderness, and Abraham puts things on, perhaps gives them some food, gives them some water, hopes the best for them and sends them on their way. The mother, that is to say Hagar and Ishmael, probably around 17, 18 years old at this particular juncture, find themselves in the desert. And the promise,

of course, to Abraham was, "I'm going to take care of this boy. He's going to be okay. Don't worry about it." And really, we don't see Abraham actually fretting after that.

But we think up in Chapter 21,

(Genesis 21:15) "When the water in the skin..."

That Abraham had supplied.

"... was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes.

(Genesis 21:16) Then she (Hagar) went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, "Do not let me see the boy die." And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept."

I just want to stop there. Okay, so that doesn't seem to me like she's trying to work things out. It doesn't seem to me like she's even trying to think, "Well, maybe we can maybe eat some cactus juice or something." I don't know what's there. But the point is that she's just sitting down and crying. And that's what anxiety does. It paralyzes you. It keeps you from thinking. It keeps you from doing the right thing.

Now, if you look at the passage, it goes on and says this,

“...And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept.

(Genesis 21:17) God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.”

Listen, God's omnipresent; He knows all things. He's omniscient.

(Genesis 21:18) “Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him.”

(Genesis 21:19) Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water...”

You mean there was a well there all along? You see, we live our life going, “I don't think I'm going to make it.”

Yeah, you're not going to make it that way. But look at all the things that God has supplied around you. They're all around you. We can't see them because we're too busy crying. We're too busy focused on ourselves. It's one of the reasons why Jesus picks the raven. He has a lot of ingenuity. He has a lot of ability. And it's a very smart,

smart animal. And God goes, “Look, I made the raven smart. I made you to have a brain.” But we realize that God wants us to use what He's given us, but beyond that, He wants us to trust that He's a supplier.

So, the way it reads is,

(Luke 12:24) “Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap...”

In other words, they haven't made the things, they just pick up what's there. God provided for them. They didn't just then dig the well. It was already dug. But God just opened their eyes that they would see it.

“Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!”

So, it's a very interesting combination, and clearly what He's talking about is that you need to stop and think about what's most important in life and stop focusing on these things that just are scaring you to death to cause you to not see clearly the things that God has prepared

for you. God has wonderful things in store for us, no doubt that He does.

He goes on and says this, and He virtually is giving the argument, what value is your anxiety? I know that some people think, “Well, if I just sit around and meditate about how miserable my life is, somehow it'll get better.” But it just doesn't work that way. You can watch all the soap operas in the world, but they're not going to make you happier.

(Luke 12:25) “And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life’s span?”

This text can be read in different ways because of the words that are used. It can actually make reference to your height, or it can make reference to your length of life. And so, that's one of the reasons why it's translated differently in some cases. But “life’s span” can be height, the word that is used there, and a single cubit (hour) makes reference to the length of something. So, which of you by being anxious could do this? And of course, what God is trying to reveal is that anxiety never solved anything. Most of the time we don't sit down and think, “I

wonder if this will work?" We just don't simply ask that question. I mean, how has that helped you? How is it working for you? It's just a simple question. Is it working? "I've been doing it for years." Are you happier? "Nope." Okay, so it's not working. So, anxiety is just not a way to go and mulling it over and thinking it over and, you know, how about turning to God? How about considering what's really important? How about trusting that He's going to supply? And how about start opening your eyes and looking for the things that He's given to you? There are things all around you that He's given to you. Look at them. "And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span?"

(Luke 12:26) If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters?"

He actually broadens it and begins to reveal. It's amazing how focused we get on our problems, isn't it? And in the scheme of things, if you just stop and say, "How important really is this?" You would have to discard it. Nevertheless, it's just something that just seems to take all of our thoughts and He goes, "You can't change; you

have not the ability.” And unfortunately, we began to focus on the things that we can't change, and we won't focus on the things that we should be doing. And that's basically what fear does.

It then goes on and says in verse 27, in the realm of considering,

(Luke 12:27) “Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin...”

A lot of our frustration in life is just trying to make things happen. It is amazing that things are growing. And I don't know if you've ever interviewed a lily or not, but if you were to interview one, you'd probably ask them, “Was that pretty hard just growing like that?” And they'd probably say something like, “No, just comes natural.”

“... 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.”

Clearly, we toil over things that **only** God can do. And that's part of our frustration, too. I mean, you know, “I'm

going to bring peace to the earth.” Good luck with that.
Good luck with that. It's only something God can do.

(Luke 12:28) “But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace...”

And probably has a significance of even the wheat that's thrown in to bake the bread.

“... how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith!”

The phrase there makes reference to somebody having a lack of confidence. And that's what brings so much anxiety, “What if this happens? How am I going to handle this?” And so, there's all this anxiety that comes in. So, He clearly, this passage is making reference to, you need to consider your responsibility. You need to consider God's care. You need to consider how valuable you are to God. And you need to consider that what's really important. And He sets the stage for ridding yourself of anxiety.

He also declares in verse 29,

(Luke 12:29) “And do not seek...”

Here again, it's really emphasizing seeking the wrong stuff. And we spend a lot of energy, a lot of effort going after the wrong stuff, which is one of the reasons why people are miserable. They say if God wants to punish us, He'll give us what we ask for. And it is in the seeking of the things that we want that brings us probably the most anxiety in our life.

“And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying.”

Now, He's even adding to this, “Don't seek what you shall eat, what you shall drink.” I mean, it is amazing when you think about how much focus we spend on those kind of things. And once again, the great anxiety of humanity worries about these kind of things. We watch the stock market and the things that happen, the gas prices.

Underline that phrase,

“... do not keep worrying.”

The root of that word is where we get the word “meteor”. In fact, it actually is the word “meteor”. You go, “Wow, what does it have to do with meteor? What does that

have to do with worrying?" Well, the point is that it makes reference to something that's in mid-air. So, that's basically what meteor means, in mid-air. The point of that is, you're just dangling up there. More specifically, not only are you unsettled in your thoughts, but your thoughts are in suspense. You're suspended, you can't move. And so, because of that, you're confused and you're indecisive about your life. And He says, "Stop being indecisive. Stop being in the air about things." That's where a lot of our frustration comes from, "Should I do this? Should I do that?" Then we start taking votes and start asking everybody else. Of course, everybody has their own opinions, and that just brings more anxiety. You know, ask more people, and now you've got more confusing choices. And it's because you're worried about what people are going to think, what it's going to look like, what's going to happen if I fail. Everybody's worried about failing. You should be worried about not **pleasing** God. You're going to fail. You're going to fall on your face. We're human. But the righteous man falls seven times to get him back up. So don't focus on failing. That's going to happen. But do not seek these things. Because according

to Scripture, when you begin to focus on those things, it will keep you up in the air. You won't be decisive about the things you need to do.

It goes on and says in verse 30,

(Luke 12:30) “For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek...”

Once again, what are we talking about? Well, you go back to verse 1, we're talking about hypocrisy. And then if you go on, we're talking about fear of man. So, we're worried about what everybody else is thinking. And so, we've adopted the very fears that the world has thrust upon us. They've told us what to be afraid of. We began to listen to them. And so, the anxieties began to flow. Don't seek these things.

“For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things.

(Luke 12:31) But seek His kingdom...”

Actually, the passage is, “don't seek” and then “seek”. He tells you what not to seek and what to seek. Don't seek about these things. God's going to take care of those

things. It's like the ravens walking around going, "I wonder if I'm going to have any fruit or if I'm going to have any meat?" No, it's out there. It's out there for the picking. God has supplied that, so don't worry about that. So, what should I seek? Well, the passage is you need to seek God's standards. You need to seek God's rules. You need to seek God's way. And that's the emphasis of the word "kingdom" there, "*basileia*".

"But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you."

In other words, let God do the taking care of. He'll open your eyes. He'll go, "You see that well there?" You'll go, "Yeah." He'll go, "I made that for you." So, God is going to supply. But when? And the answer is, when you're seeking Him. "I just want to please the Lord. I want to love the way that He wants me to love. I want to focus on relationships, not on finances. I mean, you've got to focus on the right things in order for it to be pleasing to God. But if you're pleasing to God, He's the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, Scripture says. So, as you're

seeking first His kingdom, as Matthew would say, these things shall be added to you.

Now, He states this in verse 32,

(Luke 12:32) “Do not be afraid...”

I like the simplicity of it. “Consider this.” “Don't seek that.” “Seek this.” “Don't be afraid.” And I would just say just that line alone would be the reason why you shouldn't be afraid because God said not to. I mean, if God were standing before you, He'd go, “Stop.” You would just stop, you know, “Whatever you say.” It's in the imperative.

But in His statement, He actually gives the analogy of sheep. And so, His point is that “You don't have to be afraid because I take care of you like sheep. I'll lead you by the still waters. I'll put you in the green pastures. I'll patch you up. I'll take care of you.” The sheep have to follow the shepherd. I mean, all we like sheep have gone astray. Now, you're into problems. But if you'll follow the shepherd, you're okay. So, just the simplicity of this is that “If you'll seek My kingdom, then you have a Father that's like a shepherd to you. He's chosen gladly to give you His

kingdom,” which is not only making reference to, of course, the wonderful things in heaven, but He's chosen to give you the wonderful things of the kingdom, which is joy, peace, love, all these things that God has in store for you, and confidence and security. All these things that God has in store for you, He gladly will give them to you if you just put your trust in Him.

Then He makes an interesting statement in verse 33, (Luke 12:33) “Sell your possessions...”

So, you have, “consider,” “don't seek,” “seek,” “don't fear, and now, “sell”. And what does He want you to sell?

Well, He wants you to:

“Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.”

(Luke 12:34) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

In other words, you want a heart that's not anxious? Then invest in stuff that can't be taken away from you. One of

the reasons why you're anxious is, I mean, Scripture says money makes wings like eagles. So, "I'm going to invest in this and I'm going to hold on to this." Well, hold on to it tight because it's going to fly and it's going to take you with it. And that's one of the reasons why people are up and down. Just like the stock market is up and down, they're up and down with it. See? Why? You're investing in the wrong thing. Invest in something that can't be taken away, something that just grows with time as you begin to invest in things that are eternal.

There's an interesting passage and it probably describes this point best. And if you look with me in Luke 16, it probably gives the clearest example of this.

It states this in verse 1,

(Luke 16:1) "Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions."

(Wasting his possessions)

Now, quite frankly, what we do in life is we waste the things that God gives us. Instead of using them to invest in something that would be righteous and something that would be eternal, we stockpile. We tear down our barns. We build bigger barns. We waste our investments. We squander them. This is an interesting example of one who was squandering the possessions, and he was supposed to be a steward.

(Luke 16:2) “And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’

(Luke 16:3) The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.

(Luke 16:4) ‘I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.’

(Luke 16:5) And he summoned each one of his master’s debtors, and he began saying to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

(Luke 16:6) And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'

(Luke 16:7) Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

(Luke 16:8) And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light."

Now, I just want to stop here. A steward, if he had a responsibility of collecting, he was usually given a certain amount in which he was paid to collect. So, he could charge a certain amount. So, he may just owe the one that he was representing, his master, 50% of that, so he would actually make 50% on one, or he may only owe maybe 20% of that. So, he was actually giving up his pay every time. And his master goes, "Well, that's pretty smart." You say, why is it smart?

Here's the answer. Watch in verse 8.

“... for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.

(Luke 16:9) And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

(Luke 16:10) He who is faithful in a very little thing (i.e., money) is faithful also in much...”

What's the point? What he just did was he traded his money in for the relationship. And this is why he was shrewd, because he knew that the money would eventually fail him, but the friendship wouldn't. And he could bank on those friends. Now, that's a worldly way of thinking, but Christ then turns to His disciples, He goes, “They're smarter than you are, because you don't think that way. You think in terms of, ‘I've got to hold onto my money, I've got to hoard it, I've got to put it in barns, and I've got to store it up,’ instead of thinking, ‘Maybe I should invest it in the lives of people around me.’” And this is why Jesus says, “Sell your stuff.” What He's talking about is obviously not liquidating everything you have, but the point is, make good financial decisions. Use your

money to invest in something that won't fade away; that is reserved in heaven for you, as Peter would say. So, why is that so necessary? Because once you begin to invest in what is real and what is lasting, the world can't make you anxious anymore. I've often made mention of the fact that this is not anything about boasting, it's just about something that I've learned. And that is that I have found when you go to a restaurant, if you tip high, you give them a really good tip where they're like going, "Whoa, I'm surprised." And you go back to that restaurant, it leaves the door open for a relationship. And I always think of it this way, "I just invested in the kingdom." I know people will go, "Well, I don't know if they deserved it." Well, I wasn't thinking that way. I was thinking about selling what I had to save a life. And Scripture is saying, if you'll take your money and you'll use it to help build the kingdom, you won't be anxious about whether the walls are the right color, or you won't be anxious about whether or not you get all the right kinds of food or the prices of groceries or the clothes that you wear, because you're not thinking about those things. Where does anxiety come from? Well, it starts off from pleasing men;

it goes into the realm of trying to find some kind of fulfillment in money or things, and it just takes you down a path, a deep hole of depression. Stop thinking about yourself. Build up the kingdom. Put God first. Where does the anxiety go?

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for Your word and just for the encouragement that You give us as we come at this time. Lord, deal with our hearts. Lord, You just know that it's hard for us to let go of these things. It's hard for us to rethink because the world has trained us to be afraid of the things that they're afraid of. They've forgotten that You're the supplier of all things. They've forgotten that You care for them.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. We're wanting you to have freedom today; freedom from the anxiety, from the hurt, and from the pains. We want you to have confidence. God has given you clarity of mind and thought, but He's also given you great hope and a great way to go; a great way to use what you have. He's given

you a purpose and a place to invest. Investing in something that can't be taken away by anybody. Talk about security.