

THE BIG IDEA: Anxiety comes from wondering HOW GOD WILL instead of trusting WHO GOD IS.The Take-Off**[Video clip / Bridge of Spies / Would it help?]**

So far in **Luke 12**, we've talked about the need to have guardrails in place that will keep us from hypocrisy and greed. Last week, I told you that what we're taking 5 weeks to cover, Jesus covered in one sitting.

Basically, I've made 5 messages out of one, and so remembering the context is so important for us week to week.

When Jesus taught about guarding ourselves from greed, He knew that if we did, we may begin to feel anxious, and so this week we're looking at the next section which deals with fear and anxiety.

If you've got a Bible with section headers, you may see the words "Do not worry" over **Luke 12:22-34**, and that's something that should get our attention, because all of us can relate to fear and anxiety at some level.

Anxiety can tend to run the whole spectrum, from "low grade" daily anxieties all the way to debilitating depression. The anxiety that Jesus is talking about in this section is specifically tied to finances.

Remember, He just told a parable about not being greedy and storing things up for ourselves, and so naturally His disciples would begin to freak a little about how they'd be taken care of going forward.

If you aren't holding onto your possessions, how will you eat? What will you wear? The lack of details alone would cause even the most laid-back personality types to feel a bit unsettled.

And so, in that context, Jesus turned to HIS DISCIPLES (not the world - this is a message to people in love with and following Jesus) and said, do not worry.

All of us can relate.

"Fear not" is the most common command in the Bible.

The Bible, written over a period of 1,500 years, contains "do not fear" all the way through it.

Now, the scope of today cannot be the do an exhaustive teaching about every kind of anxiety known to man: from OCD to panic attacks to anxiety attacks to social disorders.

But we can talk about anxiety as it relates to our finances and resources since that's what Jesus was doing, and I think we'll learn some things about fear and anxiety that can help us in other areas, too.

Let's start by reading, and then we can talk about some guardrails and some takeaways.

Luke 12:22-34**1. GUARDRAIL ONE: Trying to THINK our way out**

- a. Jesus tells the disciples not to worry about what to eat, or how they look, or what to wear.
- b. He's NOT saying we shouldn't do those things - I'm personally VERY glad you all chose to wear something!
- c. But if you take it in context, he points out how ravens (nasty birds) and lilies don't waste effort or energy trying to figure out what they need.
- d. Again, Jesus isn't saying that planning is bad - and I know a lot of you in here who plan are glad about that!
- e. What He is saying is that it's okay to PLAN for the future, but it's not okay to FEAR the future.
- f. The first sign that we're giving into anxiety - the first guardrail - is simply that we spend an inordinate amount of time trying to THINK our way out of our anxiety over things
- g. Planning out every minute of every future day - having a contingency plan for our contingency plan - thinking that if WE TAKE CONTROL then we'll have nothing to worry about.
- h. Basically, this type of person thinks that worry is only for the weak - "Well, if THEY had thought it through the way that I thought it through, they wouldn't need to worry!"
- i. That, my friends, is pride, and pride will keep us from the step we need the most when we hit this guardrail: we can't THINK our way out of anxiety; we have to TRUST our way out.
- j. The raven is fed by God. The lily is clothed by God.
- k. HOW MUCH MORE will that same God - Who is OUR FATHER!! - take care of us?
- l. Jesus is saying: why worry when you have a Father who knows what you need, has what you need, and will give you what you need?

2. GUARDRAIL TWO: Trying to BUY our way out

- a. There is only one reason why we wouldn't take Jesus' advice: we don't really trust God to give us what we need, and that leads us right into the second guardrail: we try to BUY our way out of anxiety.

- b. It looks like this: if I had a new car... If I could get a new job... We need a vacation...
- c. But you can spend all your money on yourself, and still have anxiety.
- d. But now you have less money, and that can lead to more anxiety!
- e. At the end of the day, Jesus isn't saying you shouldn't go shopping. Rather, He's saying don't trust something external to be the solution for internal pain.
- f. That's what HE wants to do.
- g. HE wants to be your treasure.
- h. Before we start to wrap this up, please resist the urge to see this as a to do list for getting rid of anxiety
- i. "If I give God more, I won't be depressed."
- j. No, that's the same as trying to buy your way out of anxiety!
- k. Jesus is calling you to Himself. Not to anything other than a "100% loved by Him just the way I am" relationship, because He knows that is the soil that healing grows from.

The Landing

Now, let's talk real talk. About this time, if you struggle with fear, anxiety or depression, you're starting to feel a little, well, anxious. Because you think you've tried all of this before.

Maybe you have, and maybe that's the problem.

YOU'VE tried it.

So, can we leave you with some hope about what can happen when you **stop wondering HOW GOD WILL and start trusting WHO HE IS.**

[Joe's testimony]

Now, I want to invite you to do what Joe did. Bring your anxiety to the altar and simply trust the Savior who said the words found in **John 14:27.**

Not as a command, but as an invitation.

Whether you leave here no longer needing medication, or counseling, or anything else that you may think defines you. Come meet - for the first time or for the first time in a long time - a Savior who loves you - even the anxious, fearful, depressed you - and offers you a peace that passes all understanding and that leaves your heart untroubled.

Let's pray.