

material possessions, but to many of us God will entrust fairly modest resources and require us to be content and faithful with that. It is foolish (as per the parable of the rich fool in the same chapter) to believe that God’s ambition for us is to have more and more material possessions for ourselves. Jesus’ clear teaching is that we should use whatever resources we have on this earth to secure ‘treasure in heaven’ (verse 33) – because that is real treasure that will never perish, spoil or fade. Earthly possessions are like Monopoly money and real estate – you can be “rich” while the game is being played, but once it ends, you’re left with nothing!

APPLICATION

What part of the teaching did you find most challenging and why?

How do I apply the Word to my life?

- Can you identify any characteristics of the ‘orphan spirit’ in your life? If so, take time to discuss them with your group and then repent before God of failing to trust in his Fatherhood.
- What needs to change in the way you view money and material possessions? What practical steps will you take in this new direction?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the fact that he values you, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you to truly believe this
- Ask God to show you in ways big and small, what it means to be his child
- Pray for opportunities this week to share God’s love and truth with someone who doesn’t yet know him as Father.

NOTES

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

WARM UP

What sort of things do you worry about most?

WORD

"Therefore I tell you, 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 is more than clothes... But seek first his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Luke 12:22-34

None of us are spared the cares of this life – we have to find work, a place to stay, food to eat, clothes to wear, a car to drive. Parents have an even longer list – school fees and everything else that our children need. It can all be very stressful! In fact, it's hard to imagine life without the constant anxiety of how we will keep up with all our financial responsibilities (to say nothing of the nicer things in life that we're still dreaming about acquiring!). And yet, in today's passage, Jesus very clearly instructs us not to worry about anything – not our lives, what we'll eat or what we will wear i.e. the most basic things! But how can that possibly be? There is something we need to understand and believe before we can consistently live the worry-free life that God wants for us.

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR VALUE

And how much more valuable are you than the birds! Verse 24

When you first read this text, it's easy to think that Jesus' main emphasis is on how much we must give up in order to be his disciples (V33 "Sell your possessions"). But that's not it at all – and in fact, the two main points Jesus is making are hidden in plain sight! The first is found in V24, where the Lord of History is driving home the point that YOU are valuable to the Creator of the Universe! In Psalm 8, David wrestled with the absurdity of this truth, "When I consider the heavens, the works of your hands, the moon and the stars that you have made – what is man that you are mindful of him?" And that's not all. How many times do you knowingly disobey God? How many times do you have jealous, lustful, or rebellious thoughts? And yet Jesus assures you that he loves you! Do you sometimes struggle to believe that God values you?

2. UNDERSTAND HIS FATHERHOOD

For the pagan world runs after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Verse 30

Here's what it all boils down to – God not only values you; God is your Father! If we don't understand and believe this, nothing else Jesus says in this text will make sense. Conversely, when we do – then everything he says follows on quite naturally. It appears that Jesus is saying to us, "Why would you choose to live like (spiritual) orphans when the God of Creation is your dad? Why would you choose to run around worrying about the things that people who don't have God as their Father spend their lives chasing?" This mindset is sometimes referred to as a 'orphan spirit.' Suppose you buy the latest state-of-the-art laptop, and just a couple of days in, I ask you to give it to someone else who desperately needs it but can't afford it. It would be a noble thing to do, but just about impossible – right? That's what Jesus' commands often sound like! But now suppose that your dad was Bill Gates – would you feel differently about giving away that laptop? I suspect so. Why? Because your dad has warehouses full of laptops and you can get as many as you like whenever you like? Do you get the point? Understanding who your Father is, directly impacts your ability to not worry about material things. That's what Jesus is saying in this text – if you know who your Father is, and understand and believe that he values you greatly, then you have no reason what so ever to worry about provision.

3. WHAT THEN?

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Verse 31

Is Jesus saying food, shelter and bills are not important? No. He's saying when God is your Father, these are not the things you should spend your time worrying about or setting your affections upon. He's saying when you are in God's kingdom, he has a special plan for your life – a unique way for you to bring him glory on this earth in the short time you have, and that this is what your heart, passion, energy, time and money should be given to. And he's saying that if you would do that, then (obviously) God will provide everything else that you need. For some that will involve be handling lots of money and