

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 12: 22-34

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue reading Luke Chapter 12 and today we will read verses 22 to 34.

Previously, Jesus was speaking to His disciples, but He was interrupted midway by a man—that is in verses 13 to 21. After Jesus answered that man's question, He returned to continue speaking to His disciples.

Verse 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.”

In this portion of Jesus' speaking to His disciples, the word “life” is used, and in the Greek original it is *psuchē*, which is what we refer to as the “soul.” As human beings, we have spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is the means by which we communicate with God; within the spirit there are different functions, including conscience, intuition, and fellowship. The soul, on the other hand, determines our personality. It includes our mind, emotion, and will. The Bible also often uses “soul” to represent the whole person. As for the body, of course, it is our physical body.

The body has life, the soul has life, and the spirit also has life. In Chinese it is translated as “life,” and in English it is often translated as “life” as well. But in the Greek original, sometimes the word *zoē* is used, referring to our spiritual life; sometimes *psuchē* is used, referring to our soulish life; and sometimes *bios* is used, referring to our physical life.

Jesus told His disciples not to worry about life—do not worry about what you will eat; that is, do not worry about your soul concerning what you will eat. Eating should be related to the body, yet sometimes our soul becomes anxious. The

anxiety of the soul is about “what you will eat,” while we are told not to worry about the body concerning “what you will wear.” The focus here is not on what to eat or what to wear, but on worrying about what to eat and worrying about what to wear. The worry about what to eat is related to the soul, while the worry about what to wear is related to the body.

Then, in Jesus’ response, He uses God’s provision in nature to instruct us: when your soul is anxious about what to eat, consider the birds of the air; when you are anxious in your body about what to wear, consider the lilies of the field. What to eat is related to the continuation of life, while what to wear is related to our vanity. Therefore, in verse 22, Jesus begins by saying not to worry about your soul—what you will eat—and not to worry about your body—what you will put on.

Verse 23: “Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.”

Do not waste your higher-level soul-life on worrying about what to eat, nor waste your higher-level body on worrying about what to wear.

Verse 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?”

The birds do not sow, they do not reap, they have no storehouse or barn, yet God feeds them. Is not our soul-life much more valuable than these birds? If God sustains them, will He not also take care of our needs for food?

Verse 25: “And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?”

“Add one cubit” (the margin in the Chinese Union Version also notes it may be translated as “add one cubit to his stature”). Our lifespan and our height are both

determined by God beforehand. By worrying, we cannot add even one second to our life; nor can worrying make our stature grow even a foot and a half.

Verse 26: “If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?”

By worrying about what you will eat, you will not eat any better; by worrying about what you will wear, you will not be clothed any better. Your worrying cannot add a single moment to your lifespan, nor can it add one cubit to your stature. What is interesting is that adding a moment to our lifespan or a cubit to our height is, to us, something extremely difficult. Yet Jesus calls these the smallest things. If you cannot accomplish even these smallest things, then what else is there for you to worry about?

Verse 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.”

Labor refers to its work, and spinning refers to its making of its own adornment. King Solomon, in the history of Israel, lived at a time when the nation was at its strongest, its territory at its greatest extent, its economy at its best, and its people enjoying the most prosperous living conditions. At that time, Solomon could use the finest materials, the best craftsmen, and the most skilled tailors among men. Yet even at the height of his glory, what Solomon wore was not equal to a single small flower. This little flower is adorned by God Himself. What God gives, what comes from His hand, is always the best.

So why should we still worry about what brand of clothes to wear, what brand of purse to carry, or what brand of shoes to put on? These things may appear noble in the eyes of men, but before God they are not as good as a single small flower. In Pennsylvania, we often like to visit Longwood Gardens, where there are all kinds of flowers. Every time I see those flowers, I give thanks and praise to our God. The

adornment He gives to the flowers is so beautiful, far surpassing anything man can produce by his own effort.

Verse 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?”

Natural beauty far surpasses artificial beauty. In the natural world, everything has its own life cycle. Like the grass—here today, and tomorrow it is thrown into the oven. With such a short life span, God still clothes it with such beauty; how much more will He do so for us?

Verse 29: “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.”

The “seek” here does not mean to ask or request in prayer, but to pursue—to **seek**. Do not pursue what you will eat, and do not pursue what you will drink.

Verse 30: “For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things.”

To pursue what to eat and what to drink—these are the things the Gentiles seek. These people do not know God and are unaware of His provision; therefore, they worry about themselves and spend much time and effort pursuing what to eat and what to wear. But Jesus tells us that our Father knows that we need these things.

Verse 31: “But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.”

We do not pursue what to eat, nor do we pursue what to drink. Instead, what we need to pursue is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the realm of God's authority; how much God rules in our lives is what we need to seek. If we only seek His kingdom, all these things will be added to us. What we eat is necessary for our soul-life, and what we wear is necessary for our body-life—our Father knows these needs and will take care of them. Therefore, we do not need to waste time or energy pursuing the things that the Gentiles commonly chase. Instead, we must pursue God's kingdom. God's kingdom is the place where God reigns.

First, how much of our life is under God's rule? Our thoughts, our emotions, our will—how we think, how we make decisions, what we desire—are these all under God's authority? In other words, in these matters, is God the Lord over us? Then, expand the sphere of God's rule to your family—your spouse, your children. Next, expand it to the church you belong to, where there are also God's children. Is God's kingdom truly among us? That is, is God's sovereignty being exalted in the midst of our lives?

Verse 32: “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

When we first seek His kingdom, all that we need in life will be given to us. When we seek His kingdom, Jesus gives us a very beautiful promise: “You are the little flock.”

The term little flock speaks of the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. We are shepherded by the Lord; we belong to His sheep. Brother Watchman Nee once collected and compiled many hymns. On the cover of the hymnbook, he wrote “Little Flock Hymns.” He truly saw and expressed that we, God's children, are shepherded by Him. We are a little flock. Our numbers may be small, but we are willing to rest under God's shepherding care.

“For your Father... delights to give you the kingdom.” The word Father reveals the relational aspect of life—it tells us that we are in the Father's household. The

kingdom shows that He is our King, able to exercise authority in our lives, and this kingdom is given to us by Him. In this simple sentence, three wonderful relationships are revealed:

1. God is our Shepherd, and we are His sheep, for whom He takes responsibility our whole lives.
2. He is our Father, the provider of our life. We are in a family relationship with Him, and with our brothers and sisters, we are family together.
3. He wants His kingdom to be among us, to rule in our midst. He is our King, and this kingdom is not something we can obtain by asking; it is given to us by Him.

Today, what we can truly pursue is, on one hand, to rest like sheep under His shepherding care; on the other hand, to live as children in His household, building together with our brothers and sisters a home where love and unity reflect God's heart. The church is our family.

Verse 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."

When we have this kind of vision—that God is our Shepherd, responsible for the path of our lives; that we place ourselves in God's household; and that we learn to provide for our brothers and sisters who are also family—then one day, when we have rested from earthly labor, we should leave nothing behind for ourselves but sell it all to help others. In doing so, we prepare for ourselves an imperishable purse. This purse belongs to heaven, containing inexhaustible treasures stored there. And in that place, neither thief nor moth can reach it.

If we store treasures on earth, thieves may steal them, and moths may destroy them. But if we place our treasures in heaven, and draw from them when needed,

we will have an everlasting supply of treasure in heaven—like a purse that never spoils.

Verse 34: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Our hearts follow where our treasures are. If we place our treasures in heaven, our hearts will be in heaven; if we place our treasures in the church, our hearts will be in the church; if we place our treasures in the bank, our hearts will be with the bank.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You once again for the reminder that the path of our lives has already been arranged by You. You are the best Shepherd for us. Today You place us in Your household, allowing us to learn family life together with our brothers and sisters. Help us to be willing to store our treasures in heaven, for where our treasure is, there our heart will be also. Help me to become a Christian who is more willing to give, more willing to offer, and more willing to help others. Bless my life today. I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen!