

Trinity Lutheran Church, Gillette, WY
August 12, 2007

Anxious for What?

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen. The text for the sermon this morning comes from the Gospel, which was read earlier.

Everyone take a look at your watch. We need to hurry things up today because I know that everyone has a busy schedule. We have places to be, things to do. Our appointment books are overflowing with meetings and doctor appointments and little league games, sporting events and the like. We are on the go 24/7 and it doesn't seem like things will be slowing down anytime soon. We try not to worry about our busy schedules and making sure that everything gets done in a timely manner, but it's hard to do. There are many burdens, many concerns, and many worries of this world that are laid upon us. Not to mention the various concerns of this world clamoring for our attention, often bringing anxiety. Regardless of all that is going on around us, there is no need to be anxious for anything, for Jesus points us to God's creation and says, "Will God not care for you?"

It's easy for us to become over anxious in our world. However, Christ points us to creation all around us in our text and asks us a simple question: "When you see creation, don't you see my Father's care? Don't you see the concern my Father has for everything all around you? Then surely you know that my Father is concerned for you as well."

Christ begins with ravens: "*they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them.*" It's safe to say that we are higher on the

evolutionary food chain than ravens. Regardless, they show us a very important lesson. While we might detest ravens and see them as unclean and nasty birds, God provides for all of their needs. He provides them food. He provides them the materials that are necessary for shelter.

God the Father does nothing less than provide for us as well. It may not be what we want or desire but it is what we **need** to live. Martin Luther, in the explanation to the Fourth Petition writes, “*What is meant by daily bread?* Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”

However, when we look at the world around us, we get conflicting information. While God provides for our needs, we also see such destruction and devastation. Tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, collapsing bridges – how many of these have touched our lives? All of this seems to go against God’s care in creation. How is it that God provides for His creation when He allows His creation to suffer like this? We look for answers, but often than not, we don’t look to God for the answers. We look to ourselves for answers or we look to the world for answers.

We become anxious about everything. We become anxious about what things we have in our lives, or better yet, the things we don’t have in our lives. We become anxious about the way we live our lives. In essence, our greatest anxiety is for improvement.

We are bombarded by the claims which society places upon us concerning what we ought to be worried about. Commercials tell us what we need to make our lives

better, things which we cannot live without. We see these things and they convince us of what we should want and that our life is incomplete without them. They want us to see what is lacking in our lives. The problem is not with our eyes seeing things, but with our eyes loving things too much.

The major problem that we face is not relying on God to provide for our needs. Jesus makes it very clear that we are to rely on God to provide for our needs and not the things of this world: *“And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.”*

The heart does not see Jesus tries to build up treasure for itself. It places trust in the things of this world, something which is easy for us to do. It's easy because we think that the world can provide us the comfort we need, especially in difficult times. However, that is not the case. While the world may seem to bring comfort to us now, it is only temporary at best. Jesus gives to us a warning – short and simple, but a warning nonetheless: *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

This is a truth that applies in all matters. If your “treasure” is worldly goods, then your desires, your plans, and your actions will be directed toward getting earthly riches. If your treasure is human power, your heart will devise ways to get it. Likewise if your treasure is in heaven, your heart will seek ways to use your time, your abilities, and your earthly treasures toward obtaining and securing heavenly things like spreading the good news of forgiveness in Christ Jesus. In doing so your heart will be strengthened in the treasures which we receive in the assurance of the gospel.

When the heart is treasuring the wrong things, then creation and the world does not bring the comfort that Jesus speaks of; the problems of the world weigh upon us rather than being lifted, and anxiety and fear burden us. The only way to change what our heart sees is to change the focus of what our heart is seeing. Instead of focusing on the things of this world which give us great joy now, we need to turn our focus to what matters: Jesus Christ and what He has done for us.

Because of Christ's life, death and resurrection, He has made us a wonderful treasure to God. Our sins have been forgiven; not once, but for all times. God doesn't see the way we used to be, a creation marred by our sins. Now, He sees us as His blood-bought sons and daughters, free from all our sins and where only the brightness of Christ's holiness is reflected in us.

Where God's treasure is, there is His heart also. That is why He sent His Treasure to earth, as His one and only Son, who left His place in heaven to become human so that He may die for your sins and mine.

Notice that God's treasure is not in the things of this world, but in the One who came to redeem the world. Since God has given His Son to us as His treasure, we can put our hope and our trust in Christ, who is our treasure.

That is the message which Jesus tells to the disciples: "*Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.*" Little did they know He was referring to Himself, for they were focused on things of this world. They were focused on trying to figure out how to feed 5000+ people instead of trusting in Jesus to accomplish such a feat. They were full of anxiety over what was to happen.

In a world full of schedules and the like, we should have no anxiety. We are to be anxious for nothing for God has promised to provide us with all that we need for this life, in both body and soul. The greatest of all promises we have is faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who lived and died so that we may live forever. In Jesus' name, amen.

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, amen.