



*From the Pastor's Desk*

March 6, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Recently, I read a message from Billy Graham, entitled, "**How to Calm our Fears in This World and the Next: A meditation on Luke Chapter 12.**"<sup>1</sup> It was very encouraging to me, and I hope that it will encourage you!

"Today we find ourselves in a time of political change, in a time economic uncertainty, and in a time of armed conflict. People all over the world share a common concern for their safety and security, but find themselves filled with worry and uncertainty. Good news seems difficult to find, and those who deliver the news from across the globe to our living room or doorstep seem to have only one message: our worst fears may come to pass.

Fear is a part of our everyday lives. But that's where the gospel message breaks in and challenges us to get our news from a different source: from the good news of Jesus and his Kingdom. Just when we are tempted to think that these times are unique, the Gospels of the New Testament remind us that people of every generation, every race, and every society have had to cope with fear and uncertainty. The answer is always the same: there is a King in Heaven who will return to earth, and we can participate in His Kingdom right now, even before he returns.

In the Luke's gospel, we get a picture of a society eager to find a solution to their worries. The beginning of Luke chapter 12 tells us that so many people gathered to hear the teachings of Jesus that the crowds grew to many thousands, sometimes in danger of trampling upon one another (Luke 12:1). They were hungry for good news. In that setting Jesus reminded his followers of how to order their priorities and manage their fears.

He taught that our first priority was be sure that our fears are rightly placed--in reverence to God Himself, the ultimate Judge. Jesus boldly indicated that the only judgment that mattered was the final judgment when the Son of God would return. In the first paragraphs of this chapter (Luke 12: 4-21) we can receive a powerful revelation from the Scriptures, namely that riches in this life are not as important as being "rich toward God." (v. 21)

After establishing the one ultimate truth about Judgment Day, Jesus then began to address the cares and worries of this world and the here-and-now. He taught that the reality of the Kingdom of God is not simply about the afterlife, but rather that the Kingdom of God should impact the way we think and act now.

Here is how Jesus gives us comfort. He assures us that God cares about our everyday needs. He promises us that we can settle our fears by learning how to trust Him for practical things. In this new relationship with God He will provide for our everyday needs:

*And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom (Luke 12: 29 - 32, NIV).*

Jesus is teaching us that the same Father who will provide for our eternal life will also provide for our needs right now. That is, the blessing of his heavenly Kingdom can begin right here and now for those who walk in a trusting relationship with him.

Do we really believe that our Heavenly Father is pleased to “give us the Kingdom?” Perhaps we trust him for our assurance of eternity with him, but Jesus is also instructing us that when the Father gives us this Kingdom, He is committing Himself to look after our needs day-to-day: our needs for food, and shelter, and clothing.

True, in the remaining portion of the chapter (verses 35 - 59) He also instructs us to look forward to his return. We should be ready for that day! But if we depend on God for our eternal destination, surely we can learn how to trust Him for the journey along the way as well.

These verses about the Kingdom of God in the middle of the chapter are heart of his message. Luke 12 opens and closes with images from the end of the age, but by proclaiming the Kingdom of God in the middle of the chapter, Jesus is reminding us that if our heavenly priorities are correct, his Kingdom can begin to impact our everyday needs, and calm our fears.”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.billygraham.org/>