

It's **Father's** Day. Father's day and mother's day is tricky from the pulpit. You may have had a good father, a bad father, or an absent father. How we view God is often shaped by our earthly fathers. Regardless of your earthly father, you need to hear that you have a perfect heavenly father who loves you deeply. Matthew 7 - Ask for bread, given a stone, ask for a fish, given a serpent.

Your Father in heaven is most concerned with your **soul**. Here I'll prove it.

What would you say is the most famous Psalm?

Psalm 23 -

The LORD is my shepherd,
I shall not want.

² He **makes** me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.

³ He restores my **soul**;

Harold Holmyard - In Psalm 23:2 the basic verb means "lie down." It is in the Hiphil imperfect. The Hiphil is a causative conjugation, meaning "he causes to lie down" or "makes lie down." There is no connotation of force. The verb can mean that God provides circumstances that allow David to lie down. The imperfect tense stresses ongoing action or iterative action.

There are a few things you need to come with me on our journey this morning:

1. Knowing that God the Father loves you deeply, He is near to you, He and wants what is best for you.
2. God's primary concern for you is for your soul.
3. I want you to see God inviting you into a deeper place with Him more than see Him commanding you to do something, although that's entirely within His rights. That's okay with me if you see these as commands, but I'd prefer you see this as an invitation like Psalm 23: green pastures, quiet, still waters. Last week Taylor walked us through why quiet waters were meaningful in David's time.

All this sets up our Passage today, which is Luke 12.

I'm Mike, Elders here, according to Timothy and Titus an elder is supposed to be able to teach, within the hour you get to be the judge of that, perhaps you'll disqualify me. Ali's husband - Empower One U.S. leader - preach under trees in villages. Orality vs literate. Dignity - corruption and access, not intelligence.

Orality, destroy you in the telephone game.

Luke 12 - Begins with thousands of people around Jesus. There were so many people they were stepping on each other.

But to really understand what's happening, you have to go back to chapter 11. A Pharisee invites Jesus to lunch and Jesus calls him a hypocrite, which provokes a religious lawyer to say that Jesus hurt his feelings, which Jesus replies saying he's helped oppress their people and killed previous prophets.

So Jesus is warning them of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, but then He transitions to how much God cares about us:

Don't be afraid of who can kill the body, but be afraid of who after death can cast you into hell. But hang on, God the Father loves you, there it is again:

He knows how many hairs are on your head, He knows every sparrow, and your infinitely more valuable than a bird. And then He's teaching them that the Spirit of God will be with them when they're persecuted....

Hey!!! Jesus!!

V 13 - Tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me. Errgghh, Record scratch...

Wait, what? This has nothing to do with the Pharisees. Read the room, Bill! I'm labeling this man "The Interrupter." Think how consumed this man is with this issue of his inheritance. He is not listening to anything Jesus is saying. He has shown up with one issue on his mind, his inheritance. He's elbowed his way through a crowd of thousands, gotten right beside Jesus, the King of kings, and he takes his one, big shot....and uses it on...himself.

I can have a lot of fun with the back story on The Interrupter. How many weeks and months has he been consumed with this lump of money his brother controls? Did his wife or friends put him up to this: Now you go down there and get this new Rabbi to straighten Josephus out!

Jesus allows Himself to be interrupted and decides to use The Interrupter for a teaching moment. But look at Jesus' response:

V 14 - Man, who appointed me a judge or arbitrator over you?

That's a weird response. Our life group for about 18 months has been camping out on anything we find weird or odd in passages like this.

This is Jesus talking. King of kings, Lord of lords, master rabbi. He's not a judge?

One of the themes in this chapter is Jesus grabbing our chins and lifting up our heads. You're looking at the world. Look up and see the Kingdom!

This is like if you were being sued for \$10K or even \$100K or more and you ran into Chief Justice John Roberts and asked him to solve your case for you. Man, I deal with constitutional matters, not this.

Now some of you are clever and you're catching another odd part of this story: But you just said, sparrows and hairs on my head?? You care about every little part of me! That's right. Jesus will move beyond the issue of inheritance and go to the matter of the heart. He's lifting our chins.

Jesus does care about all your issues, He really does, but He knows our thoughts. We know that from Luke 5 and the story of the paralyzed man. Luke says Jesus “knew their thoughts.”

It's about motivation, your heart, your soul. Regardless of the sin, every single time someone approached Jesus honestly, humbly, and in a spirit of repentance, He met them with mercy. Every. Single. Time. And He'll do the same for you.

The Interrupter was greedy. I also think The Interrupter was already wealthy. He didn't need the inheritance, He was totally self-absorbed and focused on himself. I think you see that in Verse 15:

V 15 - Beware, and be on your guard against every form of **greed**; for not *even* when one **has an abundance** does his life consist of his possessions.”

Now we need to pause here and let me break some bad news to you. If we're honest, often we're The Interrupter. We're not stopping. We're not listening and we're not submitting ourselves to God. We're consumed with some issue in our lives. We have rights! We want to assert our rights! We don't ask God. We demand He side with us. We don't consider what He's said in the past, we want our justice, our way, right now. We are the Interrupter.

So Jesus continues with this teaching moment and He breaks out one of His most powerful tools: Story.

Parable of the rich man. Productive, more barns.

“The land of a rich man was very productive. ¹⁷ And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ ¹⁸ Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my **soul**,

There's that word: Soul. The part of you God is most interested in.

Our soul is our most vulnerable, intimate place. Our place of security or insecurity and our connection with God. The place we meet God within ourselves.

V 19 - “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.”

The American dream.

Let me be clear, there's nothing wrong with saving, with growing your business, or being wealthy. Abraham was wealthy, Joseph who leveraged his wealth and influence took Jesus' body off the cross, and Philemon was probably quite wealthy.

V 20 - But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?’ ²¹ So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

You fool. Can you imagine if God called you a fool?

The issue is the man's soul and his focus. It's what he put his trust in. Jesus never lowers the bar. You want to follow me? I'm homeless. Leave your mother and father. Sell everything you own.

V 22 - And He said to His disciples,

This is to you and me. Anytime you read, And He said to his disciples or turning to His disciples, He's talking to you!

And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not **worry** about *your* life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put

on. Wait, I thought we were talking about greed?

Jesus cuts to the heart of the matter: Worry, Anxiety.

What are you worrying about today? **How many times are we the interrupter?** How many times have we found ourselves consumed with something we're actually powerless over?

Remember Command or invitation? Listen to this:

²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and *yet* God feeds them; **how much more valuable you are than the birds!** ²⁵ And which of you by worrying can add a *single* hour to his life's span? ²⁶ If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other

matters? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

David Guzik - God cares for the flowers, but that means that every day for the flowers is not sun and sweetness. If every day was sunny, and there was never clouds and rain, the flowers would die quickly.

²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, **how much more will He clothe you?** You men of little faith!

Dallas Willard translate this "You little-faiths."

²⁹ And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. ³⁰ For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; **but your Father knows that you need these things.**

Remember point 1: Your Heavenly Father loves you. He sees you, He knows what you need. Now, be sure you haven't turned a want into a need.

“You say again that you cannot help being anxious. Then, my dear friend, I must very solemnly ask you what is the difference between you and the man of the world?” (Spurgeon)

³¹ But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

South Sudan - Poverty. 1-3 most failed state. Naked, God provides. Since 1970s famines are man-made.

³² Do not be **afraid**, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

He just moved into deeper waters. He went from worry to fear. That word little is double diminutive, which literally would translate little, little flock. He knows your weakness. He knows your fear.

Then note he says your Father. Not my father, your father has chosen, **gladly** to give you the Kingdom. He's not withholding from you.

This is what the interrupter didn't understand. He was asking for the wrong thing, the lesser thing. He was being foolish. He was seeking the wrong thing. Things of scarcity. It felt like abundance, but it's actually scarcity. On the other side, God offers the entire Kingdom to you, gladly! Which will you choose? And the Kingdom is Jesus.

Jesus came, died on the cross, and was resurrected and God offers Jesus' sacrifice for our sin gladly for us. If you want to follow Jesus or you've recently begun to follow Him, but haven't let us know come find me or go to the concourse and let us know, or ask for help.

V. - 33 - Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor does a moth destroy.

V - 34 - For where your treasure is, there your heart will be

also. Note the order, heart follows treasure.

Jesus gives us the antidote to greed and worry: Giving. It's another teaching of Jesus that at first feels like a paradox. You want to live, you have to die. If you want to be free of worry and greed, be generous and give back to God.

Our series is on heaven so here's how this works.

Acknowledge that everything you have is from God. You own nothing, you have an invitation to manage God's assets. Some of you manage small portfolios, others of you manage large portfolios, but it's not yours. Ask the big barn owner now.

In 2 Corinthians 9, Paul says God loves a cheerful giver. So if giving feels like a chore or eating your peas, don't give...for now. You may need to talk to God for a season.

But for the rest of us, when we give, cheerfully, to Fellowship and a refugee gets help, a life group comes alive, a person in India or South Sudan comes to faith, that becomes treasure in heaven that gets credited to your account.

Now listen, if you don't have a lot, relative to others, don't feel guilty. Mark 12, Jesus watches a widow give a small amount, but a lot to her and he tells his disciples she gave more than anyone else that day.

God is not fair! He doesn't not operate in fairness, He operates in justice and righteousness. And to my competitive achievers, this isn't a game to be won or a trophy to take home.

The reason God wants you to give is so your soul is oriented to, and aligned with, the Kingdom, that is, Jesus.

Money is our idol in America. Giving up control of your money eliminates this idol.

How do we apply all this to our lives this week?

1. Your heavenly Father loves you deeply.
2. Take some time this week, get quiet for 10 minutes, be still and ask God about your soul. Then listen.

"The soul is like a wild animal—tough, resilient, savvy, self-sufficient and yet exceedingly shy. If we want to see a wild animal, the last thing we should do is to go crashing through the woods, shouting for the creature to come out. But if we are willing to walk quietly into the woods and sit silently for an hour or two at the base of a tree, the creature we are waiting for may well emerge, and out of the corner of an eye we will catch a glimpse of the precious wildness we seek."

ó Parker J. Palmer,

3. Worry - take it to the altar. Admit it. Do an inventory. Be honest. Jesus is gentle with every single person who approached Him honestly, regardless of sin.

Be patient and keep going to the altar. This is a way to build intimacy with God. Don't you want that? This is the Kingdom! HE is the Kingdom! Isaiah 9 - Gov't on His shoulders. It's Him!

4. Invest in the Kingdom with Joy. Give to your local church because this is your family, your home, your community. Then find what lights you up and give there too! Bibles, water wells, refugees,