

“Raising Sunken Treasure” Luke 12:22-34

Context: Luke continues recounting Christ’s active life and in particular Christ’s foundational teaching regarding persecution, kingdom values, and God’s meeting of human needs. Today’s account follows Jesus’ teaching that “real life is not measured by how much we own” (Luke 12:15). It differs from Jesus’ previous teaching by addressing the faith of a disciple rather than the mere interest of a crowd. Two exhortations are directed to the faithful: (1) to attach with utter confidence in the heavenly Father’s wise provision and (2) to hope with utter readiness for Christ’s return. Both exhortations are in keeping with Luke’s purpose to steady the wobbly faith of ‘God lovers’ as they invest their life in the eternal ends for which they were created as God’s sacred vessels before His altar (cf. Luke 1:3-4).

Where’s hope: There is hope in a God who is pleased to give an unfailing eternal Kingdom return to those who invest their temporal souls in it.

1. Life above the surface (Luke 12:22-23)

Jesus appeals to the wills of those who live a calculated life in Him to rise above heartrending obsessions over physical means to assure our physical survival. Such obsessions reduce our thoughts about soul and body to material and temporal terms only.

2. Life examples from below (Luke 12:24-32)

The disciples are to bend their will over against humanity’s natural tendency to strive after and fixate on their ability to meet their own needs. The dependability of God’s earnest care is illustrated by Jesus’ examples of God’s nurture of the feeble young raven and the short-lived lily. Further, sober reflection reveals the futility of anxiety in hope of extending our longevity for even a moment beyond God’s plan. What we are to strive for, however, is what the heavenly Father is pleased to provide - power to rise above earthly kingdoms and live within His effective rule, which is His Kingdom.

3. Life at Kingdom level (Luke 12:33-34)

Luke is not teaching the Ebionite error of asceticism. He teaches that when your possessions get in the way of Kingdom service, you should put them to Kingdom use and raise them above their possession of you. The point is that you can determine the kingdom to which you are journeying by how you think about earthly goods, including your very soul.

For Further Study:

- The English Bible translates the term soul as “life” in Luke 12:22 and 23. Our **doctrinal statement ‘On Mankind’** under **what we believe** references the human person as created as living soul (nephesh) in Genesis 2:7 (cf. http://www.gracepointfellowship.org/files/DocStmnt.pdf-footnote_1). What constitutes a living soul? How does this notion fit in with Jesus’ teaching in verse 23? What are we being redirected to consider in Jesus’ prohibition against worry and fear?
- In Luke 12:29-31, Jesus commands His disciples not to seek one end but rather to seek another. As a **Bible study method**, look up “seek,” “care,” and “fear” in your *Vines Expository Dictionary* (cf. <http://vines.mike-obrien.net/>). What view of reality underlies the vexing emotions of worry or fear when we seek to meet our needs? What is Jesus’ recommended cure for this kind of fear or worry (cf. Luke 12:31)?
- The kingdom of God is spoken of more than 30 times in the Gospel of Luke. In Luke 12:31-32, Jesus calls us to seek it and promises that God is pleased to give it. Look up Dallas Willard’s discussion of Kingdom of God under Forum: sermon discussions on our website. What does God’s adding the physical supply of the seeker’s needs have to do with the promise of giving His kingdom to those who seek it (cf. *Divine Conspiracy*. Willard, pp. 24-25)? Why does Luke use the term ‘Father’ in this context for God? Recount a moment where you have been acutely aware of His Kingdom provision and then give Him thanks.

Transformation exercise:

Memorize Luke 12:29-31. Capture any thought of fear or anxiety this week. Ask yourself: What was I seeking that caused this worry or fear? Replace the thought with its Kingdom counterpart.