



1616 W. Mequon Road, Mequon WI 53092  
(262)241-3121 [www.stjohnsmequon.org](http://www.stjohnsmequon.org)  
Email: [office@stjohnsmequon.org](mailto:office@stjohnsmequon.org)  
**Pastor James Tiefel**  
**(262) 853-9723 (cell#)**  
Email: [pastortiefel@gmail.com](mailto:pastortiefel@gmail.com)

---

## The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost August 7, 2022

### Don't Let Worry Wear You Down

“What? Me Worry?” It sounds a little like bragging. People mean to assure us that they deal with tasks and troubles without cares and concerns. Truth is, they’re probably not being completely honest. Everyone worries. Some people worry a lot; we call them worrywarts. Some people worry a little; we call them cautious. In the Gospel for today Jesus helps us deal with worry. He promises that with the loving plan of God we can put our worries away.

#### Sermon Luke 12:22-34

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup> For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! <sup>25</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? <sup>26</sup> Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

<sup>27</sup> “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

<sup>32</sup> “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

I suppose you all heard what Jesus said in today’s Gospel: **Do not worry**. So worry is what we’re going to talk about today. Worry is something that we feel inside of ourselves. If you say, “I’m worried” it’s like saying “I’m bored” or “I’m happy.” You can’t touch it, you can’t taste it, but you sure can feel it. Worry isn’t the same thing as caution. Caution is good. Cautious people aren’t in a rush. Cautious people look before they leap. They’re not worried; they’re careful.

Worry is an emotion that adds fear to caution. Caution plus fear equals worry. “I worry that the stock market keeps sliding” which means I’m afraid that my savings are shrinking and I’ll run out of money. “I’m worried about the test results” which means I’m afraid of being seriously ill and that I’ll die. Every worry has a trigger that we can’t control: the stock market and cancer for sure, but just as much the weather or crime or safety or my grandchildren when they go swimming. We’re afraid something bad will happen or something good won’t happen—and so we worry.

People handle worry in different ways. Some people simply drown in worry. They worry about this or that and their worries consume them; they can’t think of anything else. They sweat or fidget or complain. You absolutely know they’re worried. You might even say, “Don’t worry so much.” Other people keep their worries inside. They’re afraid of something but don’t want anyone to know. They’re kind of stoic. You might even say, “Aren’t you worried?”

Everybody worries. Some people worry more and some people worry less, but everybody worries. It's the way we are. So how do we react when Jesus says in the Gospel for today, **Do not worry**? Is this like the 11<sup>th</sup> Commandment: Thou shalt not worry? Does worry lead us to the gates of hell? That's not what Jesus is saying. What he is saying is this: There are good reasons why you don't need to worry. And then he makes a little list. Basically, Jesus is saying to us:

### **Worry if you want, but...**

Jesus was talking to people who believed in him. So there's a touch of kindness and understanding in Jesus' voice. He had just finished speaking to a larger group of people—not all his followers—about the sin of greed and he had let a rich scoundrel have it: **You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.** Jesus said to the crowds "Greed is bad" and then he said to his disciples, "And worry isn't so good either." **Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.** There's nothing wrong with planning supper or getting dressed, but don't live in constant fear that the food might be spoiled or the clothes might be out of style. Besides, your life and body are more important than eating and dressing up. Worry if you want, but...

**Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap; they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them.** Ravens are dirty, lazy birds who relied on other birds to leave them some food. In Jesus' day people considered ravens unclean, unfit for sacrifice. Ravens are God's creatures, Jesus was saying, but you are God's children. **How much more valuable you are than birds!** Worry if you want, but...

Worry is worthless. I used to tell my boys, "Worry about the things you can change like how carefully you drive my car or how well you prepare for a test. Don't worry about the things you can't change. Of course, I learned this from Jesus and we all can learn from Jesus: **Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?** Remember Chicken Little? Chicken Little was worried that the sky was falling! The sky is falling, Chicken Little screamed! Well, the sky never fell and what could Chicken Little do if it did? Worrying about problems doesn't solve them. Worrying doesn't take them away, either. Only God can do that and only God does it. And he promises that he will. The Bible is full of those promises. So worry if you want, but...

If you drive out in the country in Texas, you'll look out your window and see the gorgeous Texas bluebonnets. You look on either side of the road and a mass of blue covers the hills. I always think of that sight when I remember what Jesus says here: **Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin.** The Bluebonnets don't get up early in the morning to apply blue make-up and they don't produce blue thread to sew blue robes. God simply makes them this way. **I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.** Here's the point: **If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you?** So Jesus used two pictures, one of birds and another of flowers to remind all of us that God knows perfectly well what we need and he supplies it perfectly well, too. So worry if you want but remember that God provides for his children.

The problem with worry is fear. The problem is not with being cautious or careful. God want us to be cautious and careful. The problem comes in when we begin to be afraid that God isn't in charge of us anymore or that our lives are spinning out of control without his direction. We don't usually think about worry as a failure to trust God, but that's really what worry is. God must not know where I am, so I worry. God must not know what I want, so I worry. God must not know how to bless me, so I worry. Someone asked long ago, "Is your God too small?" Is that really what we think of God? Jesus said, **The pagan world runs after all such things** because that's all the pagan world has. My mother had a planter above the kitchen sink and I saw it plenty as I washed the dishes. "Said the robin to the sparrow, 'I would really like to know why those anxious human beings rush about and worry so.' Said the sparrow to the robin, 'Friend, I think that it must be that they have no heavenly Father such as cares for you and me.'" Is that what happens when we worry? Is your God too small? Is your God not at all?

Jesus speaks to us about worry in such a kind and gentle way. He understands us. Worry doesn't make us unbelievers, but Jesus called his disciples, **you of little faith**. And so Jesus doesn't just identify the problem with worry, he also provides a solution for worry. **Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.** God never promised us Disney World every day. He never promised perfect health or impressive wealth. God never promised to free us from taxes. Instead, God gives us all the saving activities of his Son. In this kingdom we find the obedient life lived in our place. Here is the innocent death died as our substitute. Here is the resurrection carried out for our confidence. Here is forgiveness gained to take away our sins, here is the gospel proclaimed to create and strengthen our faith, here is almighty power extended to protect us against Satan, society, and ourselves. This is the kingdom Jesus gained for us and God wants us to know that he was pleased to give it to us.

In Jesus kingdom worry is a non-issue and a non-starter. All of the things we worry about look different or kind of drift away. Jesus said, **Seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.** Paul asked the Romans, **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?** Jesus said the same thing. In Jesus' kingdom the things we worry about so often look different. The clothes I wear and the sickness I bear, the food I eat and the grave I must meet—What of them? So what? In Jesus' kingdom we can **sell your possessions and give to the poor** if we want to. But whatever you do, don't lose the kingdom! Invest in Jesus. Put your money in the Jesus bank; buy Jesus stocks and bonds. **Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out,** Jesus said, **a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.** Worry if you want but remember what you have! **Amen.**