

Live with a Kingdom Perspective, Part 2

Luke 12:29-32

Go ahead and turn over to our text. Luke 12, we are looking at verse 29 and following, "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. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Remember Jesus knows what we don't know. He's not of this world. He sees from a very different perspective. We understand in Jesus there are two natures, divine nature, human nature, right? In his divine nature as the second person of the Trinity, Jesus is like the Father, omnipotent and omniscient. He knows all things. He knows that we are meant for something else. He knows what we were made to be. He knows what we were designed to enjoy. He knows the future in his, hum, or in his divine nature, he knows what awaits us.

In his human nature, as Jesus, apart from any sin, he has no weakness. He has no frailty in his thinking. He has no dimness of understanding. He knows the Scriptures. He knows the father through the Scriptures. The spirit of the living God came upon him at his baptism, informs all of his ministry, all of his power, all of his authority. He clearly sees from the Scripture, discerns what our frail eyes see so dimly.

What we in our minds perceive so vaguely, Jesus sees is it perfectly. He knows from his study of the Scripture that he is the king of God's kingdom. That he is the one to whom all Messianic promises point. He knows what that means, he knows what's happening, he knows what the future is, and he calls his subjects to join him in seeking God's kingdom like he does. He calls them to value what he values as king of God's kingdom. He came to receive a kingdom from the father and he's calling us all to come along. He wants us to love what he loves, he wants us to prioritize what he prioritizes, so that we might join him in pursuing what he pursues. He says, seek his kingdom.

It's such a different perspective, right? From him. He, he's, you can tell he so wants us to get it. He wants us to let go of everything here, it's not important. As the king of God's kingdom, he's calling upon us as his subjects, whom he calls friends, by the way, he's calling upon us to accept a new mission, to take up in our minds a new ambition and join him, you might say, on a crusade to seek and find treasure, to seek infinite riches, to, to seek and find eternal wealth.

I mean, he's excited about this, and he wants us to be excited about it, but we will never be excited about it if we keep looking at this world. We deceive that this is all there is. He says stop that, all those mundane, trivial matters, they're gonna be; things like your food, and your drink, and your clothing, and all the rest, all those things are mundane, trivial things. They'll be taken care of just fine.

Seek his kingdom, these things will be added to you. Added to you, that's divine passive there refers to God as the one who is the one adding all these things. Food and drink to sustain our lives, strengthen us, preserve our lives, clothing to cover

and adorn our bodies. He adds all these things to our labors, making our labor count for something.

God provides us with the rest we need. He provides us with the enjoyment that we desire. He provides us with the satisfaction that we crave, the fulfillment we long for, and our hearts are at rest and content. "Seek his kingdom, these things will be added to you." The first command accompanied by a first word of assurance, seek God's kingdom, and rest assured the supply is going to be there when you need it.

Look at verse 32, this second command and second source of assurance brings us to whole new heights, here. The command is fear not, and the rest of the verse is assurance. Fear not, there's the command, the rest of this is assurance, little flock, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This is such a precious expression of care, isn't it? We'll give it the proper time and attention to unpack this, understand this command there, fear not, same thing we've been looking at throughout the rest of the chapter, the same thing he said to his friends back in verse 4. He says, "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who can kill the body, and after that

have nothing more that they can do.” And the assurance there in verse 4 is that our enemies have no power over our souls. God does; they don’t. Don’t worry about your body because the soul is untouched. The soul is cared for by God.

So being rightly, rightly related to God as friends of God’s Son, his only beloved Son, we’re well protected. In fact, God is so meticulous in taking care of us and protecting us, he’s got all of our hairs numbered, even the most insignificant parts of us are covered, protected, watched very carefully by an omniscient, all-knowing, all-powerful God. Here the command, fear not, goes beyond mere safety and protection from our enemies.

Here, the assurance is that we are sheep. We are led by a good shepherd and he is taking us on a trip, on a journey to see his father. The goal at the end, the reward? Just that, is to see the father, is to come into full possession of this inheritance that we have been granted, which is a glorious eternal kingdom. Quite a lot of inheritance to bequeath to a bunch of sheep, isn’t it? Two images of the believer here. One is explicitly stated that we’re sheep. The other is implicit in

the fact that God is our father and so that would mean then by extension that we are his children. He's father, we're his children. Both are images of a believer, right, in Scripture. We are sheep. We are children.

When Jesus says, little flock, it's not the size of the flock that matters to God, it's the nature and condition of the flock. Just belonging to the flock that's what counts because it marks your nature as a sheep. That's a second observation. When he calls his disciples, little flock, Jesus is referring to these believers as sheep. They're sheep; you say, no kidding what an amazing observation they're sheep. But you know, though, this is the only time in the entire not just New Testament, but Old Testament as well, the only time in the entire Bible that you are gonna find this exact phrase, little flock, applied to Jesus' disciples, applied to God's followers. Little flock This is it. This is the only time in Scripture. And it's significant that Jesus is the one saying it and that he is saying it here.

Adjective, little, obviously refers to the relative number of Jesus' disciples in contrast to the rest of the unbelieving world. But in addition to the numerical sense, this term,

little, also demonstrates affection, doesn't it? There's an affection intended here. Jesus takes a term of affection, he applies it to these people, and then by applying it to them, he has, in that act, he has taken personal responsibility to this little flock as their shepherd.

So follow the logic, if Jesus is referring to them as sheep, he is acknowledging them then, that they are part of God's flock. They belong to God therefore they are owned by him. They're under his special care, under his protection. That means, as Jesus knows from Scripture, that he himself is their chosen shepherd. He's been appointed by God to shepherd this flock.

I want to illustrate this by having you turn to Ezekiel, Ezekiel chapter 34. And I want you to see in Ezekiel 34 this indication of God's concern for his flock, his interest not only in the flock and its health and its safety, but he is also concerned to set a faithful shepherd over his flock, very concerned. Ezekiel 34, look at, start in chapter 34 verse 1, "The word of the Lord came to me, 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the

shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you've ruled them.'"

Those are the root sins of Israel's leaders, religious men, shepherds. This is their failure in leading God's flock and shepherding those people. They're self-centered. They're greedy for gain. They have no love, no compassion for the sheep, so of course, they've failed to sacrifice, or to sacrifice themselves for the sheep because they're all false shepherds. See a lot of this going on in the pastorate today, I'm ashamed to say. It's so sad to me. Keep reading.

Look at the results of bad shepherding, starting in verse 5, So the sheep, they're scattered, they're scattered because there was no shepherd and, and they became food, food for all the wild beasts. "My sheep were scattered; they wandered all

over the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered," look at, listen to the heart of God here, they're scattered, they're scattered, they're scattered "over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them."

God's heart bleeding over this. So because the shepherds, appointed shepherds failed to care for the vulnerable and the weak, because they left them as prey, verse 7, "Therefore, you shepherds, you hear the word of the Lord," Listen up! "As I live, declares the Lord God, surely because my sheep have become a prey, my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, have not fed my sheep, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord," When he says it twice, you'd better stand by, "Thus says the Lord God, behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them."

Isn't that wicked, that a shepherd is not only fleecing the flock, but killing the fattest of the flock and taking, I think about this in today's terms, taking their money, taking their prestige, using it all for themselves. Doesn't it make you angry? Judgment on the false shepherds. Let all false pastors, all those who are pastors and elders in name only, let them be warned. But then this blessed promise comes like a ray of light shining into dark, dark crevasses. Look at verse 11, "For thus says the Lord God, behold," I, "I, myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out.

"As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that," that, "have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

"I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. Then they shall

lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be," the shepherds of my sheep, "be the shepherd of my sheep and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. "I will feed them in justice."

Down in verse 22, again "I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken."

Man, I just want to say, Amen, bow and close in prayer. That is so good. Read that again for yourselves later today. Micah identifies that same one shepherd Micah 5:4. He says in Micah 5:2 he will be born in Bethlehem of Judea. Micah 5:4, this one, this one appointed by God is there to "stand and shepherd the flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the

name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.”

So what did Jesus say when he came? I am the what? “Good shepherd,” right? John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” And man, did he do that in a way we could never anticipate. Verse 14-15, John 10 “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and they know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

Andy Stanley, son of Charles Stanley and pastor of this massive multi-site church in Atlanta, Georgia, was answering a question posed to him from *Christianity Today*: Should we stop referring to pastors as Shepherds? Here is what he said, “Absolutely, that word needs to go away. Jesus talked about shepherds because there was no one over there in a pasture he could point to, but to bring that imagery today and say, ‘Pastor, you’re the shepherd of the flock.’ No. I’ve never seen a flock. I’ve never spent five minutes with a shepherd. It was culturally relevant in the time of Jesus, but it’s not, culturry, culturally relevant anymore.” That article was posted

in a section of the *Christianity Today* website called, *Leaders Insight*. He's influencing other people with that, other leaders with that poison. Leader Insight, quote, "Get it Done Leadership." It should be called, Leadership that God Condemns, Leadership that Offends Christ.

Listen, contrary to the sentiment of the modern age, today's church leaders do not need more leadership seminars. They don't need more business acumen. They don't need to be visionaries and CEOs. They need to return to the shepherding metaphor, now more than ever. God said through Jeremiah, Jeremiah 23:4, "I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither should any be missing, declares the Lord God." They follow the pattern set, Jeremiah 23:5, by the Good Shepherd, "A righteous Branch, [...] the king who deals wisely, who executes justice and righteousness in the land."

The best pastors, the best shepherds, are those who know how to be faithful sheep because they know they are sheep. They listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd. They follow that pattern as clearly and closely as possible. They, they do what

Jesus instructed Peter to do. John 21:15-17, "Feed my lambs," "Tend my sheep," "Feed my sheep." So when Jesus calls his disciples little flock, he's taking personal responsibility for this flock. He's saying, they're mine because God, Father, they're yours. And it's my joy and privilege to die for them, to save them from the greatest enemy which is sin and death, Satan, hell.

Finally, one more observation, a third one. This is all we have time for, for today. Jesus assures his believers that they're favored by God, though they're few in number, because they're lowly sheep, but they are his sheep. Finally, third, Jesus pictures his disciples as children of his Father in heaven. They're children of his father in heaven, Luke 12:32, again, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Though they're sheep, they're also children. And if children, Romans 8:17, then they are heirs. They are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, together with Christ as our king. Listen, we're heirs. We've inherited a kingdom.

I want to wrap up just by emphasizing the implications of what we're hearing from our Lord, this Good Shepherd. To live with a kingdom perspective, we need to learn to refuse what is mundane and trivial. We need to just turn our eyes away from that. Don't seek it. Don't make the things of the world your ambition. What you spend all your time and energy on. Listen, those things don't matter, ultimately. We all have to work, don't we? We all have to put food on the table, put a roof over our heads, put clothes on. We need to work hard and diligently so we can be generous to share with those in need. But rejoice to be generous with other people. Jesus said, "It's more blessed to give than receive."

So we want to do this: work hard, work as unto the Lord. But man, we do not care about the stuff here. We do not care about it. We're all watching in horror and astonishment as the world is ripping itself apart. Those in power are fighting tooth and nail for more power. Those without power are tearing down our institutions and they're trying to find someone somewhere to blame. So they can demand power, so they can demand money; at least they could get if they can't get power and money from some people, they want them to beg and grovel at their feet, give

them some respect. Look, all of this tearing down and tearing apart, this is, it's heading for a train wreck, and I think everybody sees it, but so many feel powerless to stop it. Some are even like rapacious wolves. They are seeing this as an opportunity to profit from this. It's so sad.

None of that, none of that is our end, beloved. None of it. So we're not going to get caught up in the fight. In Christ, and because of Christ, who is not of this world, we're going to transcend that strife. We're going to refuse to fight for the scraps of a dead, decaying, sin cursed world. We're not going to do it.

Instead, we're gonna seek what we can't find here. We're going to love those who are so churning in their hearts. We're gonna love them through it. We're gonna seek them. We're gonna try to find the lost sheep. We're gonna try to win them to Christ and preach the Gospel. We're gonna care. We're gonna be tender in our hearts because they don't know what they don't know. We want to rescue them from certain, certain destruction.

We've got our minds on something else, don't we? That which is glorious, that which is eternal. Paul said it best in Colossians 3:1-4, he says, since then, you little flock, you "have been raised up with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. For you have died."

You have died to all of this. "Let anyone who would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." We've already crossed that bridge. We've died that death. Our "life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, appears, you also will appear with him in glory." To that we say, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" Right? Christ is our Good Shepherd. He shepherds us so wisely, so skillfully, so lovingly. He keeps us safe. He keeps us sound, protected, provided for, all in the warmth of his fold. So we are happy as a church to stay put, to go where he leads us, to obey the tender voice that calls to us.

When he says things like this, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," oh,

man, our hearts are assured, aren't they? Our, our hearts are strengthened by that, encouraged. We've got steel in our spine. We've got resolve on our faces. We've gonna march forward as he calls us to march forward. We are so content, and we are, our hearts are at ease. We're grateful with our state. We're rejoicing in our station, eager to go wherever he takes us. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for this good word from the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Savior and our Lord. We love him dearly. We see what a high and holy privilege it is to be counted as a little flock. You care for the little flock under Jesus' shepherding care. You use him to provide and protect us. You use him to guide us safely. Jesus is ascended and he is at your right hand, and he deployed the Holy Spirit into each heart of each sheep, that we might be kept safe, connected to Christ, the head, joined together as a body, walking together as a flock.

You love us, you set your seal upon us, giving us the Holy Spirit. You made us one flock under one Shepherd. He is the one we follow. He is the one we listen to. Help us not to be ever afraid. Help us to not worry like the world worries, to get our

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hearts off the things they seek. Unite our hearts to fear your name. Focus our minds on Christ and Christ alone. In his name we pray, amen.