**“Kingdom Given”**

Genesis 15:1-6

Hebrews 11:1-16

**Luke 12:22-34**

Pentecost 9, August 6/7, 2022

Jesus said, “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.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

According to the magazine, “Psychology Today”, **worry** (with the anxiety that accompanies it) come from the realm of five **source domains**. Not in any particular order (yet the last the biggest issue) “**a stressful lifestyle**” is the first domain on the list. For the most part (it says in this one especially) our worries are as **self-induced** as the schedules that we assume, with **factors** (with that) that we elect to **stress ourselves with**. Circumstance and responsibilities, of course, get (some) **dumped upon us (like parenting and providing for a family or marriage)** yet **adding on to what’s part of those responsibilities becomes a series of choices** … where, then, most of the **added pressures begin**.

Second of the worry domains is “**perfectionist tendencies**” where we expect from ourselves more than is reasonable. Even when it’s “**adequacy**” that’s strived for, still there’s the nagging expectation that **even our expectations aren’t as perfectly set as they should be by us** … so there’s **still a “perfectionist stress”**. **Living up to self-expectations** or **expecting even greater expectations from ourselves**, **both** pressure us to accept something beyond a place that’s satisfying and quieting. Both don’t want us to **rest**.

And “**how we feel about our worry**” is a domain all to itself. Jesus (in our Gospel reading) **deals** with this one, but (and it’s related to the last one in lots of ways). This one is an **expectation to worry** (that if we don’t worry more, we don’t care enough). But, the Lord says: “which of you by being anxious **can add a single hour to your span of life**?” Yet we can be fooled into thinking that we **can** add hours or quality to life by “worrying”.

Then there’s the “**guilt of it / worry**” … and we **ought** know our guilt in it, yet unload that (with everything else) in confession … and **receive absolution**. It’s why Jesus offered us the Judgment and Gospel that He **specifically** does today. The absolution (or complete wiping away of **any guilt in not trusting in God) erases our sin in it with its guilt**. **Confess the burden of the sin of unbelief and receive forgiveness from it, “O you of little faith!**”

Then the last domain of worry (the big one) is the **willful** “**making of mountains out of molehills**”. Opposite of how we often make “molehills of the mountains” of God’s kingdom and grace and the forgiveness of complete absolution (diminishing what’s really cosmic in magnitude and majesty so as to, maybe, comprehend it better, but not really know it), we can be quite guilty of **magnifying little earthly things and challenges into what we think are (or make into) “mountainous obstacles”**.

The magazine called these all “**mental issues to be overcome**”, while Jesus is, even, more harsh saying “You of **little faith**!”, He calls worry and anxiety **unbelief** to be overcome by an **acceptance, simply, of God’s Promises**. Hebrews 11 is the “**by faith**” chapter, reciting the acceptances of God’s Promises and **exercising decisions to heed how God counters earthly concerns with a Promised alternative**.

**Text**

That “**alternative that’s Promised**” is what’s called and is “**GOD’S KINGDOM**”. “For **all** the nations [**worry**] about all these [**worrying kinds of things**], and your Father knows [that you don’t need to worry about anything in His kingdom, so DON’T]. **Instead, seek what (Who) is His kingdom**, and [everything needful that could cause worry if you let it] will have already been taken care of and provided for”. Jesus said that (and **pay attention here because it’s why the “Promised alternative” is the “Promised alternative):** “**IT’S YOUR FATHER’S GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM! So, really, FEAR (AND WORRY) NOT, LITTLE FLOCK … THERE IS NO NEED**”.

**Some** **(notably) worked through fears and worries and anxieties** and, instead, **believed in the kingdom of God in everything**, their **action noted in demonstrating how they took God at His Words as a “Promised alternative” to not**. Faith: it’s the **same thing today**.

**Abel** was told, for instance, that God graciously received his offering, which, then, pleased him. **Enoch** accepted God’s decision to take him from this world without death … told he was a pleasure by God, and it was God’s pleasure to do that … and Enoch rejoiced in hearing all that. **Noah’s** Good News (Gospel) was the Promised salvation of a boat that he’d have to spend years in building. In spite of the odds against it, mockery and, of course, heavy labor, Noah God called righteous (made him so), getting such a status by God because He made Him “an heir” to carry **something precious** with him.

**Abraham** (initially Abram) proved OK with the name change … and a son (actually with a capital “S” eventually since it was Jesus who this old and unworthy man would bare from his loins. And **Sarah** (his wife) would have her laughter overcome and she would enjoy motherhood though barren … because God made her to be pregnant.

**Application**

And it’s **that pregnancy** which (and Who) **defines God’s kingdom that faith seeks**. The “**Promised alternative” to the worry of any situation in the Old Testament** was the Seed (and that, ultimately, Jesus) through Abram in Sarah’s womb and through Eve and then Noah’s wife, Sarah then Ruth, through David’s wife (Bathsheba) then one of Solomon’s and, then, onto so many of the other Judean king’s wives, then onto a young girl named Mary.

The person and work of Jesus (the Genesis 3 Promise) is the **alternative to worry and anxiety** and is God’s kingdom throughout all history, 2,000 years ago, and onto all of today and every tomorrow. God’s is the medicine to give strength to any reduced and controlled workload, to gain better sleep, and to provide for ourselves a good diet and exercise and (maybe even) a helpful doctors’ prescription for aid from stress. He (Jesus) is the kingdom and the formula for every earthly assistance, superior yet having **Him first**, then (with Him) all the gifts of Him **for us** earning us salvation and forgiveness of sins through His blood with the Promise of a baptismal unity with Him in all that and food of His divine and raised body and blood and life and the Promised place toward which we yearn and, yet, already have in part. God Promised that Jesus was born to live unworried **for us** and then die innocence **for us** so as to **make us** ready for being heirs of righteousness and salvation through the Means He Promises to give Himself through. It’s a “**Promised alternative” to worry and anxiety** **(that kingdom / God’s in Christ)** receivable and enjoyable that, **when we do we express faith**. ….

The Old Testament heroes “died in faith, not having seen God’s Promised kingdom in Christ fulfilled”. They “**longed to see** Who and what we all have seen (but did not see it as we do), or to hear of it as we have heard of it”, Jesus said about the Gospel Promise in Himself. “They **desired a better country** … a heavenly one ushered in by Christ in Promise and fulfillment. And God prepared for them a city.” They “longed” and “desired” for **the** **kingdom fulfilled in Jesus**, receiving it (for them) by “Promise”.

Our faithful response is **receiving all of Him as (all through history)** **for us**, and “longing for Him **in us**”, “desiring Him as the better country” that’s **for us**. “Lord, may we fear nothing but losing You. You **Promised us** (and please **help us to receive it, believing it by faith**): ‘**It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom**.’”

In +Jesus’ name. Amen.