

*“Reaping Ravens & Laboring Lilies!”*

## 1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. **Prayer:** Nikos Kazantzakis (from Crete, a Greek writer, poet, playwright and philosopher) prayed, “I am a bow on your hands, Lord. Draw me, lest I rot. Do not overdraw me, I shall break. Overdraw me, and who cares if I break?”
- 1.2. **Big Picture:**
  - 1.2.1. Last week (13-21) parable of the Rich Fool the issue was “*don’t hoard material possessions!*” {i.e. covetousness}
    - 1.2.1.1. He was like the **schoolboy** who was once asked what parts of speech “*my & mine*” are, he replied **aggressive pronouns!**
    - 1.2.1.2. The **Rich Fool** lived life like he was **drinking sea water**...the more he drank the thirstier he became!
  - 1.2.2. This week (22-34) Jesus gives the flip side concern, “*don’t be anxious about basic needs!*” {i.e. anxiety/worry}
  - 1.2.3. **Covetousness** is the desire for more-n-more but never getting enough; **Anxiety** is the crippling fear that there may not be enough.<sup>1</sup>
    - 1.2.3.1. So this is addressed to “**the have’s**” & “**the have not’s**”!
    - 1.2.3.2. Which do you struggle with? **Luxuries** or **Necessities**?
  - 1.2.4. So Jesus returns to talking about “**life**” & “**things**” from vs.15, now to His disciples.
- 1.3. **Outline:** 2 Prohibitions; 2 Considerations; 2 Reminders that we are Priceless; 2 Paths; 2 Commands.

## 2. **REAPING RAVENS & LABORING LILIES! (22-34)**

- 2.1. **2 PROHIBITIONS!** (22,23)
- 2.2. **DON’T WORRY ABOUT FOOD!**
- 2.3. **Worry** – (This is the catchword in this section, see also vs.25, 26 “anxious”)
  - 2.3.1. It means “*to be pulled apart*”; and that is what worry does to us!
  - 2.3.2. We don’t need to worry about our **daily bread** nor being **clothed**.
- 2.4. **Life is more than food** – it is? “But I could starve to death w/o food!”  
Yes, you could starve to death as far as **the body** is concerned, but your **life** is still there (i.e. spiritual/eternal life)
- 2.5. **DON’T WORRY ABOUT CLOTHES!**
- 2.6. But it is difficult **not** to be anxious, and Jesus knew it, & so says to **consider** two things:

<sup>1</sup> Shepherd’s Notes; pg.47

- 2.7. **2 CONSIDERATIONS!** (24-28)
- 2.8. To **Consider** something is to **See** something – *so what do we see?*  
 2.8.1. We are to see **ravens** that don't **reap** & **lilies** that don't **labor!**
- 2.9. **NO REAPING RAVENS!** (24-26)
- 2.10. **Consider the Ravens** – (any of the crow family. An *unclean* bird)  
 2.10.1. Crows **cry w/harsh, inarticulate, croaking notes** making **their wants known...**and your heavenly Father **answers** their prayer, & sends **them food.** {note: it's not a chirp, or beautiful whistle, but an ugly Caww!}
- 2.11. Spurgeon, “If there was an **ant** at the door of **your granary** begging for help, it would not ruin you to give him **a grain** of your wheat.” –“Remember, you are but a **tiny insect** at the door of God's all-sufficiency...**do not doubt His sure supply!**”
- 2.12. **NO LABORING LILIES!** (27,28)
- 2.13. **Consider the lilies** – (Scarlet anemones<sup>2</sup>, bloom for only a day, then die)  
 2.13.1. **Show my backyard flower shot.**
- 2.14. **Labor & Spin**(weave) – i.e in making clothing for themselves.
- 2.15. Last point on **Consider** [Latin *considerare* , from *sidus* “star,” underlying idea being one of **examining** the stars carefully to divine the future]  
 2.15.1. **This week will you look out in nature & consider/examine a few things?** – Let God give you your own bible study in nature.  
 2.15.1.1. Maybe a **crow, flower, star.** Maybe pick up that **penny** on the ground & let it be a reminder “*In God we trust!*”
- 2.16. **2 REMINDERS THAT WE ARE PRICELESS!** (24-28)
- 2.17. **NO REAPING RAVENS!** (24-26)
- 2.18. **Of how much more value are you!**  
 2.18.1. Come on, He hears & responds to **crow's crowing**, **how good do your prayers have to be for Him to respond?**
- 2.19. He did not mean to say that we are to **sit down** & expect God to feed you, as he feeds the birds.  
 2.19.1. He said **they** sow not nor reap not, nor do they have store houses or barns...yet God feeds them.  
 2.19.2. But **we can** sow, & reap, & store up. **And we ought to** sow, reap, & store. **And** hopefully realize we have less to worry about than those of His creation w/o reasoning skills & abilities to provide for themselves.  
 2.19.3. If a crow had **cognitive skills** to, he would be able to **reason**, “*Oh my, I can't sow, nor reap, nor put what I do find in a mini-storage*”...**WHAT ABOUT MY NEXT MEAL!!! :-o**  
 2.19.3.1. He simply flies & looks for a worm in a gutter, or for a French Fry left over from your happy meal!

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<sup>2</sup> William Barclay.

- 2.20. (26) NLT “if worry can’t accomplish a **little thing** like that, what’s the use of worrying over **bigger things**?”
- 2.21. **NO LABORING LILIES!** (27,28)
- 2.22. **How much more will He clothe you!**
- 2.23. They don’t & couldn’t toil & spin but **we can!**  
 2.23.1. He has given us the capacity to make & weave or sew clothing.
- 2.24. **If all of nature trusts** God to meet its needs, God’s children should trust Him to meet **their** needs!
- 2.25. **2 PATHS!** (29-31)
- 2.26. **DO NOT SEEK!** (29,30)
- 2.27. **Anxious mind** - **μετεωρίζο** [*meteorizo*] “*to buoy up with hope*”. A metaphor taken from **ships** that are **tossed about** on the deep by winds and waves.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.27.1. It is moving from the place of lost & tossed at sea, **to** being buoyed up & secure. [buoy = to be kept up from falling or sinking]
- 2.27.2. It is moving from being tossed at sea, **to** being anchored safely in a haven of rest.  
 2.27.2.1. **The Sea** is our restlessness; **The Anchor** is trust(peaceful & safe); **The Haven of rest** is our Father(30b).
- 2.28. He **doesn’t** say, “don’t take **any** thought towards, or be concerned with these things.” - *It’s the **anxious mind** He considers **sin!***
- 2.28.1. Sometimes it’s the **sin/anxious mind** of the **rich fool** not knowing how exactly to **hoard his plenty**(17); **or** it can be the **sin/anxious mind** of worrying about **ones basic needs**.  
 2.28.1.1. **Either way it regards *self-consuming care*.**
- 2.29. **Concern vs. Worry:**  
 2.29.1. **Concerns** – Be concerned for things we are **responsible** for.  
 2.29.2. **Worry** – is concerning yourself with things over which **we have no control**.
- 2.30. **Q: Why does God hate us worrying & being anxious?** Because when we worry we are denying the **faithfulness** of God!
- 2.30.1. Phil.4:6,7 “**Be anxious for nothing**, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
- 2.30.2. It brings **discredit** on God. **Q: What is the difference with this attitude & the attitude of atheism, “a-theism”, or “no-God-ism”?**

<sup>3</sup>Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible* : (electronic ed.) (G3349). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

- 2.31. **SEEK!** (31)
- 2.32. Look at the vital connection here: **Seek the kingdom**(31), it's your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom(32). [He will give us what we seek!]
- 2.33. Rather than worry about *things* or use them as substitutes for **life**, believers should concentrate on *the concerns of the kingdom*.
- 2.33.1. These things should be the **supreme passion** of our **life!**
- 2.33.2. The **passion of life** is a **passion for His kingdom**.
- 2.33.3. **The passion for his kingdom** is a passion for **however it is in heaven**, that it would be **the same down here!**
- 2.33.3.1.i.e. **"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!"**
- 2.34. **All these things** – Look at God's formula → **Consider + Seek = all these things**
- 2.34.1. You know what's **excluded** in **all these things?**
- 2.34.2. See Scripture says, **all things are yours**, all things except for yourself: **"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."**
- 2.34.3. **"We spend our health looking for wealth & then spend our wealth looking for health!"** Vance Havner
- 2.34.4. Maybe **the key** is in John's words to Gaius (3<sup>rd</sup> Jn2) **"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."** [God wants no man to be richer than his soul!]
- 2.35. Here then is **the central motive** in the life of a Christian!
- 2.35.1. If our heart is **centered on Christ & trusting wholly** in Him, you will have a **united heart** that **fears God alone**.
- 2.35.1.1.Ps.86:11 **"Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart(give me singleness of heart) to fear Your name."**
- 2.35.2. The key to a **worry-free life** is a **heart-fixed wholly on God!**
- 2.35.3. (Core Values) **"We encounter God as we center our affections on him!"**
- 2.36. **Q: If it is taken seriously, what is Jesus' promise then in regard to material needs?**
- 2.36.1. He promises the **bountiful basics** of life! – And once we have **accepted this**, we have laid the foundation for **genuine contentment!**
- 2.36.2. In his book **"God's Psychiatry," Charles L. Allen** tells this story: **"As World War II was drawing to a close, the Allied armies gathered up many hungry orphans. They were placed in camps where they were well-fed. Despite excellent care, they slept poorly. They seemed nervous and afraid. Finally, a psychologist came up with the solution. Each child was given a piece of bread to hold after he was put to bed. This particular piece of bread was just to be held—not eaten. The piece of bread produced wonderful results. The children went to bed knowing instinctively they would have food to eat the next day. That guarantee gave the children a restful & contented sleep."**<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

- 2.37. **Q: How can this apply practically in your own situation?**  
 2.37.1. **Q: Any area in your life you need to get *re-centered* on Christ?**
- 2.38. **2 COMMANDS!** (32-34)
- 2.39. **DO NOT FEAR!** (32)
- 2.40. A **large flock** is generally composed of several thousands of sheep belonging to many families & taken care of by many shepherds.
- 2.40.1. **Small flocks** generally consist of the sheep of **poor families**. They have only **one** shepherd & are usually victims of thieves.
- 2.40.2. A **little flock** was a seemingly defenseless group which could be preyed on (*Rambo & Lady...& the coyote*)
- 2.40.3. Followers of Christ were a **little flock** compared to the organized religion of the day. They were hated & persecuted, but they trusted in the Lord for **security & guidance** against all enemies.
- 2.41. His **fear not** is followed by a reminder our 3-fold relationship w/Him:  
**Good Shepherd; our Father who art in heaven; & the King of Kings!**
- 2.41.1. A little flock must have a Shepherd, He's your Father, & a kingdom must have a king.
- 2.41.2. He's pledged to us as our **Shepherd, Father & King...Have any worry's???**
- 2.42. **SELL & GIVE!** (33,34)
- 2.43. I just had someone last week seeking to do this very thing.
- 2.43.1. Maybe this is a **no excuse clause** for giving. "*I don't have money to give*", no problem sell something off!
- 2.43.2. Context...to make sure you have secured deposits sent ahead of you in heaven.  
 2.43.2.1. **Dividends are postponed** but, but they are **perfectly safe!!!**
- 2.43.3. The principle is **scatter & yet you'll increase**.  
 2.43.3.1. **See Eccl.11:1** "cast your bread upon the waters for you will find it after many days" – or possibly "send out your grain in ships."  
 2.43.3.2. Solomon was very involved in different kinds of **trade**, but there was **risk** in trade. - It would be **months or years** before their investment would return, so this would take **faith & patience**.
- 2.43.4. **Sell & give** in order to bless **others** & not just **yourself**.  
 2.43.4.1. **God 1<sup>st</sup> is the balance!**
- 2.44. (34) In **modern usage** this means that **whatever is most important to you has all your attention & care**.
- 2.45. If your **treasures** are heavenly & thus secure, you need not worry, for your **heart** will be in the same place...in a *heavenly safety deposit box*.
- 2.45.1. **Col.3:1-3** (note: **seek & set your mind on what's above; & your life**)

2.46. **Illus:** A little girl was putting a torn up **map of the U.S.** together & was getting frustrated because **she didn't know her states.** Then she remembered on the other side was a **picture of George Washington.** She knew what he looked like, so when she had assembled that side, she had the other also!

2.46.1. **Life w/o Christ is a hopeless jigsaw puzzle.**

**But when we know Him & see His face, all else fits together!**

I'd like to end with this paraphrase, *The Message Bible*:

He continued this subject with his disciples. "Don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or if the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your inner life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the ravens, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, carefree in the care of God. And you count far more.

"Has anyone by fussing before the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? If fussing can't even do that, why fuss at all? Walk into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They don't fuss with their appearance—but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them. If God gives such attention to the wildflowers, most of them never even seen, don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you?

"What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with *getting* so you can respond to God's *giving*. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don't be afraid of missing out. You're my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself.

"Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bankrobbers, safe from embezzlers, a bank you can bank on. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Peterson, E. H. (2002). *The Message : The Bible in contemporary language* (Lk 12:22-34). Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress.