

**Big Plans**  
**by Rev. Frances Savill**  
**Sunday January 29, 2023**

**Luke 12:1-34**

What are the things that keep you up at night? What do you worry about?  
What are the things you are striving for?  
Are you afraid you are missing out on something?

At different ages, and according to different personalities, we worry about different things.

We want to get ahead in our careers.

We want to fit in and have friends and significant relationships.

We want to look good, feel good, be respected, be a "somebody", an influencer.

We worry about having enough money, security, a home, family, retirement.  
We worry about health, relationships, things we've said, things we should have said, the things we did, the things we didn't do.

We worry about getting older, losing independence, and if we don't worry enough about ourselves, we also worry about close friends and family members.

And we worry about dying.

We worry about the war in Ukraine and international affairs.

We worry about global warming, and our care for the earth.

In Jesus' day, there were other concerns people had, they lived under the brutal rule of Rome. The people who Luke was writing for, people who followed Jesus faced all kinds of persecutions and even death for their faith.

Rome was happy to have the God of Israel, and the God, Jesus called “Father”, enthroned in the pantheon with all the other gods, but there was tension because Jews and Christians held that God was the only God.

Those who claimed Jesus was the Messiah, were thrown out of the synagogues and then they were even more vulnerable to imprisonment or death.

It seems there can be a lot to worry about.  
And talking about all these things generally makes us worry more.

David Lose is a commentator I appreciate, and he writes:  
*"Lots to fear, it would seem, made worse by the fact that there are lots of people eager to play upon our fears and lots of channels for them to do so through."*

*And then come the commands: Sell your possessions. Give alms. Store your treasure in heaven. Be dressed for action. Beyond not – if we're going to be perfectly honest – understanding exactly what each of those means practically, these, too, can be overwhelming, to the point of wanting to ignore this passage altogether. And I wonder just how often our folks hear a passage like this, get ready either to be made to feel guilty or confused, and then wonder why, exactly, they got up to go to church."*

I hope that won't be the case this morning.  
Because there is a phrase that is key.

**Vs 32 "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."**

This is a promise. And one incredibly mind-boggling one at that! God wants to give us the kingdom. God plans on including us as heirs – “heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,” (Rom. 8:17).

**1) It's God's good pleasure.**

God takes delight in giving God's children good things. Any parent or grandparent or aunt or uncle – anyone who's bought a special gift for someone they love – understands this intuitively.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing better, than doing a kindness for, giving a gift to, or taking care of someone you love. Nothing.

What's amazing is that this is what God is like. Not a rule-enforcer or power player or monarchical ruler. **God delights in giving gifts.**

## **2) God gives the Kingdom.**

We don't earn it. Can't, in fact. We can only receive it as a gift. And that changes the rest of what we hear.

Because our inclusion in the kingdom is by gift and invitation – then what follows aren't conditions, but the invitation to set our priorities in line with what we've already been given.

We're invited to live into the identity and reality we've been given. When we realize it's God's good pleasure to care for us, love us, take care of us, and give us all good things – even God's own kingdom – then it's a lot easier to give rather than hoard, live from a sense of courage rather than fear, operate out of a sense of abundance rather than scarcity, allow ourselves to be seen rather than presenting only what we think is acceptable.

So, looking at the beginning of Chapter 12 we'll work through the paragraphs.

When we know we are deeply loved by God, then we can be true as disciples, and where we fail, we can confess it we don't have to hide.

We can stand for our faith, even when it's unpopular, and we can risk speaking with courage, knowing that we are loved and cared for by God.

Knowing God is generous, and God loves to give, we learn to not build bigger barns for ourselves alone, but we can be rich toward God, who lavishes love upon us.

We can acknowledge our fears and face them and keep them from overwhelming us when we focus on God.

And as we fix our eyes on God's provision, God's generosity, the good gifts that are ours every day, we worry less. Immersed in the love and care of our great God, we can throw ourselves into the challenges of the day.

I'd like to close with the words of Jesus as read from the Message. I hope you will hear them as Jesus' words to 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.

**Vs 33-34 "Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bank robbers, 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.**

**Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions.**

That would be my challenge to you this week. Steeping takes time, another word is marinade. Marinade yourself in God-reality, God-initiative and God-provisions.

And then live in confidence and trust responding with courage, and generosity. In all things giving praise to our great and gracious God.

**Let us pray:**

Gift-giving God, generous and amazing God, who loves to pour out gifts on your children, teach us to live with confidence and trust, courage and generosity. Steep us, marinade us in your loving care, so that we can live this day well for you. Amen.