

Luke 12:22 And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! 29 And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. 30 For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

9th Sunday after Pentecost

“Do not be anxious about what you will eat or drink or what you will wear!” 8/7/22

Faith – faith IS believing the Word of God – His promises. Believing that God exists – and believing that He rewards those whom He loves. He has revealed His love for all mankind in that He has invited us into His kingdom in Jesus Christ – out of the fallen creation and into Christ! He invites us into His kingdom by faith – faith that He keeps His promises – faith that He desires all come to salvation – faith that Jesus has brought us this most valuable gift. Faith is believing His Word – and following His Word. You can’t believe His Word - and NOT follow! Abraham believed and sojourned to a new land – Abraham believed and it was counted to him as righteousness. God has revealed His love for us in Jesus Christ – and in Christ, God invites us into a new relationship, and to be His blessed people in His own kingdom. God showers the New Israel, His Church, with the gifts needed for this Exodus – gifts for life with God.

Israel were God’s chosen people – chosen according to the flesh, according to the promises which God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Savior was promised in the beginning, right after the fall in the Garden – the Savior who would defeat death on behalf of all mankind. The Savior who would crush the serpent’s head, but have His own heels crushed. For Israel the promise was in the flesh – because **the promise was for her to deliver the Son of God into the world!** But for salvation the promise was always **in the spirit** – faith is believing - and following the Word. God had promised that He would raise up a righteous man, a Savior, the son of David whom Israel must listen to - God’s own Son. And the Savior would give life to the whole fallen creation, He would atone for the sins of the world. He would be stricken for our transgressions. (Isaiah 53:8) Abraham believed and it was counted to him as righteousness – faith IS believing and following God’s Word. The promise was coming in the flesh – the God-man who through

His own perfect obedience - would redeem all of fallen mankind. And through faith in the promises of God – faith in His Word and Sacraments – we are saved.

But Israel were confused - reading the Scriptures sideways – that **SALVATION** was according to their flesh – according to their own flesh because they were the people from Abraham. Abraham believed the promise - and this was counted to him as righteousness. Salvation was promised through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – through Judah, Jesse and David – in the flesh – **BUT SALVATION IS BELIEVING the PROMISES OF GOD.** By FAITH - that God has kept His promise to Abraham in Jesus Christ – WE become Abraham’s offspring. Being claimed into Christ in baptism, we ARE the children of the promise. God’s Word does not change, God has not changed – but the abundant gift is only received by those who can grasp it by FAITH. God provides abundantly – as He always has – but His greatest gift – the eternal gift - is for the Church of God in Jesus Christ.

And poor, unbelieving Israel. Their confidence and desires of the flesh were so overwhelming – that they could not see – though The Promise stood right in front of them, though they read about Him and waited for Him – but not believing AND NOT FOLLOWING - they could not see – could not see that Jesus is the Christ! (John 7:17) They wanted all the gifts of God according to the flesh - worldly provisions, fine clothing, rich food, a luxurious dwelling. They were looking for the kind of “lavish care” which God had provided in the Garden – but NOT following the Word – the devil had stolen their gifts and their blessings. And he was stealing even their heavenly blessing – stealing them away from God’s salvation in Jesus Christ! They believed they were ENTITLED to salvation - entitled according to their flesh. Here in these passages – these beautiful passages - Jesus is telling them GOD STILL LOVES THEM - and GOD desires to give them all the good gifts they need in life – and for eternal life. God desires to give all His people all the good and needful gifts – HE DESIRES TO GIVE ALL MANKIND SALVATION.

God had not changed, though mankind had fallen into sin, God had not changed. Though Israel rejected Him as their king, God had not changed! God is steadfast in His love – desiring to give the good gifts to His people – the land, a nation of His own, a relationship with Him. And Jesus was **reminding** the people – the people who had received the promise – but couldn’t recognize that the promise was delivered – delivered in Jesus Christ! So anxious were they for their daily bread – they ignored the relationship! God was still showering them in gifts! “Remember?,” Jesus asked them – “Remember when God fed you in the Garden? - remember when God sustained you eternally in body and soul by the tree of life? Remember how God provided for you - before you rejected Him?” “Remember,” He asked – “Remember when I set you over the earth – the earth of plentiful abundance? The earth I created to sustain you? Remember? Remember when you had stewardship over the birds of the air and the fish of the sea – and the Garden yielded every good fruit? Remember when you walked in My ways – in My Garden with Me? Remember when you trusted My Word? – and you were NOT ANXIOUS OR WORRIED about anything - remember? Remember how you lived in joy in the life that I gave to you – and in the abundance of the gifts that I delighted to give to you? Why are you anxious about your

clothes – how you appear to before men – and not how you appear to Me - according the promises I gave to you? Consider how magnificently I clothe the flowers of the field – they are not anxious about life – they cannot spin a thread – they cannot sow a fabric – and they are burned up in a day. Yet, I clothe them more splendidly than Solomon in all His glory! How much more do I desire to cloth you - in my salvation? - to feed you and nourish you with life – even to give to you my own life that you would “drink it up” - and be healed from all your wickedness and return to Me!”

God had not changed but had given Israel the greatest gift – Jesus Christ - who is the one whom Abraham rejoiced in! God is steadfast in His love. God keeps His promises. God does not change – but He showers His children in precious and needful gifts! The gifts – the greatest gift – Jesus Christ – can only be received in faith – a living faith that believes – AND FOLLOWS. And part of that faith – building that faith - is remembering – remembering – through these Holy Scriptures – remembering who God is! That God created mankind to inhabit the earth and to be fruitful and multiply. He made man, and He made woman. He created us to live in the joy of the abundance of the earth, which He created for us. He created us to live in godly relationships, in the flesh – and to live in an obedient and up-right relationship with Him. Through the sin of one man we were all condemned – but through the free gift of God in Jesus Christ grace has abounded. (Romans 5) We are not the offspring of Abraham by flesh – but we are the offspring of **Adam by sin**. There was a time when we were not God’s people – but people of the flesh who were anxious – anxious after what we are to eat and to drink and worried about such things. But through His grace, He has delivered us in faith. Believing that Jesus is the Christ, having a share in Jesus’ ministry, His death and His resurrection – through faith in God’s Almighty power to save us – believing and following Jesus Christ – we have been grafted into this tree of life – the family tree of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the gift abundant – life come into a dead – dead and condemned world. But the gifts of God can only be received in faith. Jesus can only be received in faith!

God has not changed – and His love for you has not changed or withered – remember he laid down His life for you – so that you could have the gift of life? Remember how he was beaten – to take the punishment for your transgressions? Remember how He was crucified – His body crushed and His blood flowing – so that even in this deep – in this fallen creation – and even for sinners like us – God has not changed - but He showers us in His good-gifts – all His good gifts because Jesus is worthy. Jesus forgives sins. And Jesus has saved us from an anxious life being fearful of God who created us – to a blessed life again knowing that Jesus reveals to us God’s good-will toward us, His love for all who have grasped – who receive Him in FAITH. In Christ, you are a child of God again, the offspring of Abraham, born again from above so that you are the people, Christ’s own church. In Christ, you have an eternal inheritance, restored to life with God so that we desire Him – the relationship – and seek a better country – where Christ is King, where the righteousness of God reigns and where we live in His grace. In Christ, the relationship is restored – God has reconciled Himself to sinners by allowing His own perfect and righteous Son to pay for our transgressions – Jesus who knew no sin became sin for us. (2

Corinthians 5:21) This is the eternally valuable gift, that in Christ, God has provided us the food to nourish us on the Exodus OUT of the fallen creation - by His true body He sustains us. And His true blood is for forgiveness - and that we become one with Him. And He clothes us in His own white robe – the white robe of Christ’s righteousness – that we are acceptable before Almighty God. Jesus is worthy – and God has showered us with all His good and needful gifts in Jesus Christ – be ye not troubled about what you will eat or drink – nor what you will wear! God has provided all His good gifts to you – even SALVATION through FAITH in Jesus Christ. Amen.