

Grace, mercy and peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

[Intro]

I don't know about you – I'm sure you don't – but at times, I worry. Here are some of my typical worries: Did I close the garage door? Did I put away the leftovers in the fridge? Did I leave the dome light on in the car? Did I update my fantasy football team?

What are your worries? Now, you are only kidding yourself if you do not worry. As Christians, we are told over and over again to not worry, but something like instinct, we do just that. Just turn on the TV news or read the newspaper. We watch or read about disasters from our stock plummeting to terrorist attacks to our favorite player being traded, or our favorite player is injured. We worry. We worry a lot.

Fellow Christians, perhaps we worry as Jesus Christ calls us to proclaim the good news outside of these church walls. It is scary out there in a world that is filled with sin and death, but we have the good news that the world needs to hear. This good news is of our savior, Jesus Christ, who was born on Christmas day, then was crucified, died and buried on Good Friday, then resurrected on that Easter morning, he ascended to heaven forty days later and now sits at the right hand of the Father and will return to judge the living and the dead.

This good news is our blessed assurance, but it causes us to tremble when we hear the call to share it with others – family, friends, co-workers, and others out in the world.

In Matthew 28, our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to his disciples: **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

But this causes many of us to ask: Isn't this why we have missionaries? Well, yes. And, all of us here today are missionaries. So, we again worry and tremble at the fact that we are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

[Courage]

On the night of October 15, 1940, 480 German aircraft dropped an estimated 386 tons of high explosive and 70,000 incendiary bombs on London. The incendiary bombs were something new, and while Londoners sought shelter in basements -- important and historical buildings burned out of control above their heads. If this were to continue, nothing of London would be left. Winston Churchill then spoke to his people, "To the basement!" he said, "must be replaced by 'To the roofs!'" With a courage born of near desperation, the people no longer went into hiding when the nightly attacks began. With little or no protection beyond a tin hat, the able-bodied among them took to the streets and the rooftops as fire spotters and fire fighters and saved much of their city.

Has it ever occurred to you what might have happened in the history of the world and the church if the disciples of Jesus had not taken to the road? They could have stayed where they were, in Jerusalem or Galilee, simply waiting for the promised return of their Lord. But Jesus had given them a Great Commission to carry the Gospel "to the ends of the earth," and that's how this blessed Gospel of God's loving forgiveness in Jesus Christ has managed to come down to you and me.

What if the disciples worried about what would be said of them? What if they just sat on the floor in the locked room waiting?

So what can be done to help your and my worrying? How can our focus change from fear to faithfulness, from worry to faith, so that we don't have to be anxious about anything from food, drink and clothes, to working for the Lord in His harvest field?

[The Promise of Jesus]

Allow me to share with you more from God's inerrant Word. First of all, hear, believe and find comfort in Jesus' promise that His Father and yours will care for us just as He cares for the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, and "... *the grass of the field which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven,*" and even

more so as He asks, *“...will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”* (Matthew 6:26, 28, 30) And if you need an answer to that rhetorical question at the end of those verses, the answer is a resounding yes, as you have seen, have heard, and have experienced over and over again God’s caring, providing hand in your life.

Jesus presses the issue of worry by reminding us that the duration of our lives is up to God, and no amount of worry can add to our lifespan.

Second, I share with you the certainty found in the Apostle Paul’s confession as he, a sinner just like all of mankind, you and I included, also had to deal with many worries and concerns, including the thorn in his flesh. Paul relays the assurance he has, as he shares with us this Word of God meant for each of us, God’s sinful yet forgiven children, as he writes, **“He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me”** (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Let me share with you another well-known passage you can apply to your worries. Hear the inspired words of Philippians 4:13, where our Father in heaven assures us that as His forgiven, redeemed, restored children we can boldly profess with Paul, **“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”**

And, if I may share with you God’s Word from Luke’s Gospel to give you more confidence in God’s calling, **“And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say”** (Luke 12:11-12).

When we are confronted by others and asked what we believe, be bold. Confess Jesus is Lord! For as Jesus said, **“...for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, all of these promises are yours even when we speak to the neighbor across the street, the friend at work, or our son or daughter who has grown away from the Lord and for whom our heart aches.

You get the point as we could spend all day in conversation with our heavenly Father, picking out and rejoicing in His promises to us recorded for us in His Word.

You too can easily add your favorite and most comforting verse of assurance of God's abiding presence even when you allow the worries of this world to creep into your life.

[Seek His Kingdom]

So, let me remind you. First, your Heavenly Father cares; and second, know that His care is certain.

You and I have a heavenly Father who does not just talk a good game. "Don't worry, be happy" is **not** His mantra. He backs up and follows through on the promises He makes 100 percent of the time. You see, He did not just tell all of man to seek His kingdom and His righteousness first. No, He acts on that admonition to seek first what is of utmost importance, promising that all of these other things we have been talking about will be given to us as well. (Matthew 6:33) God's promise throughout the ages is the same, "**seek first the kingdom of God** ("desire above all to live under the rule of the one true God") and His righteousness (the salvation which Christ Jesus has won for us and all people on the cross of Calvary, [John 3:16]), and all these things will be added to you."

That my friends is providing and coming through on a promise. To seek the reign of God is to seek the gospel, which comes to us in the Scriptures and Sacraments. And since you and I are united with His Son in Baptism, in hearing the Word, in receiving His very body and blood, in His very death, being "**buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life,**" (Romans 6:3-4), we have nothing to worry about as we seek first His kingdom, serving Him as we serve those He places in our lives (Matthew 25:40) wherever and whenever He has need of us, carrying out the great task He gives to us of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Amen!

Now, let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord! Amen!