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Pentecost 11

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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“Don’t Worry About It”
Text: Luke 12:22-40 (Genesis 15:1-6)

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Don’t worry about it! My kids can testify to how often I say that. When they’re worrying and obsessing about things that I consider not worth worrying or obsessing about. To me, they’re nothing. But to them, they’re something to be concerned about. We have different worldviews, different outlooks, because we are of different ages and experiences. They sometimes think I’m dumb, like all kids think of their parents at times. That’s okay. It’s my job to teach them, to help them understand, to show them a worldview that they do not yet know.

Last week in the Holy Gospel, a man came up to Jesus and asked for help getting his share of an inheritance. This came at the end of a whole long section of Jesus teaching about how the things of this world are *not* what’s important; that you have a Father in heaven who has promised to provide for you; and that what really matters is Jesus and His teaching and the fact that the Son of God is here in the flesh and has come to die for you. This other stuff is not worth worrying or obsessing about.

That’s a different worldview than they knew. They were *used* to worrying about these things. And so some thought Jesus was dumb. Some were setting traps for Him to catch Him in His words, teaching or saying something wrong. Some just wrote Him off as crazy or demon-possessed. But Jesus kept teaching. He was patient and long-suffering with them. He continued to show them a worldview that they did not yet know.

And it was right then, that the man with the inheritance issues pipes up - *had he been listening at all?* And after addressing the man, Jesus turns to His disciples and says: **Don’t worry about it!** Stop worrying about these things! What you wear, what you eat, what you have, is not all there is. In fact, those are pretty insignificant things compared to what Jesus is doing right now, right before you. Teaching you of God, your Father. Giving His life. Giving *you* life through His Word. God is in the flesh in your midst, and you’re worrying about these things? Look at the sparrows, look at the lilies. If they don’t have to worry, then neither do you. Your Father in heaven is taking care of them, and He is taking care of you. **Don’t worry about it.**

Don't worry about it. We need to hear that. Because we do worry and obsess. About little things, about big things, about things that matter and things that don't. Sometimes that worry is just an inconvenience; sometimes it is debilitating. But however it is with you, Jesus has come to take those worries away. To take away your worry and give you peace.

Don't worry about it. You see, when I say that its usually because *I'm* exasperated and fed-up with the fussing and fretting and want it to stop. But when Jesus says it, it's not because *He's* exasperated, but because *we* are. That's a big difference. The difference between the Law and the Gospel. The difference between telling you to stop, and assuring you that you don't need to live like that. And then in that assurance, taking your worry away. For unlike our words, His Word can do what it says. His Word *does* what it says. His Word is living and active.

And so when others tell you **don't worry about it**, we think: *yeah, right! You don't know what I'm going through.* And when we try to tell ourselves *don't worry, don't worry*, it doesn't work, because in both these cases we just wind up focusing on what we're trying not to worry about and making matters worse.

But it is not so with Jesus' words. His Word points you away from yourself and what worries you, and points you to Himself. That you may see in Him all that you need and not worry. That you may see in Him that you are worth more than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field or anything else in all creation. For the Son of God did not become a bird or a flower when He came down from heaven - **He became your brother.**

And so He does, in fact, know exactly what you're going through, whatever it may be. He came and lived this life with all it's troubles and problems, it's worries and fears. There is nothing that you're living with that He did not also live with, and nothing that you're dying with that He did not also die with. For all that you're dying with He took upon Himself in His own death. But while all that went into the grave with Jesus, only one thing came out alive - Jesus. That all that worries you, all that burdens you, all that drags you down, all that weighs heavy on your mind - all your sin, death, and misery - be engulfed in death and resurrection; in His forgiveness and love.

Yet still your sinful nature worries. I know it. Mine too. And it always will. Because your sinful nature is an unbeliever. It is the one of little faith - or really no faith - who doesn't believe God and thinks Him uncaring and unfaithful. Or who, like Abram, looks at himself and asks: *How can this be? It isn't possible. It is not for me.*

But it is for you! Your worry does not make you less of a disciple, or no disciple at

all. Because your sinful nature, though it still clings to you, *is no longer who you are*. For Jesus has raised up a new man in you, from the death of sin to the new life of faith, like Abram, by His Word. For as God came and spoke to Abram, so He has come and spoken to you. As God made great and precious promises to Abram, so He has made great and precious promises to you. And as ***Abram believed the Lord, and it was counted to him as righteousness***, so it is for you. For as God took hold of Abram by His Word while he was still an idolater, gave him the gift of faith, and raised him to a new life - so God your Saviour has taken hold of you by His Word while you were lost in sin and death, gave you the gift of faith, and raised you to a new life. A new life not as a child of this world, but as a child of God.

That Word came to you connected to the water of Holy Baptism. There, as dead and helpless and lost as Abram, your Saviour came to you, took hold of you in His forgiveness and life and said: *you are Mine*, I will not let you go. *You are Mine*, and all that I have is yours. *You are Mine*, and so all this other stuff? **Don't worry about it.** You don't have to worry about it, Jesus says. *I have taken care of it.*

And He has. Just ask the birds and the lilies. They recline at the table of God's creation, and He feeds and cares for them. Every day. Your worry does not make the sun come up or the rain come down, the plants to grow or the animals give birth. Your Father in heaven does all of that.

But even *more than that* has your Father in heaven done for you. For not only do you recline at the table of God's creation and receive all that you need for this body and life, your Saviour has given you a seat at His heavenly table, where He comes and feeds and cares for you with His own Body and Blood. Here the God of all creation who has come to be your brother, comes and serves you with His forgiveness for your sins, His life for your death, His salvation to free you from the power of the devil, and His peace for your worry.

Here is the steadfast love of the Lord. You are worried about life; He has given you life. You are worried about death; He has conquered death. You are worried and anxious about many things; He has been faithful in all things and has promised all good for you. And if He promised it, then you can be sure. Though perhaps all you can see in your life right now is a cross, in Jesus, crosses end in resurrection. And in Jesus, no devil can stop it, no sin can prevent it. They tried. He won.

So it is now, and so it will be in the end. Our Saviour who comes to us now, will come for us again. And we who feast now, will feast with Him forever. Be ready and watching, Jesus says. And here you are. For here the door of heaven is open to you. Here is your treasure which no thief can take and no moth can destroy. Here we lift up our hearts and have them with the Lord. And so here there are no worries, but rest. For here we rest in His service, in His forgiveness, in His life and

love.

So **don't worry about it.** Whatever "it" is. If you are, sell it and give it to the poor. Whatever "it" is - your wealth, your health, your life. You will be none the poorer. You cannot out give your Father in heaven. He has given you His Son. He has given you His kingdom. He has give you a life that will never end. All those things are yours now. And they cannot be taken away.

So don't worry, dear child of God. Your Father knows what you need.
Don't worry, dear baptized. Your Father is not ashamed of you but delights in you.
Don't worry, dear lambs of God. You have a Good Shepherd who has laid down His life for you. Come rest in the pasture of His forgiveness and love.

In the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.