

Pre-Sermon: This is to help you prepare for hearing from God's Word.

- Read Luke 12:13-34
- What do you think it means to be anxious?
- What are some things you are anxious about?

Sermon Questions: These will help you evaluate how well you were listening.

- What is the purpose of this sermon?
- In Luke 12 Jesus is explaining how to live in light of eternity. What does he tell us we need to do in verses 1-3? What do we learn in verses 4-12? What do verses 13-21 warn us we need to watch out for if we are going to be able to do that? What is Jesus doing in verses 22-34 then? How does this connect?
- What is the first thing you need to do if you are not going to become distracted by material things according to verse 22? What is the connection between anxiety and greed?
- How does Colossians 3:5 help us understand covetousness?
- What are the different reasons Jesus gives us that we should not become anxious? Which one stood out to you in particular?
- What does anxiety say about what you believe about God?
- What do we need to put on if we are going to overcome worry?

Sermon Outline:

1. What to do
2. Why you should do it
3. How to do it

Sermon Synopsis: This is a short summary that will help you reflect on the message.

When you find out someone you know who is your age has died, you start to realize how little time you have here on this earth and how urgent it is that you use it well. Especially because you know you aren't just going to live and die and that's it. You live, you die, and you face God. We've got just a few seconds here on earth to use to do something for Jesus, and there's an accountability for how we use it, and so obviously we really need to stay focused on using the time the Lord has given us well.

And yet, it's hard to stay focused. It's easy to become distracted.

So what I want to do today is show you from Luke chapter 12 how Jesus helps you stay focused on using the time God has given you well.

If you've been coming the past couple weeks, you know this is something Jesus has been talking about since the beginning of the chapter. He's on his way to Jerusalem. He's seeing all these people around him who are religious but completely missing the point and so he's talking to his disciples about how to live in light of the coming judgment. There's some dangers he wants them to watch out for so that they don't just become like everyone else.

And, he's like first of all, watch out for hypocrisy. Just being religious and focusing on the outside and trying to gain the approval of people the way the Pharisees do is a ridiculous way to live your life, because you are going to stand before God one day and He knows everything. What matters when you stand before God is your relationship with Jesus and this is where you need to focus. But if a relationship with Him is going to be first priority then you are really going to have to be careful when it comes to the everyday normal concerns of life because they can become a real obstacle. Specifically, we have to watch out that we're not covetous. Our life is too short. Jesus is too important. And covetousness is too dangerous. It's a threat for a lot of different reasons. But the

one Jesus focuses on here, in Luke 12, is that covetousness is going to make you really, really dumb. You start making a huge priority out of stuff that is not a huge priority, and stop focusing on what actually matters.

We don't want that to happen to us.

It doesn't need to happen to us.

If we are not going to become distracted and waste the lives the Lord has given us, we need help. Jesus gives it in verses 22-34. He tells us what we need to do, why we need to do it, and how. This is real down to earth practical help for followers of Jesus who want to stay focused and use their life well and not become covetous and spiritually dull and act like the Pharisees and be hypocrites and pretend to love Jesus while really just valuing ourselves and miss out on living for what matters eternally because we've gotten so distracted by material things right now.

First, fight anxiety! This is how you guard against covetousness because this is one big reason many people are greedy. They are looking to material things for security. In other words, they are looking to stuff to do for them what they should be looking to God to do. If you can deal with worry as a Christian and feeling like you have to be in control of the future and wanting to use stuff to help you do it, you can deal with a lot of greed. But you are not going to be able to do it half-way. You can't give worry one single spot in your life!

But, why? This is a very different way of thinking and living. Honestly, to most of the world it is going to look foolish. Jesus gives us reasons why not becoming anxious and over focused on material things makes sense. It is demeaning, it is unnecessary, it is ineffective, it is blasphemous, and it is pagan. Ultimately, the way we handle money reveals what we actually believe about God. And so while we say all these great things about God, it's going to be very confusing if we go out there as followers of Jesus and people look at our lives and we are driven by the exact same things absolutely everyone else is. We're going to waste the five seconds we have on this planet to put the glory of God on display which is why we have to fight anxiety.

The question is how. One of the ways we stop being preoccupied with material things is by becoming preoccupied with something else. In other words, you can't stop with putting off, you also need to put on. You need to deliberately make God's priorities your greatest priorities. Jesus gives one important explanation how to do that. Be super, super generous. This may seem counterintuitive. I am worried about stuff, so I should give it away? Yes. The more selfish you are, the more worried you will be. The way we overcome worry is by deliberately making God's concerns our most important concerns and in faith using our possessions for God's glory and other people's good.

If you are really going to enjoy Jesus as Savior, you've got to think and live like He really is your Savior, not money. It's not too surprising you are not very excited about Jesus as Savior, if you are not living like He is the Savior, but really trusting money instead. Yet, in this world right now, that's a real temptation, because things feel uncertain. So what do we do, if we are not going to waste the time we've got before we die and see Jesus? We fight anxiety. We believe and apply the gospel to the way we look at the world and we step out and act, making God's priorities our priorities, even when it seems a little scary.

Application Questions: These are some questions that may help put the message into practice.

- How were you impacted by this passage?
- What are some questions that you have as you think about it?
- How should what Jesus says here change your life?
- What is stopping you from obeying Jesus?
- What plans do you make to think and live differently as a result of what you have learned?