Luke - Commentaries by Walter Thomas Turpin

From Occasional Helps: Volume 1 (1875), Under Fire

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

Luke 12:22-34

There are two great principles here that are dealt with by the Lord in a two-fold way; and which will, I trust, be profitable to our souls to contemplate a little. I speak of what I believe few are strangers to, namely, care and fear—two of the commonest influences that are at work to weigh down the hearts of the saints of God. You will find that the two are closely allied to each other; that is to say, whatever causes you anxiety is that concerning which you are likely to have the most fear; whatever it is that settles upon your heart, and becomes a pressure or a weight, this produces dread in connection with it. I do not speak of care about that which is wrong, but I speak of it in the largest possible sense. There is a care which it is right to have—a godly, proper, prayerful concern, which, if we were devoid of, we should be simply like inanimate things.

I speak now of that which becomes so settled in the soul that it is between us and God; and there is a mighty difference between having God and my Father's interest between me and legitimate anxieties, if I may so speak, and having these anxieties between me and Him.

I do not know anything more destructive of true, real, spiritual growth in the soul than having distracting care (:,D4:<") resting upon it. If I have God between me and them, then they only become fresh opportunities for dependence on God; fresh opportunities for me to lean on Him; new reasons for my turning to Him. It was somewhat in that sense that the Lord used that word, when He said, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation."

Trial is a thing that comes sooner or later to us all; in one sense we are never truly proved till we have been under fire. The Lord's charge to His disciples was this: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation"; that is, when the moment of trial comes, let it be an occasion for you to turn to God, instead of turning away from Him. We know well that is the moment when hundreds have turned away from Him; it was the test that showed what was in them. It has been said that testing is the harvest-time of faith." The moment the test comes, we shall reap the harvest of faith. This is the good of having God between us and lawful cares that would oppress us here. Do we each know what it is to have this for ourselves?

Verse 30. "And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Think of what that is! He says, Do not you trouble yourself; you do not need to let these things weigh down your heart. Oh what a resource! "Your Father knoweth." He knows it all from beginning to end.

And while I delight to own the fact that He knows all, that He is conscious of the need of His child, yet let me point out a danger. I sometimes think, in our anxiety to have our need met with the supply there is in God, we are making that need the measure—I do not say of the supply—but of the affections of His heart. There is a tendency in us to do so. Never let us forget this, that our Father God has a father's heart; that He has the affections that are peculiar to Him as a father. He did not want servants, He did desire to have sons, it was His pleasure to have such; but I speak now of what is more intimate than sons—of children; there is a distinction between the terms son and child. Just for a moment to illustrate it, you have doubtless heard of acts of benevolence; how the mighty of the earth, moved with compassion, have taken some poor, forlorn little creature, some little waif, and have brought it into their family; have educated it and given it all it was in their power to supply. But all the power and all the love that person had could never make it a child. Such an one might adopt him and make him a son, for that does not of necessity imply a birth-tie; but when we speak of children, we speak of that which John 1:12, 13, speaks of, and therefore it implies a much more intimate relationship to say that I am a child, than a son. We are both, blessed be God! and hence we can say, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God"; and also, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Do you think God acts the part of a patron to us? Never; it might suit us, but it would not suit Him. What God does is this, He has children born of Him, in His own family, with the relationship and position of children given them by Himself, and towards whom He delights to do a Father's part.

Whilst I fully own how graciously He knows and meets all our need, yet I remember that there are motives and springs in Him apart from every question of our need, but of which our need becomes the occasion of display.

It is amazing how few there are who walk in the knowledge of this relationship. I find there are comparatively few who live in the enjoyment of what God has brought them into. What a wonderful place it is! And yet we actually see those who are brought into all this, walking about with the very livery of anxiety on their countenances. Why, one would think it was all over with them, that there was no Father's hand behind the dark cloud, and no Father's loving care for them. And it is not a question of the way in which He meets our need, I am sure, whatever that may be; that is not the measure of what is in His heart. And yet many people think it is a wonderful thing to be able to say, "Oh, I can trust the Lord, and I know I shall not want." It is a blessed thing to know we shall not want, no question of that; but is that the highest thing God has for me? What is the highest thing He can do for me? My need or necessity cannot be the measure of it; we cannot measure it; the heart of God is its own measure. When I come to Him I find the fullness that is in God. It is a wonderful thing to say you are born of God, and that in grace He stands to you in the relationship of Father, with all the feelings and affections of a Father's heart towards you. What am I to do then? Put your hand in His and go on in patience.

What are cares? They are choking things that destroy the rest and peace of the soul; am I to allow them, when there is all this love for me? It is the Lord's object to keep me up; these would drag me down. And what is to keep me up? Not the question of the supply, not the question of the time that intervenes between the need and the supply, not the question even of when He will come in for me; but the blessed fact that He

knows; so that you can leave time, ways, means, everything with Him.

But now for an instant let us look at the next point. He meets the question of care by the fact of our Father's knowledge of us (v. 32). He meets the question of fear by the fact that it is "the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom." It is a little flock, for God's people are very few in number compared with the multitude outside. "It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"; that is, it is the Father's good pleasure to do a father's part. Is it not sweet to find that this is the very same word that is used of Christ when the voice from heaven was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom is all my good pleasure!" It is His good pleasure to act a Father's part to you, and to give you the kingdom; and the consciousness of that takes away the fear. So far this affects us in that which is negative; but there is a positive side as well. He says (v. 33), "sell that ye have." He means, Let things here go. Beloved friends, are we up to that? Many would be glad to say, "Thank God, I need not have any fear"; but are you willing to let things go? What I mean is simply this, that the sense of the goodness of His nature, that He, in suiting those feelings of His, so gratifies His own heart that I want no more, and so I can afford to let things go.

But if we were to lose everything? Well, we would have the less to burden us. There is not a thing on this earth that does not entail trouble. Even the possession of lawful things brings trouble, that is the character of all here. Remember, I am not speaking of things which are wrong in themselves, but of what is perfectly lawful. Take, for instance, the God-given relationships of life, as that of father, mother, husband, wife, sister, brother, child. All we can say is, they are God-given relationships, and the man that despises them, despises that which is of God.

But look, for instance, at a mother and her child. You see how she loves it, nurtures, cares for it; but is there any fear in her heart about it? Is she not afraid she may lose it, that it will die? The best thing we can see in this world, there is the moth and the thief to seize upon it. There is death, the thief that enters into every house, and no bars can keep him out. Well, if we have not any of these things, we have the less to promote anxiety and fear.

Or to come down to what is a great deal lower than these—earthly possessions, the same thing holds good. Suppose you were to enlarge the circle of these blessings, to widen the area; would you not only have a wider target for death to shoot at?

How wonderful to have something that death cannot touch, something beyond his dart!

First of all, what is your treasure? I believe with all of us, there is a great deal too much tendency to make Christ the servant of our need. I know He is that. I know He is the willing servant of our need; but too many are satisfied with that, and He is not the treasure of their heart. The question is, where is your treasure? For where that is, there will your heart be also; it is that which must control all the affections.

I feel we are all glad to have heaven as a sort of relief from the storms and trials of the way, but, alas, how little we know of it as our home, the home of our hearts now?

We know it as a shelter from the things that distress us here; and when everything else is gone, then we turn our thoughts there. And that blessed One is ready to receive us, even though we value Him only as a shelter from the storm. He never refuses any who come to Him. But He desires that the affections of our hearts be set on Himself.

He will not deny us, though we only come when everything has failed here. But it is another thing to say, "Whither thou goest I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge . . . where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." There is an attractiveness about the person of Christ for the heart, that can lead it above everything, so that even when things are bright around us, we can say there is a brighter thing still that detains all our affections: and this would flow from it—in place of being visitors there, and dwellers here, we should be visitors here, and dwellers there.

You can never know what it is to be for God, unless you know what it is to be from Him.

The Lord give us to be able to say, I am of God, I am from Him, and now I desire to be for Him.

Verse 36. Here is the second aspect of preparedness of heart; this refers to Christ's coming. There is the sense of His absence: I do not think any of us feel the absence of Christ as an affliction to our hearts. I may feel the terrible nature of the world through which we are passing, but do I feel that He is absent? I know He is here in one sense, that is true; but I am not speaking of that now, but of the sense that He is not here, and that it is only His presence that can fill up the void His absence creates. And this will lead us to watch and wait; to watch for His coming every moment. Is there not a heartless deficiency about us in this respect?

"And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for your lord." This is the proper demeanor of the Christian; so that the world might read in our very ways that we are strangers here—waiting for our absent Lord. The world does not understand this; it cannot comprehend doctrines; but the world can understand whether the people who hold these doctrines practice them or not.

Has the world seen this in us? I fear that we have given a poor testimony to it. I fear that the church of God has not backed up as it were the gospel as it ought. The gospel in its entirety is as clear and distinct as can possibly be; but here are people who profess to have believed it and own it; and yet there is not the practical testimony which ought to flow from it. It is a solemn thing to think that the poor world, that lies in the arms of the wicked one, can turn round and say, I hear all this that you tell us; but I do not see it carried out in practice; in other words, I do not see any who look like men "waiting for their Lord."

The Lord give us exercised consciences and hearts; may His own word find such a place in our souls, that we may arise and shake ourselves from the dust and soiling influences of the age, to meet and welcome Him who saith, "Surely, I come quickly."

‘‘ Note: This article appeared as "Cares and Fears" in Occasional Helps, vol. 1, but in this article named "Under Fire," the wording "Cares and Fears" was improved and therefore is substituted here.

"Martha was cumbered about much serving." Luke 10:40. There is a tendency to distraction in all service, blessed though it be in its place. All of us have some service given us to do for Christ—it would be sad indeed if we were in a position that we had nothing to do for Him—the great point is the way it is done. What is needed is the quietness of communion so as to go out from Himself, and then return to Himself. There are those who work, thinking thereby to get into communion. They can never know or enjoy it this way. All real service must flow from communion; then we are occupied with Christ, and have His thoughts.

clickbible.org