

Sermon 2008 Pentecost 2

Text: Matt. 6:25

Theme: "Anxiety: Having Faith in Faith"

Jesus says "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" There you have the secret of a joyful life. Just stop being anxious! Easy right? Stop worrying that you won't have enough money to retire. Stop worrying that your health might fail. Stop worrying that your kids will make bad decisions. Easy stuff here folks.

But it's not that easy is it? As hard as we try to put it all in God's hands, we turn right around 15 minutes later and take it back. We let God hold onto it for a while and we fret and fidget while he's got it. What if he doesn't do things the way we want them done? So we take them back. We pile worries on ourselves and we let other people pile them on us and soon we feel as though we are drowning in worry. Anxious Asphyxiation: it leads to either being a lunatic or wallowing in despair and doing nothing because it is hopeless to do everything.



Well I'm not particularly happy with either choice, although I prefer lunacy to despair. But, I don't think that Jesus gives us options that lead to lunacy or despair, so what did he mean by this statement? "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" I think he is saying more than for us to stop being silly about shallow things. While he certainly includes crying fits over there being no mustard for one's hot dog, or tantrums over someone wearing the same thing we are wearing to the party, I think he is pointing to something deeper and more significant.

There are some distinct differences between Lutheran theology and mainline protestant theology, but fundamentally, I think it all boils down to one thing and that one thing is why Jesus can look at us and say, "Don't be anxious." In mainline protestant theology the basis of salvation goes something like this:

_____ () _____

1. All who have faith in Christ are saved.
2. I have faith in Christ.
3. Therefore I am saved.

In Lutheran theology, however, the basis of salvation is quite different. For us, it goes like this:

1. Christ says I am saved by grace through faith because I have been chosen in Baptism.
2. Christ does not lie.
3. Therefore I am saved.

For the mainline protestant, saving faith is based on having faith. Having faith in having faith leads one down a spurious path that has no definition and no clear end. Having faith in Christ's promise gives sacramental shape to our lives and a definite conclusion.

Christ does not lie. So, in our Gospel for today, when he says that he will take care of everything, I believe him just as surely as I believe that Baptism saves. When he says that he will turn every bad thing for my good, I believe him. And I believe



him not because I am holier than someone who doubts but because I put all my confidence in my Baptism.

My Baptism was not an historic event. It was not a nice church ceremony. It is the watershed event of my life when the Holy Spirit entered me and created in me saving faith that grabs the promises of Christ and holds onto them. My Baptism continues to work to wash away sin and give me all the strength I need for life. Jesus does not lie. If you believe that, then Anxious Asphyxiation is incongruent with being Christian. Not that you lose your faith if you're anxious but that anxiety is an *ALIEN* thing for the Christian. Worry and anxiety are lies straight from the pits of hell to shake our faith in Christ.

I imagine the devils logic goes something like this. If I can shake their confidence in God's provision, then I can cause them to either believe that God does not really care about their daily trials or I can get them to believe that their faith must be too weak, so God is not rewarding them. Either way is fine because both lead to the belief that saving faith is something they must do. They must have enough faith in faith to be saved.



Please remember that above all else that he may be, the devil is a liar. He boldly lies about everything to get his way. He is a conniving, slimy worm of a being that has no integrity and seeks only to do you harm. DO NOT BUY INTO HIS DECEPTION! GOD DOES NOT LIE! So when Jesus says, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" He is promising you that he has everything in his hands. It's not like someone who has no power telling you not worry. This is the all powerful God. You have been made his child in Baptism and he will never let you go. You have been chosen. There will be testing and trials along the way, but those will all be turned for your good. Jesus says that you are his through Baptism and he will take care of everything. Jesus does not lie. Anxiety is of no use to you and no benefit for you. AMEN.

