Trinity 15 – September 28, 2025
Text: Matt. 6:24-34
Theme: Anxiety: Cancer of the Soul

"Just put it in God's hands."

"Trust in the Lord."

"Jesus, take the wheel."

We say those things all the time don't we. But I can promise you that after 35 years of being a pastor, very few people really believe them, or, at any rate, very few people live their lives as though they believe them. No, instead, most people choose to worry and fret and be anxious as though if we worry enough, we will be able to overcome whatever the challenge is. Worry and anxiety is never beneficial to us. In fact, it is harmful.

I don't know how many physical problems have their root in worry and anxiety but I know that there are many. Worry and anxiety effect our sympathetic nervous system, causing increased heart rate, blood flow diversion from non-essential systems, the release of adrenaline and epinephrine thereby disrupting our sleep cycle, our physical processes of digestion, our natural healing, and many other processes. It is great for those moments when we find ourselves in extreme danger. If your car blows a front tire at 70 miles per hour, you definitely want your sympathetic nervous

system to kick in and handle business. However, many people live in a constant state of worry and anxiety and the body was not designed for that. Many doctors think this leads to heart disease, cancer, and other ailments.

Beyond the physical damage, the spiritual damage is even greater. When we worry and are anxious, we are bypassing faith and acting as though the challenges of life are all our responsibility to handle on our own. At the same time, we are imagining that we can control life if we are just careful enough. People have asked me, when tragedy struck, "What did I do to deserve this?" I try to answer something comforting but the real answer is usually "You did plenty! Actually, you deserve much worse! But God is gracious and has spared you the worst fate." We are all poor miserable sinners and we deserve nothing but damnation. Stop fooling yourself. All that worry and anxiety doesn't hide your sin. Don't pretend that you can avoid the consequences of your sin if you just figure out a way to control your life. You cannot.

That is where the widow of Zarephath was. She had run out of food and the Lord sent her a prophet to feed on top of that. She could have let worry and anxiety dominate her decision and thrown Elijah out. When times are tough and the economy in unsure, the Church suffers. People stop buying unnecessary things, stop eating

in restaurants, and often, they stop giving money to the Church and any other charity. But she didn't do that. She dug in and fed Elijah in spite of conventional wisdom. And her supplies never ran out. God took care of her, her child, and His prophet just as He had promised He would do.

Worry and anxiety are our attempt to take control away from God. He's driving us down the path to everlasting life and we're grabbing the wheel and saying, "No! I don't like this way. Let's go my way!" Every time we worry, we are grabbing the wheel. Every time we let anxiety dominate our decisions, we're calling God a liar. He promises to take care of us. What is anxiety but us saying we doubt that he will?

This is why Jesus is so specific about this sin of worry. It not only hurts us physically but it hurts our faith as well. Jesus says,

"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other." If you are relying on money, power, some personal ability, intellect, good-looks, or your stunning personality, you are serving a different master and that ends badly every time. Jesus says,

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Get your priorities right in the

beginning and there is nothing left about which to worry. Don't treat God as though He is someone to help you out when you are flailing around without a clue as to what to do. The Bible is not labeled, "break glass in case of emergency." Treat God as though He is running the whole show every day, and you are just a participant, because that is how it is. I don't care if you're a nobody in this world or the leader of the free world, you're just a participant in God's story. He runs the verbs in this world and when we worry and are anxious, we mistakenly proclaim that we are in control, not God. I saw a bumper sticker that said, "God is my Copilot." God is not your copilot. He is the ship's captain and we are passengers.

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." There's the Gospel. Revel in the gifts of God that are already yours. Read the Psalms and hear how God has poured blessing upon blessing on His faithful people. We are His people, washed in His baptismal water and made holy by Him. We are part of the body of Christ and the Holy Spirit dwells within us. Christ himself enters us when we receive His body and blood. There is no room left in us for worry. There is no place in our lives for anxiety. We are the people of God who seek Him first, and all things will be added onto us.