

Trinity 15 (2026)

I was tempted this week to look back to see what I preached on on the Sunday following 9/11.

I did not get around to it, but I suspect it was a message of hope and assurance. If it wasn't, it should have been.

After all, the deadliest attack on U.S. soil had just taken place, and people were still trying to make sense of it.

It was one thing seeing on television crazies 'over there' firing missiles and committing atrocities against civilians, but not on our soil! We were in a bubble of delusion.

Needless to say, it was a time of extreme anxiety.

Here at St. Luke's our doors were open, and people were coming through them to pray or just sit quietly.

Throughout that first week we had unscheduled noonday services. Many who showed up were people we did not ordinarily see in church.

A message of comfort, resolve and hope was what was needed at that time.

A quarter of a century later, the same message of comfort, resolve and hope is needed, as there is plenty out there to make us anxious.

Some common causes for anxiety in 2026, as identified by one counseling agency, are:

- Ongoing financial uncertainty and rising living costs.
- Increased workplace demands and burnout.

- . Constant exposure to news and social media.
- . The ongoing war in Iran. //

Anxiety is nothing new though. People in Jesus' day were plagued by it as well.

Palestine of the first century was a powder keg ready to explode.

Reoccurring insurrections against the Roman occupiers would eventually lead to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Some, no doubt, saw this day of reckoning coming.

Jesus' words about anxiety in today's Gospel were spot-on for His day. They are spot-on for ours.

A good teacher repeats his key points. Jesus is no exception. Three times He says, "Be not anxious".

Verse 25: Be not anxious what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.

Verse 31: Be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Verse 34: Be not anxious for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Jesus' message is clear and unmistakable: Worry is wrong. Fear is futile. Anxiety debilitating.

It might be tempting to dismiss Jesus' words as unrealistic – How can we not worry? -- but before we do, we should note what He is NOT saying.

First, He is not advocating improvidence. Refusing to take out insurance policies, not preparing for winter while it is summer, not putting aside money for a rainy day is foolishness, not faith.

Improvudent people court disaster for themselves and put heavy burdens on others.

Rather, we need to go to nature and let the lowly (and in some quarters, loathed) squirrel be our teacher.

The squirrel collects and stashes away acorns and nuts in the summer in preparation for winter, and he is wise to do so.

Joseph in the Old Testament did something similar. Warned of God that seven years of plenty would be followed by seven years of famine, took action.

Acting under the authority of Pharoah, he collected and stored grain in barns against the coming bad years. As a result, not only were the people in Egypt saved, but members of his own family who came down to that country to live.

So, the first thing Jesus is NOT saying is, be improvident . . . that is, ‘take no thought for the morrow’ in a reckless and senseless way.

A second thing He is not saying is: **Be work shy or lazy**. “God is going to take care of me, so I am going to lie down under a shade tree and wait for Him to do so.”

Again, we look to nature for our instruction. True, God feeds the birds of the air, but He does not drop worms into their open mouths. Rather, they must go out and collect what He provides.

The same should be true for us. Those who can work should work, not just to satisfy their own needs but the needs of those who can’t.

But there is a third thing Jesus is not saying. He is not saying **His followers will be exempt from earthly trouble and calamity.**

Yes, God knows every time a sparrow falls from the air, but they do fall. The same is true for us human beings. Bad things happen to good people. It is part of the fallen nature of the world in which we live.

Jesus says as much in John 16:33: **“In the world ye shall have tribulation.”**

Case in point, Scott Breemer. He was a devout follower of Jesus, a graduate of Wheaton College, an exemplary husband and father, yet he found himself on United Flight 93 on the morning of Sept. 11 and of course perished along with everyone on that flight.

You might also remember it was he who led the charge against the hijackers. After reciting the 23rd Psalm and the Lord's Prayer,

Bremmer's last recorded words were: "**Are you ready? Okay. Let's roll.**"

And roll they did. Words of Mordecai to Esther come to mind: **"thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this."**

My point is that being a follower of Jesus does not mean smooth sailing through life. It may be a call to come and die.

Whatever that call is: **"When duty calls or danger, be never wanting there."**

So, three things Jesus is NOT commanding: Be improvident, be work shy, and think that because you are a Christian, life will be without trouble and challenges.

What then IS He saying in this passage?

I think it is this: Don't let worry consume you, especially over things you have no control.

If God provides for the critters, *how much more* will He provide for you, His beloved child. The key phrase here is ‘**how much more**’.

Trouble may come and almost certainly will, but God is greater.

Whatever you are facing, God knows, God cares. God is providing. In the end, all shall be well, to quote Mother Julian of Norwich.

What is being forbidden in today’s passage is that fear which debilitates and destroys and renders joy in the present impossible.

The trap that we so often fall into is that we think we have to shoulder every problem alone. Everything from paying my car payment to world hunger rests on *me*. It does not.

Realizing God is ultimately in charge is freeing.

Yes, I must do my part, but I am the under-agent and not ultimately the Man in Charge. I'm in sales, not management.

Hence: Cares and concerns over things over which I have no control must give way to trust.

/ What is Jesus advocating in today's Gospel? /

Again, it's not improvidence, not laziness, not the expectation that the skies will always be blue.

Rather it is faith . . . faith in God's goodness, care and providence.

Paul at the end of Romans 8 asks:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

He then answers His own question: **“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”**

Whatever happens, happens.

I’m in God’s hands. With this knowledge, I am determined not to let the ‘what-ifs-of-life’ defeat me.

Rather, I am going to receive each day as gift. I’m going to pay attention to the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. I’m going to love, laugh, give thanks and serve. The rest I’m leaving to my Father in heaven.

What’s on your mind this morning? What’s troubling you? Whatever it is, give it up. Lay it at the feet of the One who cares for you.

I want to end with a few lines from a hymn that came along in the late ‘70s, and then a word of my own.

**Learning to lean,
Learning to lean,
I'm learning to lean on Jesus.
Finding more power than I've ever dreamed,
I'm learning to lean on Jesus.**

Do you have this power? /// If not, learn to
lean on Jesus.