

Luke 12:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Analysis

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

Jesus transitions from warning about greed to teaching about anxiety. The connecting word **Therefore** (dia touto, διὰ τοῦτο) links the parable of the rich fool to this discourse—since earthly treasure cannot secure your soul, stop obsessing over material provision. **Take no thought** (me merimnate, μὴ μεριμνᾶτε) means stop being anxious, cease worrying, don't be divided in mind. The verb merimnao (μεριμνάω) comes from merizo (to divide) and nous (mind)—anxiety fractures mental focus and spiritual peace.

The command addresses **your life** (te psyche, τῇ ψυχῇ)—the same psyche God required from the rich fool (v. 20). But where the fool trusted possessions, disciples must trust providence. Jesus specifies two fundamental needs: **what ye shall eat** (ti phagete, τί φάγητε) and **what ye shall put on** (ti endysethe, τί ἐνδύσησθε)—food and clothing, the basics of survival. The prohibition is not against planning or working but against merimna (μέριμνα, anxious worry) that betrays lack of trust in God's provision.

This teaching directly challenges worldly values. The nations seek these things (v. 30), but disciples of the kingdom operate differently. Paul later echoes this: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

Historical Context

Jesus spoke to disciples who faced genuine economic vulnerability—fishermen, tax collectors, and others who left occupations to follow Him (Luke 5:11, 28). Unlike modern Western contexts with social safety nets, first-century Palestine offered no unemployment benefits, food stamps, or welfare programs. Missing a harvest or losing employment could mean starvation. In this context, Jesus' command to stop worrying was radical and countercultural. It required trusting that the Father who feeds sparrows and clothes lilies would provide for His children. This teaching must have seemed especially challenging given the economic realities of subsistence-level existence in Roman-occupied Judea.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What specific anxieties about provision dominate your thought life, and how do they reveal areas where you struggle to trust God?
2. How does Jesus' teaching challenge both the hoarding of the rich fool and the anxious worry He prohibits here?
3. In what ways does consumer culture encourage the very anxiety Jesus forbids, and how can you resist those messages?

Interlinear Text

Εἶπεν	δὲ	πρὸς	τοὺς	μαθητὰς	αὐτοῦ	Διὰ	τοῦτο	
he said	And	unto	G3588	disciples	G846	Therefore	G5124	
G2036	G1161	G4314		G3101		G1223		
ὑμῖν·	λέγω	μὴ	μεριμνᾶτε	τῇ	ψυχῇ	ὑμῶν,	τί	φάγητε
unto you	I say	no	Take	G3588	life	for your	what	ye shall eat
G5213	G3004	G3361	G3309		G5590	G5216	G5101	G5315
μηδὲ	τῷ	σώματι	τί	ἐνδύσησθε				
neither	G3588	for the body	what	ye shall put on				
G3366		G4983	G5101	G1746				

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 4:6 (Parallel theme): Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Hebrews 13:5 (Parallel theme): Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

1 Corinthians 7:32 (Parallel theme): But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

Luke 12:29 (Parallel theme): And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.