

Luke 12:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Analysis

If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Jesus applies the lily illustration with qal wahomer logic. The conditional **If then God so clothe** (ei de ton chorton en agro, εἰ δὲ τὸν χόρτον ἐν ἀγρῷ) assumes what is obviously true—God does clothe **the grass** (chorton, χόρτον), a term encompassing all field vegetation including flowers. This grass exists fleetingly: **to day in the field** (σήμερον ὄντα ἐν ἀγρῷ), **and to morrow is cast into the oven** (καὶ αὔριον εἰς κλίβανον βαλλόμενον). Palestinian peasants gathered dried grass and wildflowers as fuel for clay ovens—cheap, abundant, and disposable.

The conclusion: **how much more will he clothe you** (poso mallon hymas, πόσω μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς)—by how much more, to what greater degree! If God invests creative beauty in temporary vegetation destined for fire, He will certainly provide for eternal souls made in His image. The a fortiori argument is irresistible: you are infinitely more valuable than grass. Divine care for the lesser guarantees provision for the greater.

Jesus' rebuke: **O ye of little faith** (oligopistoi, ὀλιγόπιστοι)—a compound of oligos (small, little) and pistis (faith, trust). This word appears five times in the Gospels, always as Jesus' gentle but pointed diagnosis of disciples' anxiety (Matthew 6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8). Anxiety reveals deficient faith—not absence of faith but

insufficiency. They believe, but not robustly enough to dispel worry. Growth in pistis is the antidote to merimna.

Historical Context

In ancient Palestine, ovens (klibanos, κλίβανος) were typically clay or stone structures for baking bread. Fuel was scarce—wood was expensive and trees rare, so people burned dried grass, thorns, and flowers gathered from fields. This was daily reality for Jesus' hearers. The imagery of grass clothing comes from Psalm 104:14 and Isaiah 40:6-8, which contrast human frailty with God's eternal word. Jesus builds on this prophetic tradition, arguing from God's lavish care for transient creation to His certain provision for His children. His rebuke of 'little faith' echoes Moses' similar challenge to Israel's wilderness complaints about provision (Exodus 16).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What specific anxieties reveal areas where your faith is 'little' rather than robust and trusting?
2. How does recognizing your infinite value to God (compared to grass) affect your daily worries about provision?
3. What spiritual practices help you grow from 'little faith' to mature trust in God's character and promises?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δὲ	τὸν	χόρτον	ἐν	τῷ	ἀγρῷ	σήμερον	ὄντα	καὶ
If	then	G3588	the grass	in	G3588	the field	is to day	which	and
G1487	G1161		G5528	G1722		G68	G4594	G5607	G2532
αὔριον	εἰς	κλίβανον	βαλλόμενον	ὁ	θεὸς	οὕτως			
to morrow	into	the oven	is cast	G3588	God	so			
G839	G1519	G2823	G906		G2316	G3779			
ἀμφιέννυσιν	πόσω	μᾶλλον	ὕμᾱς	ὀλιγόπιστοι					
clothe	how much	more	will he clothe you	O ye of little faith					
G294	G4214	G3123	G5209	G3640					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 14:31 (Faith): And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Matthew 17:20 (Faith): And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.