

Giving Christ's Kingdom to the fearing flock (Quality: Very good)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 November 2013

Preacher: Cottingham, Peter (1947 - 2014)

- [0 : 00] Welcome to Luke's Gospel, Gospel according to Luke, chapter 12 and verse 32.
- Luke chapter 12 and verse 32. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
- This comes from those that sought to lay up their riches and their treasures here upon this earth and was speaking to his disciples and saying to them, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, neither for the body, what you shall put on.
- The life is more than meat and the body is more than raiment. This does not mean to say then that they are to be careless. This does not mean to say they were to be presumptuous anyway.
- Abundance there to watch the Lord's hand. As Jesus said, Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them.
- [1 : 22] How much more are ye better than the fowls? And so he brings before them the lilies, and they grow.
- And Solomon in all his glory was not even arrayed like these. Now we see the finger of God and the hand of God in creation. And I often think of those poor deluded souls that propound the theory of evolution.
- They miss so much in seeing the glories of creation, what God has created.
- What poor deluded souls they are. And we know then in our schools there is the putting forward all those things and the denying of creationism.
- But if we've got eyes to see. More than they can see. But the creator of all things here below.
- [2 : 38] And mankind and giving unto man are never doing so. And his dear son to be their saviour and their redeemer. Those then are loved with an everlasting love.
- We hardly know anything at all, do we? We hardly know anything at all. Even though we are surrounded by all these evidences and all these things.
- As Jesus was saying here. Even Solomon, he was so rich. So full of wisdom. The gifts that God had given to him.
- And yet he was as nothing. But what is there then in mankind? It is that he has given unto them a soul.
- That sense mankind above the beast. We know. Reasoning, thinking, beings.
- [3 : 46] Then there we are indeed set apart above the creatures of the earth. It was given unto man and dominance over them all.
- But whatever man might say. That there, what do we read? God spake, right in the beginning, God spake and it was so. Let there be light.

And there was light. He saw that it was good. And all those different things. The divisions of the waters and the land. And all that was brought to pass.

He spake. It was so. And it was good. It was perfect. Until sin entered into the world. And Jesus is saying then, warning his disciples against those that heap up themselves riches upon this earth.

We're thankful for the supply of our needs in so many different ways. We're a lot to be thankful for in our day. Our forefathers knew what it was to be in want many, many times.

[4 : 53] We have so much. But oh, what a solemn thing it is if we're overly concerned in these things. Because all that we have and all that we possess is in the ability that God has given to us.

In other words, it is not ours. It is the Lord that has given to us that we might be good stewards over those things that the Lord has been pleased to do.

And Jesus said, for all these things do the nations that the world seek after. And your Father knoweth that ye have needed these things. And there are those in olden days, as we just mentioned, that knew, they knew what it was to have to cast all their care upon the Lord, even the supply of the bread to eat.

What was the prayer then? That Jesus taught his disciples, give us this day our daily bread. Well, we very rarely seek the Lord in that way.

But may it be that our prayer would be in this way. Oh, that the Lord would give us spiritual food.

[6 : 19] It is what we need more than anything in the days in which we live. That our souls might be fed. But Jesus says, but rather seek ye the kingdom of God and all these things.

As your Father knoweth thou hast need of. And all these things shall be added unto you. So he is saying then, fear not, little flock.

For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Now this little flock, they are told not to fear. Why? Because they are in the Lord's hand. In what way are they little?

In our day, numerically, we can say then that the followers of Christ, the Christians, the believers, are very, very small in number.

But the main thing is here, I feel that we must speak of for a little while, is that little in their own estimation. Why?

[7 : 25] Because the Lord is all in all to them and very precious. They look upon others and they say, is there anything good in me?

Oh yes, they believe what the Lord has done for them or hope in that way. None of those evidences, they have those answers to prayer, they have those tokens.

They feel themselves to be so little. But what does it matter? What do we read in the 10th chapter of John's Gospel? The good shepherd that feedeth his sheep, he leadeth them out and goeth before them.

They hear his voice, they know his voice and he knows his sheep. He laid down his life for them. Another sheep I have which are not of this fold, he said.

He knoweth those that are his. May it be that burden, care and concern that we have heard his voice.

[8 : 29] That he knows their names, that those names are written in the Lamb's book of life. But this little flock then, they feel themselves to be so small in the knowledge and in the understanding and they have those fears.

Those fears then, we must be careful in this, that we do not say then those fears are a mark of grace. because if we doubt what he has done and pour scorn upon it, that is not that right fear, the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom.

No, those fears then that they are fearing to presume. I quote this from time to time at home and that is when the Christiana and sons and those that were with them were on the pilgrimage in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress then they fell to talking about one Mr. Fearing that went on pilgrimage some time ago and I believe it was an evangelist or great heart whoever it was was with them and it said he had much trouble with that man in the pilgrimage because he often was tried and troubled and cried and groaned out because he felt that he was not the right character.

He did not fear the lions, he did not fear the dangers, it was not the natural things that he feared but he feared that he was deceived, that he would come short and this word speaks unto such fear not little flock.

So they fell to talking about Mr. Fearing and did that one say that there oh the root of the matter was in him, his end was good, he was right but he had so much trouble with him.

[10 : 48] He that hath begun a good work in you will perform and done to the day of Jesus Christ and so that good work begun will be a work that is carried on. He was brought safely through, he had the token, he had the evidence, he had that evidence to give in at the gate as Bunyan spoke of it but his fears were that he was not the right character and he was very little in his own esteem.

What did one of the boys say regarding Mr. Fearing? No fears, no grace. This does not mean to say as we said just now that their fears are a mark of grace but no if we have those fears if we have grace we will have fears.

Fears that we have presumed, fears that we have sinned against the day of grace, fears that we have taken something to ourselves, fears that there we have borrowed or stolen a word or a token.

We want the Lord to be in everything. This little flock wants to hear the Lord's voice. They know his voice, they have heard it and they want to hear it in everything.

They want the Lord to be with them and to go before them. They want the Lord in life and they want the Lord in death. Oh this little flock, what do we read?

[12 : 36] He goeth before them and when he leadeth them out he goeth before them. They hear his voice, they know his voice and he does not and will not lead them astray.

But this little flock then in the assemblies of the Lord's people in different ways and there are the little flocks indeed but they are praying people.

I know that there are different causes of truth represented here in different ways. What a mercy it is if you can say yes. We do try to make the services here at Rye a matter of prayer, united in prayer.

If your soul is truly hungry and desiring there might be a word you will come with prayer. For this little flock they are dependent and they are dependent upon the Lord for all things spiritual matters and their providential paths.

They have to commit their way, cast their burden, trust in the Lord. They feel their weakness. Oh, this little flock is a blessed flock.

[14 : 04] Greatly blessed. blessed. Because they are the Lord's. They are His. They have the comfort, they have the peace.

I know there are those times when there's the warfare, there's the turmoil, there's the storms. There are all those things that come in. But there is peace in them when the Lord himself draws near.

And when the Lord is pleased to speak, those words are peace to them. You see that little flock. The disciples in the ship there, when the storm rose up, he came where they were.

He came to them. He stood the storm by his words. They had peace. And that little flock, flock of sheep that the shepherd cares for, a flock of sheep and of lambs, that he laid down his life for the good shepherd, to lay down his life for them.

Yes, these illustrations that Jesus used, very apt, very real. And those sheep were helpless and dependent.

[15 : 26] And they knew the shepherd's voice. followers. Now, it's often been remarked that there are the flock of sheep, that a stranger might call them, they might lift their heads, one or two here and there, lift their head out of curiosity, and go back to their grazing.

And then the shepherd comes and calls them. They know his voice, and they follow him. And I suppose we should ask the question, do we truly know the Lord's voice?

His voice in a pathway. He's been trying to speak, not only this morning, but this afternoon at home.

different ways of remembrance. Remember this day, the word from this morning. Those days when the Lord graciously appeared, those days when the Lord spoke, those days when the Lord showed us his mercy and his grace, and many other things remember this day.

And we try it as we so often do try, and we feel ourselves to be very insufficient in this. remember this day that Jesus laid down his life for sinners.

[17 : 00] This afternoon, that word that he spoke to those disciples, the eleven in that upper room, do the, in, in remembrance, do this, do this in remembrance of me.

fear not, little flock, not only hearing his voice, but that desire to hear it more and to follow him.

They felt helplessness. there, let us put it in this way, in a simple illustration. If we gained a sheep, then it wanders off, shall we say, because it seems that those delights might be better elsewhere, or shall we say that the pasture is better elsewhere, that there they find then they soon are lost, and get entangled in the difficulties in the way, in the wilderness, and how entangled we can get in worldly things and in different ways.

But Jesus again gave that parable of the shepherd seeking out that sheep that was lost, leaving the ninety-nine, and he had to go and search out that sheep that was lost.

What do we find with sheep? They bleed. A shepherd will know there's different calls, I do not, wouldn't even pretend to, but Jesus knows the cries of his sheep and of his lambs, his little flock.

[19 : 00] For he's not like an earthly shepherd that can only see, that is by the line of his sight, and where he looks right. He knows those that are lost, it is true, he can count them, and there's one or two that are missing, and he'll go and search out and find them, but the Lord sees the needs of his people at all times.

He's that good shepherd. And not only the fear not little flock, but there was the promise. There was something that was laid up in store for them, and as David, the sweet psalmist of old, in the 23rd psalm, good to speak of being the shepherd leading the flock into those right places, those green pastures and beside those still waters, and even through that valley, the valley of the shadow of death, thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they come for me.

David knew these things, we might say that there, he was to be the shepherd of the nation of Israel, to be the second king.

Before that, and we know how there's so disturbed good Samuel, there they wanted a king, and Saul was raised up, the son of Kish, there to be a king over Israel.

Samuel warned them against it, and they had that hard life in different ways. But then David was raised up, but he had a path of teaching to go through.

[20 : 54] First of all, looking after his father's sheep, to know the ways of the Lord. And there are other things he had to learn that was dependence upon the Lord.

He had, we might say, in numbers anyway, a great flock to look after, of Israel and of Judah.

But the Lord was with him. We know that David was permitted at different times in his adultery, also numbering the children of Israel.

The Lord permitted these things, and it was for his teaching and our instruction. No, it was to show those in that covenant, covenant ordered in all things ensure, purchased by the precious blood of Christ, as there is that new covenant and new order.

But it never gives license to do what we want. this little flock have their eyes upon the shepherd.

[22 : 15] It gives them no license at all to sin. They have sin and they mourn over it. But oh, if there is end, and it will be in the hearts of this little flock, if there is end, the Lord has done in them, they will grieve and mourn, and seek to flee from their sin, and pray for that help.

They know what it is to fool, they know what it is to sin, and it grieves them more and more and tries them, because they fear, then, this little flock, they have those fears that they have spurned his grace.

their sins are too deep, and they have gone against what the Lord has done, and their sins condemn them.

They know his voice, they have known it, and they want to hear it again. Perhaps this is the fear there that Jesus is speaking of, they have heard his voice, and their fear is that they will not hear it again, before they die.

They want the Lord to appear. Now, in the 14th chapter of John's gospel, we have the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will come again, and I have spoken of that recently, yea, that desire that the Lord will come again, that promise that he will come and receive unto himself, there, there is that preparation for the end of life, saints of God, they are prepared for that day, but oh, is there that concern with this little flock, then to prepare me gracious God to stand before thy face, to know what it is to be prepared, and those fears, that they're not right, that the Lord will not come again.

[24 : 24] and I believe I can say with exercise souls here, you want the Lord to come from time to time, give you a little comfort, to give you a little consolation, to give you to buoy up that hope, and to strengthen your faith.

now you fear that the Lord does not hear, you fear that the Lord has turned aside from your cries, but let us look, and I, we've spoken a little of those fears, who and what this little flock is, and they are those that the Lord watches over, but now let's look at the shepherds.

For it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, and it was his good pleasure that his dear son, Jesus, should die for them, should shed his blood.

That was the shepherd. He came here upon this earth, and there, in his early days, there was that growing in stature, we might say, in a natural way, until the time came when there, according to the sovereign purposes of Almighty God, and then the John the Baptist should be that one preparing the way, that is, for the people to receive the words of Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus came to John and Jordan to be baptized of him, and there, when John saw, behold, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

[26 : 32] And John said, I have need to be baptized of thee, but Jesus said, suffer it to be so now, for it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.

And thus begins the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, firstly, being led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted those forty days and forty nights by the devil, tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin.

Oh, what did Jesus endure then? what did the Son of God endure? What did this shepherd of his sheep endure? And it was that not one should be lost.

How it is in other countries, how it was in this particular day, I do not know, but we see the sheep in our fields and they have the marking, the die marking on them to denote what flock they belong to.

We read of the mark that is put into the foreheads of those that are redeemed and it is spoken of again in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress that when Christian came to that place when there was the losing off of his burden, he came up then to rising of the ground and there he saw the cross.

[27 : 59] And when he saw it there, the burden was loosed off his back. And it was swallowed up in the savica below. But there were the three shining ones that came to him.

The change of raiment that was given to him, the righteousness of Christ, the imputed righteousness, the covering over his nakedness. the mark and the seal that was placed upon his forehead.

There then it could be seen and then there was the evidence that was given to him that he could ponder upon it and read therein as he journeyed in that way.

And so those that are called and brought to that place, what is given to them? His righteousness is not theirs.

The filthy, ragged, torn, and garments taken from him, and the robe of his righteousness, the filthy, ragged, torn, garments of our own righteousness that we seek to cover and to patch up, all those things that are wrong are taken from.

[29 : 12] It is all in Christ, all of Christ, all of his work, all of his grace. The mark that is put in their forehead, and then there, oh, the name that is written, that new name that is written, and then the evidence, as Bunyan speaks of it, the role then was given to him, not only then should there be a comfort to him in his journey, but he must give in that evidence when he came to the celestial city, and what was that evidence, bought with a price, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

And none shall pluck me, read it this evening, none shall pluck them out of my hand, Jesus said, what the father had given to him, and he laid down his life for them.

Oh, do we know, truly those, truth, have we that evidence there? You comfort yourself from time to time, strengthen yourself in it, comes back to this remembrance Sunday, those times, we remember those times when the Lord appeared, but oh, isn't there more of that desire and the thirsting and the hungering that the Lord would come again?

They want to hear the shepherd's voice, there are little flock in need, there are little flock in trouble, and in our day, we are indeed a despised people, they want the shepherd to appear, they want the shepherd to come, and those things then are the evidence that the Lord has given, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, and the shepherd must lay down his life for the sheep, Jesus forewarned of it in many ways, the good shepherd laid down his life for the sheep, and what way he laid it down, I try so often, and I seem to fail and feel to fail so often, to speak of what Jesus has done, for sinners, love, oh, the love of

Christ, his suffering so intense, but the love, we might say, greater still, love to his father, and love to those whom the father had given to him, and he had to suffer in that way, that they might have life and eternal life, oh, when they see Jesus, age and he said what he said son he doesn't know how he can he and how he's daughter come before give him and do