



**MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**AND**  
**IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org) and [immanuelshirley.com](http://immanuelshirley.com)

August 10, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Genesis 15:1-6](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 121d CW<sup>21</sup>

Second Lesson: [Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16](#)

Gospel Lesson/ Sermon Text: [Luke 12:22-34](#)

**UNDIVIDED ATTENTION**  
**On Heavenly Treasure**  
**THE TREASURE THAT FREES YOU**

- 1. Anxiety is often about control.  
Worry paralyzes and shortens your life.**
- 2. Care about the right things.**
- 3. You have the kingdom.  
What God asks you to seek He gives you.**
- 4. When you have Jesus, you are free to give.**

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

We are going to start with a prayer.

*Lord, I know that I am loved and forgiven, a precious child of God, bought by the blood of Christ. I know that today's events will happen, some good and some bad, some that are in my control but most that aren't. I know that these events will trigger thoughts (why me, this shouldn't happen to me, poor me) and those thoughts will produce feelings that will impact my behavior. So when these events happen, help me remember that you have promised to never leave me or forsake me ([Hebrews 13](#)) and that you will work it all out for my eternal good ([Romans 8](#)), so that I can have feelings of hope, peace, confidence and joy with the goal that my behavior brings you glory in all I say and do. Amen.*

That prayer you might have heard a time or two hear at Morrison. That's a Resiliency Prayer that we are teaching a little bit more. You can actually grab a copy in the back of

church. One of the things that it really stresses is talking about the things that you are in control of in your life.

How many things in your day do you have control over? You get to make choices. You can control yourself and how you react to things. But can you control how much rain there is? Down in Milwaukee there was flooding last night and today. Can you control if your power stays on? Were any of you without power last night/yesterday? Can you control the way that people react to you? Can you control the traffic? Can you control so many of the things in your life? We can't. So this can cause us to worry and to be so afraid and to be fearful.

But today we are going to focus on how what God gives us, a treasure, He gives us this **treasure that frees us**. He frees us to be at peace, to have hope, to not be worried, to be confident, and to live with generosity and freedom and with vigor and purpose. This treasure that we have, this treasure that He gives us, truly frees us.

But why do we need to be set free? We talked about that prayer and how so many things are out of our control, but look at what He says to us. It says: ***Jesus said to his disciples, "For that reason I tell you, stop worrying about your life, about what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. Certainly life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing."*** If you think about a little bit of what we've been looking at, this follows in line with the Gospel Readings from the last few weeks.

We heard about Mary and Martha. Martha is so concerned about doing and not listening. She was concerned about what she does. And then last week in the Gospel Lesson we heard a message preached on Ecclesiastes about our wealth. That Gospel Lesson that comes right before this is someone who is wealthy and then puts his hope in his wealth. He stores up everything, puts it in barns, and says "I can eat, drink and be merry. I am set for life." And what does God say? "This moment your life will be taken from you. All your hope in those things is gone."

So we put our hope in material things or our strength and then Jesus goes on to the next thing of what if I don't have these things? What about when I'm worried? What about when I've been working hard or things have been going well and then everything just falls apart and I'm worried about what we're going to eat, what we're going to wear. We're just fearful.

Go back to that prayer and think about all the things that you are in control of. You can work so hard and then in an instant, a storm, something can take it out because we're not in control. So when we think about worry and we think about anxiety, what is it so often about? I'm not going to say **every** type of anxiety is about this, because I know anxiety is complex, but **often, anxiety is about control**. You want to have control over this thing or that thing or you're afraid because you see you don't have any control and you don't know what is going to happen.

Have you thought about that? Can you see that in your life? When you are worried about something, maybe it's your health, maybe it's your finances, but it's especially when you are not in control, and that terrifies us. You're not in control of your future and really, we're not in control of the past things that have happened and we can't change those things. So we worry and we're so anxious because we want control.

How many things do you try to control in your life that you just can't? How people think about you. What people say about you; are you in control? How this thing might turn out at work. How that relationship with your family might turn out. We're not in control and that causes us such worry and anxiety.

So what does it do? What happens? God tells us to not worry. He says: ***"Certainly life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap; they have no warehouse or barn; and yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds! And who of you by worrying can add a single moment to his lifespan? Since you are not able to do this little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"*** God gives those ravens all those things that they need and they aren't worried, but we are so worried. He says: "By worrying, can you add a single moment to your life?" God can do that though. God can add moments to our lives. He is in control of our lives. In the Garden of Eden, He gives us the Tree of Life that gave life. He gives life to all mankind, but what does worry do to us? **Worry paralyzes and shortens your life.** When you are worried, you are so bound up and you're afraid and most often, you're not doing but you are scared and paralyzed. Or instead of lengthening your life, when you worry, does it add time or does it shorten your life? Of course, when you are worrying about it you're not working, you are kind of taking away time, but listen to some of the effects that worry has on you.

There is a psychologist (the last name is Sapolsky) who wrote a book called Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers. He talks about how all the other animals in the world, they don't get ulcers. But us mammals, we're mammals too, but us humans, we get ulcers because we worry and we invent things to worry about. He says these are some of the impacts of worry on us. He says the effects of your ability to feel threatened long term are absolutely devastating. We simply don't know how to handle this. Animals have that fight or flight and it comes and goes, but we hold onto the worry and stress. Your muscles start to suffer from the tension and there is often neck and shoulder pain, for starters, and your immune system starts to fail. You get sick more. And if you're already sick, your symptoms get worse and maybe you worry about getting sick. Your stomach starts to rebel. You get gastro reflux. You have irritable bowel syndrome in addition to ulcers. Stress can affect fertility and reproduction. It affects your lungs. It can make asthma worse. Of course, there is also your blood. When your body is dealing with stress long term, you can develop high blood pressure, blood clots, and it also leads to heart attacks. It affects your metabolism. It causes weight gain and diabetes. It can affect your skin. All these different things are what worry and stress can do.

It's an emotion, but what does it do? It affects your body. My guess is you've experienced that sometime in your life where the stress just takes over. So God is clearly saying, by worrying, do you add time to your life? Of course, we see that we don't and then we see the actual affect is that we take time from our life by worrying.

So what should we do? He says: ***"Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these. If this is how God clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith? Do not constantly chase after what you will eat or what you will drink. Do not be worried about it. To be sure, the nations of the world chase after all of these things, but your Father knows that you need them. Instead, continue to seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you."*** So what do we do with worry but seek the right things, or you could also say to **care about the right things**. We're going to talk more about that in some different ways but think about this in worry. When you are worried, what do you go to? When you are stressed, do you go to something? Maybe you even just numb yourself and you try to avoid it. Maybe with TV or YouTube, alcohol, other things that can numb you or distract you from what you're supposed to be doing. Maybe you are paralyzed. There are all sorts of different things you can run to, but do you then think about what God says, to seek the Kingdom, to trust in Him, to know that things are not in your control but who is in control of them? They are in God's control.

Don't we forget that so often, that all of these things, as much as God has clothed the flower and how intricate and beautiful they are, they are more beautiful than the richest and wisest man, the richest king we've ever seen, it's greater than that and God cares and loves **you**. It's in His control. So trust Him and go to Him and not to some other thing that numbs it or makes you forget about it. Also, as we think about this, instead of being paralyzed, think about the birds.

As I was preparing for this week, I was on vacation from Thursday to Monday, so I had a short week. Then I had pre-marriage counseling and a wedding rehearsal and a wedding and a couple sermons. Do you think this week I was a little worried or anxious? Maybe you were this week. It's an easy thing to be worried and anxious and as you hear these things about what worry does to you, it's not to say "Oh, how dare I," but also just to remind yourself that God is there.

But what can we also care about and focus on? Just like the birds, we can do. Don't be paralyzed. God puts things in front of us to do and that's a good thing. In our vocations and all these things, God is using us to accomplish things. So sometimes when we are worried, yes, we trust in God, but also just focus on the here and now, to work hard, to be faithful in what you are doing, but also to be full of faith, to move in the right direction but know it's not always going to be perfect because no one here is

perfect and we fall short. But God is guiding us in the way that He knows and wants us to go.

So we see what we can focus on—on God and that He is in control and not to be paralyzed or turn to other things, but to also focus on what He is giving us, the task at hand, but not to be stressed by it. But then what really gives us the hope and peace—where He says ***“...continue to seek the kingdom of God...”*** notice the next line. ***“Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.”*** Did you notice that? He says “seek the kingdom” in one line and then did you notice the next thing He said? He gives you the kingdom. So what gives us this true peace and hope is that ***you have the kingdom***. This thing is something we have and all our working and striving is not about earning that kingdom, earning our salvation, earning our status before God because we could never do that. We are in the kingdom. We are part of the kingdom by faith, by the work of Jesus—that He has died on the cross for you and for me. We are part of that. So we have that now.

What it talks about here—***“Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not become old, a treasure in the heavens that will not fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*** It talks about a heavenly treasure, but you have that now. You have the peace and certainty of heaven and the forgiveness of sins now. You have the kingdom. So this helps us to not worry because we know God has given it to us.

Notice He says “seek the kingdom,” but then “you little flock.” He’s not speaking to little children but to His disciples. Notice ***what God asks you to seek He gives you***. Isn’t that fascinating? He says “Seek the kingdom. This is what is going to give you peace and help you to not be worried,” and He gives it to you.

Just like a few weeks ago when we talked about Mary and Martha, and we can get so stressed because “Oh, I’m working so much! I’m so busy!” And yes, we want the Law to strike us and cut us to the heart when we are conflicted by that, but the comfort there was to rest, to be at peace, and to sit at Jesus’ feet. And in the same way today, as much as we know we’re overburdened by our worries and the things that are out of our control, it’s not to lay that on you but for Jesus to say “Little flock, come and rest. The kingdom is given to you and you have this peace.”

Then what does it do to have the kingdom that is given to you? He says there to the little flock to ***“Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not become old...”*** What happens is ***when you have Jesus, you are free to give***. All those things that we feel we are in control of, what are some of those things? Maybe your time, the gifts and talents that you have, the money that you have—this is really what He is talking about here, but I think it’s an example of all the other things because in relationship to a lot of this is worry of money and food, what to

eat and wear, He says give of it. When you understand you have the spiritual kingdom, peace and hope, and that can't be taken away, what can you do with all the material things and all the other things that God has given you? You can use it to bless others. Use it freely to serve God and to serve others. This is the peace and the joy that we have.

A little bit later today over at our Shirley location, we are going to have an installation/open house/dedication there for the Lil' Sprouts. Here He talks about the little flock and we're starting that Early Childhood Education and there is the question of "Why isn't it just a daycare?" There is also education that is going on. From the first meetings we had, the consultant that was there from the WELS really helped us speak about this and understand this. We get this awesome opportunity in the same way we do over at Morrison and at the school here and in church here to instill this peace and hope and the joy of Jesus every day in the hearts of little ones.

To put it into this perspective, I've heard it said as you get older, have you noticed that people kind of become a caricature of certain characteristics? People who are joyful and at peace in their old age that are filled with joy. They overflow with that joy. They have that peace and that hope. Then there are other people who you might see—that older gentleman at the store who is angry. They kind of become more and more of that. If you are trying to get somewhere and you get off by a couple inches, if you're not going too far it doesn't make a big difference, but after a long time, that trajectory really gets off. And of course, an older person or someone going the wrong way, they can change their path, but we get the opportunity with Lil' Sprouts, with our school, with church here, to instill in the hearts of you, of people of old age, of young, that peace and hope in Jesus.

In a world that is so out of our control, in a world that is filled with anxiety, and especially has grown in that anxiety over the last few years, we can help people not worry because they have Jesus. They have a treasure that will not fade, that no thief can steal, because it's a spiritual, eternal one that promises they are forgiven, that Jesus loves them. He knows them. He clothes them. He feeds them. And no matter what happens, no matter if something horrible happens, diseases and losses and pain, God is still there. God cares for them and God cares for their eternal good, because that's the eternal treasure, the precious treasure that He gives us—the kingdom through Jesus. That treasure is yours, through Christ, through faith. So fear not little flock, you have peace and a **treasure that frees you**. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\*\(Philippians 4:7\)\*](#) Amen.