

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

“Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” Thus saith the Lord. And our days seem to abound with trouble. Cities set afire. Stores looted. Lawlessness. Hatred and dissension. Violence. Divisive politics. Conflicting ideologies. And as if that weren’t enough, our divided country is facing a presidential election, the airwaves and printed page full of falsehood and ideological conflict and schism that seeks to divide the country further.

There are catastrophic storms in the south, wildfires in the west. The plume of smoke that covers our country is an illustrative metaphor. And in the midst of all this, we continue to endure an epidemic. The Lord has taught “It is not good for man to be alone”, but still we suffer “social distancing”. Many feel alone, isolated.

Many are quarantined in their homes for fear of a illness they cannot see. Children face computer screens instead of other children and teachers. Financial distress looms. Many are without jobs. International tensions seem to be on the rise. Family and interpersonal stress seem to be on the rise.

Added to all this is the guilt we feel, the weight we bear, of our own sinfulness, our own transgressions, our own shortcomings, our own mortality. We know that what God says through the Apostle says is true: “...he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption”.

The Apostle bids us bear one another’s burdens. But the burdens seem too great. Perhaps you at times have felt the desperation of the widow of Zarephath, who said in her despair: “I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”

The basic problem is three-fold. Man is sinful. Man does not have control. And man does not know what will happen next. So in fallen, fearful hearts vague premonitions of disaster develop. We fear the worst. And the sages of our day multiply our fears.

And yet God Himself has said “do not worry”. Where there is faith, fear is driven out. So do not be afraid. Remember what happened with that hopeless woman of Zarephath: The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah. God provides. God provides.

So take heart, dear Christian. Do not despair. Lift up your hearts. The God of love, the God of mercy, the God of grace, the God who provides is in control. He knows what is happening. He sees everything that is taking place. And thanks be to God, like the widow of Zarephath, we have the Word of the Lord. We have His promises. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Consider your Lord’s Words of comfort and consolation: “...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than

they?” Indeed, you are of more value. You are of great value. God loves you. For birds of the air the Lord did not die. But for you the Lord did die. So the Apostle continues “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

No one can serve two masters. Your Lord was perfectly faithful to His Father. He served Him sinlessly. He served Him only. He brought glory and honor to His Name. He did it to save you from slavery – to sin, to fear, to the devil, to the violence and hatred of this fallen world, and from slavery to mammon. For the flesh craves created things rather than the Creator. Fleshly men worry because they do not trust in God. So the Lord calls His disciples “You of little faith.”

That they be saved, that you be saved, God the Son served only God the Father. He prayed, in the shadow of the cross, that the Father’s will be done. That is the prayer of faith. And He who is the One True Master suffered Himself to be humiliated, crucified, to be mocked, and to die. He did not worry about His own life, what He would eat or what He would drink, nor about His Body, what He would put on. He fasted. He thirsted. He was stripped of His garments. He died.

And He defeated death, that you be truly clothed and fed. For it is you, O Christian, who put on Christ. You are vested in His righteousness. You are baptized into Him. The garment of His righteousness, the garment of salvation, envelops you, as the Holy Spirit fills you. So do not worry about clothing. For you wear the perfect righteousness of Christ.

And do not worry about what you will eat. God provides. He gives daily bread. And to you who are His own, to His beloved Church, He gives His Body to be your Food. He feeds you the Medicine of Immortality, the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, that you eat and be filled, filled with Christ.

And do not worry about what you will drink, for He who thirsted on the cross gives you the Fruit of the Cross to drink – His Precious Blood. By His Blood are all your sins forgiven. Drinking, the Cup which is the New Testament in His Blood brings you the life Christ won for you in His Resurrection. Drinking, your faith is made strong. Believing, you who were of little faith cling to Christ, steadfastly believing in His provision, in His deliverance, in His mercy. So in Him you have comfort, peace, confidence, and the sure knowledge of your salvation.

In His resurrection is the Promise of your resurrection. In His Ascension is the promise of your ascension, the confidence that Christ has opened heaven to you. So you need not worry, dear Christian. Death is put to death. Sin is conquered. Your sins are forgiven. You are safe. The eternal blessings of heaven, and all the treasures therein, Christ has made yours. So as the Prophet said to the widow of Zarephath, “Do not fear.” It is Christ who bore your burdens. It is Christ who bore you as His own load. In good season you shall reap, if you do not loose heart.

Your heavenly Father knows what you need. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. God has promised heaven to you.

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