

“Stop Chasing Bubbles”

Luke 12:22-34

Last week we heard the words of King Solomon that all of the struggling or striving after more than our daily bread is vanity: It is like chasing after the wind. It is like watching a child chasing soap bubbles. We have all seen this, perhaps you have even done this yourself. A young child will be drawn to the bubble; will chase the bubble; and if they catch the bubble, the euphoria is gone and they have to catch another, and another. Why do we chase bubbles? It seems fun. To a child, perhaps it seems like you are accomplishing something. But, in the end, all you have are hands that need to be washed.

Think about how much time you spend during the week struggling and striving for that which is more than your daily bread. How satisfying is it, at the end of the day, when you think back on all of those bubbles you have caught?

Two weeks ago, in regard to prayer, I said that sometimes that for which we pray is not beneficial in the long run and therefore is not God's will. Remember that “the long run” has an eternal aspect. God is always looking out for your best interest “in the long run.” Therefore prayers for

material or physical blessings are not prayers with the guarantee “ask and you shall receive” connected with them.

When we are confronted with the reality that we cannot add a single hour to the span of our life and this body will not last forever here on earth; when we remember that we are mortal; especially those who I have been with as they prepare for the end of their life; never once has anyone said, “I wish I had spent more time at the office. . . I wish I had spent more time watching TV . . . I wish I had spent more time at the casino . . . I wish I had spent more time at the mall . . . I wish I had spent more time playing video games (not that many senior citizens are hardcore gamers – but the generation who are gamers are going to face the “back 9” of life someday, and you will have a very different perspective on the value of time.

Not even the most social media addicted person will lie on their death bed and say, “I wish I had spent more time surfing the Internet.” The satisfaction of catching those bubbles is fleeting.

Nothing is truly satisfying unless it has an eternal aspect. As Jesus says, all the world seeks after these things and your Father knows that you need food and clothing and your daily bread. And He provides it for you. He also knows you need comfort and the blessing which comes with the companionship of a family. And He provides your blood family and your church family.

Don't focus your life on chasing bubbles. "Seek His kingdom and these things will be added to you," Jesus says. Do not worry; do not be anxious about this life. At the end of the day, no one looks back on their life with regret and says, "I wish I would have had more clothes . . . or I wish I would have had a bigger house." These are just more bubbles to be chased. This is why prayers for material or physical blessings are not prayers with the guarantee "ask and you shall receive" connected with them.

When the Powerball jackpot gets above 300-400 million, how many chase after that bubble? The number of tickets sold goes way up every time. I pay attention to the sign on Broadway with the current jackpots for the Powerball and Mega Millions drawings as a sociological experiment. Once the jackpot crosses 300 million, the ticket sales skyrocket. How many hours, which could have been productive, are wasted in dreaming of what winning it would mean – even though, for the Powerball you have a 292,000,000 to 1 chance to win? That is 292 with 6 zeros behind it. The actual odds are 292,201,338 to 1.

The dirty little secret is that five or six years ago the odds were 175,000,000 to 1. They decreased the odds so that there would be more gigantic jackpots – and therefore more tickets sold. They understand how much we love to chase bubbles.

How many who buy a ticket think that winning would solve all of their problems, and they would never have to worry or be anxious ever again? Have you ever seen the statistics on the divorce rate and bankruptcy for lottery winners? It is just another bubble that pops.

Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Seek the kingdom of God. Do not fear; do not worry about this life. It is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. His kingdom of grace is right here within His church. Sin and death have been defeated – in Christ. He has come, and He speaks to you in His Word. He feeds you at His Table. He comforts you with His Holy Spirit. He has given you a family. We rejoice together. We mourn together. We eat together. We are together for the "long run."

God's kingdom of glory is coming. He has made this possible in the sending of His Son who has conquered sin and death through the cross and grave. Even in the face of terror as was seen in Texas and Ohio, fear not; do not worry; do not be anxious. As Jesus says, "Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"

Rejoice in the gifts God has given you. As we heard from Solomon last week, there is nothing better than to find contentment. Don't waste your life chasing bubbles. You have a treasure in heaven that does not fail. Amen.