



## “Build Smart”

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost  
5:30 p.m., Saturday, July 30, 2016  
The Reverend Dr. Jack M. Horner  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

I graduated from seminary in 1991 and the person who was the dean when I graduated was Gerhard Krodel. Gerhard Krodel was a very interesting person. As a young man he served in the German Luftwaffe during World War II. Then after the war went to seminary. He had that deep German voice and he would just talk like this (German accent) when he was doing the lectures and everything, it was a lot of fun. And there were two stories that I remember in particular about him. Somebody had come to him and was talking about a chapel and said, you know, Dean Krodel, why can't we have (they had kneelers in the pews in the chapel) and someone was complaining and said why can't the kneelers, why can't they have cushions. Why can't they be cushioned kneelers, to which Gerhard said, "It's supposed to hurt!" You know if you're going to kneel it might as well hurt, you know.

Another story about Gerhard Krodel that I also like, there was a group on campus of people just complaining about this, that, or the other thing, and somebody asked him, you know you have to watch what you say Dean Krodel, aren't you afraid they'll get you in trouble for something that you say? And he said, "I was shot at by a Russian tank, I'm not afraid of anything." (Said again with a German accent)

Wouldn't it be great if we could live life that way, you know, to not be afraid of anything? A pretty university recently did a study and they found that because of anxiety, people that have an anxiety or worries, it actually takes about four years off of your life span. If you live as an adult with a lot of worry, it can take four years off of your life. Excessive worry can actually kill you, and so that song from two decades ago, "Don't Worry, Be Happy" might just be a way of prolonging your life. But you know many people live with all sorts of anxiety and when you think about it I guess there's a lot to be anxious about in our world, a lot of fears for us to have. There are folks who are anxious about relationships they might have. Maybe it's a spousal relationship or a boyfriend / girl friend or even relationships that deal with kids or grandkids. Of course people are worried all the time at work, that age working for the same company for twenty, thirty years, it just doesn't exist anymore. So there is a lot of anxiety of what's going to be my job and how is the company going to do, and will there be work? Of course, that plays into the whole economy, you know, how is the whole country doing as far as the economic outlook, is it going in a positive direction, is it just stagnate, is it going down? And of course that affects everybody's own financial picture and how

they are doing. You know when those bills come in, you go in to have that little procedure in the hospital or your child, something happens to your child and take him to the emergency room and all of a sudden you get bills from doctors that you didn't even think saw you.

There's a lot to be anxious about. Our young people are anxious too. Some of them are anxious about their own future. Sometimes it is because of confidence, or lack thereof, they don't have a lot of confidence or life might be kind of aimless, they're not sure what the future's going to be, not sure what they want to do. And of course, that adds to the anxiety I am sure of all their parents.

I haven't even talked about terrorism, or violence or war that we see throughout our world. And what about health or aging. These things can make us anxious and can lead to us of having a fear filled life. These concerns I see on the faces of people probably every day. And of course the drug companies have all sorts of medications to help mellow us out through those anxieties.

In our gospel story Jesus is preaching to the crowd, he was one to do that, to preach to the crowds. Previously in these chapters before, he had been doing the stuff that Jesus does, he had been casting out demons, he has been healing the sick. Just before he had warned the disciples against hypocrisy and he had told his hearers to don't fear that anybody can harm you. Out of the crowd that is gathered to hear Jesus there comes this question from a brother who has been slighted by his sibling. "Teacher tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." Now we don't really know what the problem is other than the brother wants to receive some portion of the inheritance, we don't know if the other brother is keeping it away from him, or whether or not he is even entitled to any of the inheritance. You know the lion's share of the inheritance in those days went to the eldest son, and then the percentages go down dramatically after that.

So Jesus responds not to address this whatever concern he has, but instead he takes it as an opportunity to warn him and by the way us, about greed. About placing too much trust in the stuff of our lives. And so he tells a parable, this wonderful, wonderful parable about a man whose crops produced abundantly. He decides to tear down his storage things, silos, and build new ones, and he thinks he has it all made and then God comes to him and says, tonight's your night.

Notice though how this parable begins. The land of a rich man produced abundantly. See the reason that the man had so much wealth, the reason that he was rich, the reason that he was able to have such great crops is because God the Creator had provided him with all of those resources. It is the land, the God given land, the God nurtured land which produces abundantly. God is the producer. God is the one who provides for him abundance. And so the abundant crop that he is able to experience and to be able to celebrate is all because of God at work in the act of Creation.

And so the parable begins being centered in God, makes sense? It goes bad right after that. Because notice what the man says to himself, now he's not speaking to his spouse, he's not speaking to his friends, he's not speaking to the other farmers that are

in the area. He is having this conversation with himself. He thought to himself, what should I do for I have no place to store my crops, I am going to read this a little differently, okay? "**He** thought to **himself**, what should **I** do for **I** have no place to store **my** crops." Then he said, "**I** will do this, **I** will pull down **my** barns and build larger ones and there, **I** will store all of **my** grain and **my** goods. Did you catch that? **Me, mine, I.** Notice he is not specifically condemned by God because he was keeping all of the surplus, he's not being condemned by God because he's tearing down and rebuilding barns, he's not being condemned because he has some desire for retirement and to be comfortable for the rest of his life. It is though about his egotism. It's all about him, and in doing that he pushes out the Creator and doesn't even notice that it is God who has provided him with all of those things. The rich man has planned for everything, except his relationship and the reckoning that he will have with his God. And Jesus says there is only one word for a person like that, who completely forgets God and thinks it's all about him or her. You fool.

Saint Augustine once said "*God gave us people to love and things to use, and sin in short is the confusion of those two things.*" God gave us people to love and things to use, and sin is the confusion of those two things.

There is a lot to be anxious about, but you and I, brothers and sisters, need to face that anxiety and those fears head on. Some of the ways that we can do that is for us to try to think through and problem solve on the things that are concerning us. In other words, build smart, build our lives in a way that makes sense, that takes into relationship with who God is and what God wants for us. See, I tend not to get too anxious about things that are happening in the world. Why? Because I believe in a God who has created all things. I believe in a God who has given me Jesus to love me and care for me and promise me heaven, and I believe in a God who works through a Holy Spirit sharing faith throughout the whole world. What's there to be anxious about?

The other thing is, don't worry about all of the "what if's." The "what if's" can drive you and me crazy. But what if this happens, what if that happens, what about this, and what about that? What that does is to lead you and to lead me into a period of stagnation where we are so afraid to be able to move, to one direction or another regardless of thinking through what is the best pathway for us to be able to go. M. Scott Peck in his book, "*Abounding Grace: An Anthology of Wisdom*" said this; "*By all means seek happiness, but do so wisely; seek to be loved and you probably won't be; seek to love, on the other hand and you probably will be. Look solely for happiness, and I doubt you'll find it. Forget about happiness, seek wisdom and goodness, and probably happiness will find you.*"

Another way for us I think to help face fears and building a future together is to learn to accept uncertainty. That's the hardest thing, right? To just realize there are going to be things that I might not know where the pathway is, but that's where trust comes in. Trusting God for what the future is going to bring.

When I felt a call to ministry, you know I was sixteen years old, I would sit there in the pew and I would look at the pastor and the pastor would get up and preach for twelve to fifteen minutes, right? And I would be like . . . How the heck am I going to be able to

do that? I just couldn't see myself up there, I couldn't conceptualize how a pastor week after week can go and talk to people about the things of God for that kind of time. I just had no idea, but I had to let go of the uncertainty, I had to hope and trust that at some point I am going to learn how to do this, and especially that God is going to give me the words to say because if I try to do this myself I am going to screw it up. And sure enough, that's what happened.

And finally let's think and be positive. I know it sounds so simple, you know. Think positive thoughts and then positive things will happen. But if we think about how much God loves us, how much God cares for us, how much God wants to be in relationship with us, boy, that's a pretty positive way to think about life. To always know that God is there and that God cares. And so we can build a life together with God but to do it smart. To take care of our spiritual lives and realize that God is the one, the source and foundation of it, and then we will build a good spiritual life, a good family life, and we will build a strong church. Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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