



**Grace Lutheran Church, State College, PA**  
**Rev. Carolyn K. Hetrick**  
**9th Sunday after Pentecost: August 11, 2019**  
**Sermon Title: "Don't Worry, Really"**  
**Gospel Text: Luke 12:32-40**

Grace Lutheran Church Jesus spends a lot of time telling his disciples not to worry about things. Don't worry about money or clothes, or food. Jesus never had a teenaged daughter much less one going away for a month.

Almost ten years ago, our daughter Catherine was traveling to be a part of Lutheran Summer Music, a wonderful month long program for voice and instrumental music for youth in grades 8-12. She had auditioned and been accepted. It was a hope and dream to be a part of. It was going to be her first time on a college campus, and it would be her first time away for a month. And she needed every day kinds of clothing, but also concert attire, and her flute, and a music stand, and all of the usual teenage girl types of things over which there was angst and gnashing of teeth because she had a luggage limit. And she was worried.

And I was worried that she seemed a little Immature emotionally and would she remember to take her medication, and would she stay as shy as she often was, and what about knowing not one other person, was this too much?

Well, we set out with those excitements and worries for the airport, needing to fly from Harrisburg to Detroit and then change flights to fly to Minneapolis and then get a rental car and drive to Iowa. And there were a few logistical worries there, but I was prepared and had booked our flights so that we would be good. But, you can't control the weather.

Ours was fine, but somewhere in the Midwest it was not and we had to fly around the storms and this threw off our landing time along with the landings of lots of other planes in our airline web. So when we landed, later than anticipated, we had to sit on the tarmac. I could see the terminal and where we needed to be, but there we were, in a line, waiting for a terminal gate to open. As I watched out the window, our window of connecting began to evaporate more and more. There we sat, a plane full of worried, tired and frustrated people. And the flight attendants began reading the list of flights that folks on the plane will have missed. And fear and dread fill the plane as I am ever vigilant about our time. Trying not to act worried for our daughter but failing.

The flight attendants continue to call out flights that have problems.

To distract myself, I strike up a conversation with the woman next to me- the usuals- where we are from, where we are headed, our families.

I mention that my daughter and I are on this journey to Lutheran Summer Music and there's only one plane left today. And suddenly, everything changes.

She tells me that she works for the airline and trains the flight attendants. She motions over a flight attendant and finds out that our connecting flight is still on the ground. Our connecting flight had also gotten delayed. We have about 20 minutes. Twenty minutes to get off the plane and run through the tunnel under the runway and to the other end of the universe to our gate. But of course, we are with the "little people" in row 27 at the tail end of the plane and I have a teenager dragging a month's worth of gear and worry.

As we begin to taxi to a gate, the woman stands up and in her best “flight attendant” voice says, “May I have your attention please? Everyone, we know this is a mess and lots of us are worried about fixing our next flights. Raise your hand please, if you have already missed your next flight.”

Pretty much every hand goes up from first class on back.

She continued, “Folks, I’d like to direct your attention to the girl and her mom in Row 27.

They have to catch the only flight today to a church music camp. We’ve missed our planes but if we all stay seated and let them get off first, they might make theirs. So I ask you to help out.”

In a world of points and perks and status like flying, if everyone had been focused upon themselves, and their things and their worries, no one would have moved.

If we hadn’t been seated next to someone who knew what the kingdom looked like, and she hadn’t leapt into action, we wouldn’t have made that flight. People might not even have noticed.

As it was, it was like Moses parted the Red Sea. And people cheered us on and wished us good luck. As we bolted for that airport sprint. When Jesus tells you to travel light, imagine having to be alert and ready for the airport sprint. No one wants to have to hike up a bunch of gear just to move. You can’t hustle for what God intends for you to have if you are bogged down. But there we are bookin’ it as we hear them call “final call” and our names. That’s the death knell for flyers.

We can see the gate, and we are running.

Then I hear the BEEP BEEP of a tram beeping behind us. I turn to see it, and my eye lock with an older woman. I recognize her from our plane and she too is trying to make it. If Catherine and I keep running, they will not know this woman is coming. She will miss the flight and be there alone with her bag and walker. She looks sad and worried as our eyes meet.

And God knocks and says, “What good will this lesson be if you leave her behind and not in the kingdom?”

I told Catherine, the one who most needs to make this flight, to stay with her and go her pace. I ran ahead to call them to hold the plane for the three of us. And I wonder if maybe I wouldn’t have seen this woman if someone else hadn’t been alert and seen us.

And I am sure that if I had been trying to just drag us there it wouldn’t have happened.

But God knocked and told me to draw someone else into the vision.

It delights God to give you the kingdom, Jesus says.

Be ready to open the door when God knocks and blessings will come.

Luke’s world is one in which God intervenes in miraculous conceptions, and upended moments. All intended to lift up those brought low and to invite us to embrace an alternative view of living-

Beyond perks and possessions.

Because we already have the most important thing of all- a place in the kingdom of God.

We are invited to live as those who trust that God has already revolutionized this age.

Lots of people will say otherwise but when we live as those who trust that God is for us, we can be liberated from the consuming concerns of self- security.

The things that show up in anxieties and misgivings, hoarding, closing off.

The random woman on the plane, captivated everyone by enthusiastically choosing to embrace “little people”- the total strangers in row 27- and treat us as though we were in her inner circle.

That’s what Jesus places before us all- to remember and be secure in who God is for us.

Don’t worry- just be ready with your heart and mind to reveal the heart and mind of God in mutual love and service and fear not, God will take care of the rest.