

# JESUS'S GOSPEL

*The Good News Jesus Proclaimed*

**Matthew 6:25-33**—Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**Luke 4.18,19**—"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

**Luke 12.13-34**—Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'" Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with those who store up things for themselves but are NOT rich toward God." Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"To set the oppressed free." Luke 4:18

All Texts Quoted from the NIV Unless Otherwise Noted

“What does it actually mean for the empire of God to come? It begins with a knock at the door. On the stoop stand two itinerant beggars, with no purse, no knapsack, no shoes, no staff. They are so ill-equipped that they must cast their fate before the feet of a would-be host. This is a point often made by historical Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan. These Q folk are sort of like ancient Cynics, but their goal is not the Cynic goal of self-sufficiency; these itinerants are set only for dependency. To survive they must reach out to other human beings. They offer them peace—this is how the empire arrives. And if their peace is accepted, they eat and drink—this is how the empire of God is consummated, in table fellowship. Then another tradition is tacked on, beginning with the words ‘Whenever you enter a town.’ This is perhaps the older part of the tradition, for this, and only this, also has a parallel in the Gospel of Thomas (14). There is also an echo of it in Paul’s letter known as 1 Corinthians (10: 27). Here, as in the first tradition, the itinerants are instructed, ‘Eat what is set before you.’ Again, the first move is to ask. The empire comes when someone receives food from another. But then something is offered in return: care for the sick. The empire of God here involves an exchange: food for care. This warrants pause. Food for care. In the ancient world, those who lived on the margins of peasant life were never far from death’s door. In the struggle to survive, food was their friend and sickness their enemy. Each day subsistence peasants earn enough to eat for a day. Each day they awaken with the question: Will I earn enough to eat today? This is quickly followed by a second: Will I get sick today? If I get sick, I won’t eat, and if I don’t eat, I’ll get sicker. With each passing day the spiral of starvation and sickness becomes deeper and deeper and finally, deadly. Crossan has argued that this little snippet of ancient tradition is critical to understanding why the followers of Jesus and their empire of God were compelling to the marginalized peasants who were drawn to it. ‘Eat what is set before you and care for the sick.’ Here is the beginning of a program of shared resources of the most basic sort: food and care. It’s an exchange. If some have food, all will eat; if any get sick, someone who eats will be there to care for them. The empire of God was a way to survive— which is to say, salvation.” (*The Lost Way: How Two Forgotten Gospels Are Rewriting the Story of Christian Origins*, pp. 74-75)

Scarcity  
Anxiety  
Accumulation  
Competition / Monopoly  
Violence

Abundance  
Compassion  
Sharing  
Cooperation  
Justice and Peace

“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed.”— Mahatma Gandhi

[Jesus’] basic issue, still basic today, is that most people have solved the human dilemma for themselves at the expense of everyone else, putting them down so as to stay afloat themselves. This vicious, antisocial way of coping with the necessities of life only escalates the dilemma for the rest of society . . . I am hungry because you hoard food. You are cold because I hoard clothing. Our dilemma is that we all hoard supplies in our backpacks and put our trust in our wallets! Such “security” should be replaced by God reigning, which means both what I trust God to do (to activate you to share food with me) and what I hear God telling me to do (to share clothes with you). We should not carry money while bypassing the poor or wear a backpack with extra clothes and food while ignoring the cold and hungry lying in the gutter. This is why the beggars, the hungry, the depressed are fortunate: God, that is, those in whom God rules, those who hearken to God, will care for them. The needy are called upon to trust that God’s reigning is there for them (“Theirs is the kingdom of God”) . . . Jesus’ message was simple, for he wanted to cut straight through to the point: trust God to look out for you by providing people who will care for you, and listen to him when he calls on you to provide for them.—James M. Robinson, *The Gospel of Jesus*

### Missional Instructions (Mark 6.8-10; Matthew 10.7-10; Luke 10.4-9)

**Acts 4.33-34**—God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were **no needy persons among them**. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales.

### People Taking Care of People

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