*The LCA provides this sermon edited for lay-reading, with thanks to the original author.*

**Harvest Thanksgiving, Year B**

**Matthew 6:25-33**

Thank God it is God who hands out the rain we receive! What if the world’s rulers were in charge of the rain? There would be a lot more suffering, inequality and early deaths.

God is in charge of the climate and hands down the rain according to the laws of physics and nature that he wrote. We need to learn to live within those laws, especially since we live on the driest continent on earth – Australia. God gives to the believer and unbeliever alike. If we were in charge it isn’t likely we’d do it that way. It is part of the grace of God to give rain and sunshine to the believers and the unbelievers alike. God is far more generous than we are.

The Scripture says: “Today’s trouble is enough for today!” If we look back into the past, we see how God has blessed us in this country, day in and day out, year after year. We’ve had more food and clothing than we need, and we’ve always had a place to sleep. Think of all the worries we nursed when we faced tough times ahead and sometimes we feared the worst. Today we can look back and say, “Thank you Father for caring for us so well.”

When we look forward into the future, we can’t even see to the end of the day. We can’t even guarantee we will wake up tomorrow morning! Only the Father knows the answer to that question. Only God can see the way ahead. He can see so far ahead that before he even created the world, he planned for Jesus to come and rescue you and me from destruction. Only the living God can see that far into the future.

When we try to look a long way into the future, we tend to worry, get depressed or even begin to panic a little. How often have you woken up during the night and been unable to get back to sleep due to worry? Worry can get our spirits down so low we become sick. Jesus knows we’re like that and he invites us to leave the worrying to him. ‘Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you’ (1 Peter 5:7).

‘Today’s trouble is enough for today.’ In his wisdom God gives us today to tend to all the things on our agenda. He knows that one day at a time is enough for us. So today we can focus on the very down to earth matters like thanksgiving for all the blessings we enjoy.

What a wonderful variety of food we Australians enjoy! In some countries a drought means starvation and death for many people. We’ve all seen those haunting photos of children overseas dying of malnutrition. It is wonderful that we can financially support programmes run by charities to feed and minister to these people. When we experience a drought, you would hardly know it by looking at the food on our tables, at home or in the restaurants. Often it’s only the price of the food in the supermarkets that is an indicator we are experiencing drought. We have an abundance to thank God for even in the worst years.

Drought reminds us there are people going through hard times. Some of our farmers may need to leave the land and look for other work. And in years of droughts, bushfires are a real threat to the dry countryside.

In these years, God wants us to look away from ourselves and toward those people with particular needs. Keep thinking of and praying for the families in your street or in this congregation where no one has a job. We need to confess there are times we tend to worry more about ourselves than those with big problems at home. God knows who they are. He encourages us to keep on ministering to them.

If worry is a sin, then some of us are in trouble. We might be tempted to think we can do some ‘churchy’ things to make up for our worry. Maybe we could read the Bible more often. Or maybe we could pray to God more often and that will make up for all our worrying. Or we could attend Church more often. Or we could put more money in the offering plate to pay for our sin of always worrying. But none of that is going to work! Only Jesus can wipe out our sin and make us a new person. Turn to him. Ask him to take on your sin of worrying. No matter how big the load of worry you are carrying, he can carry it so you can go free.

Thanksgiving includes turning to Jesus. It includes handing over one’s worries to God. Let God do the worrying about the future. He is big enough to handle it. He can see into the future and knows that many of the things we worry ourselves sick about will never happen. And for the few things that do happen, he can lead us safely through them to the other side. Worry is no trouble for God to handle.

Amen

*The peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.*