

The little dickens moves so fast that if you blink you miss him. You glimpse a blur out of the corner of your eye, a small grey-brown shape passing almost invisibly. Was it real, or an apparition?

Tomorrow

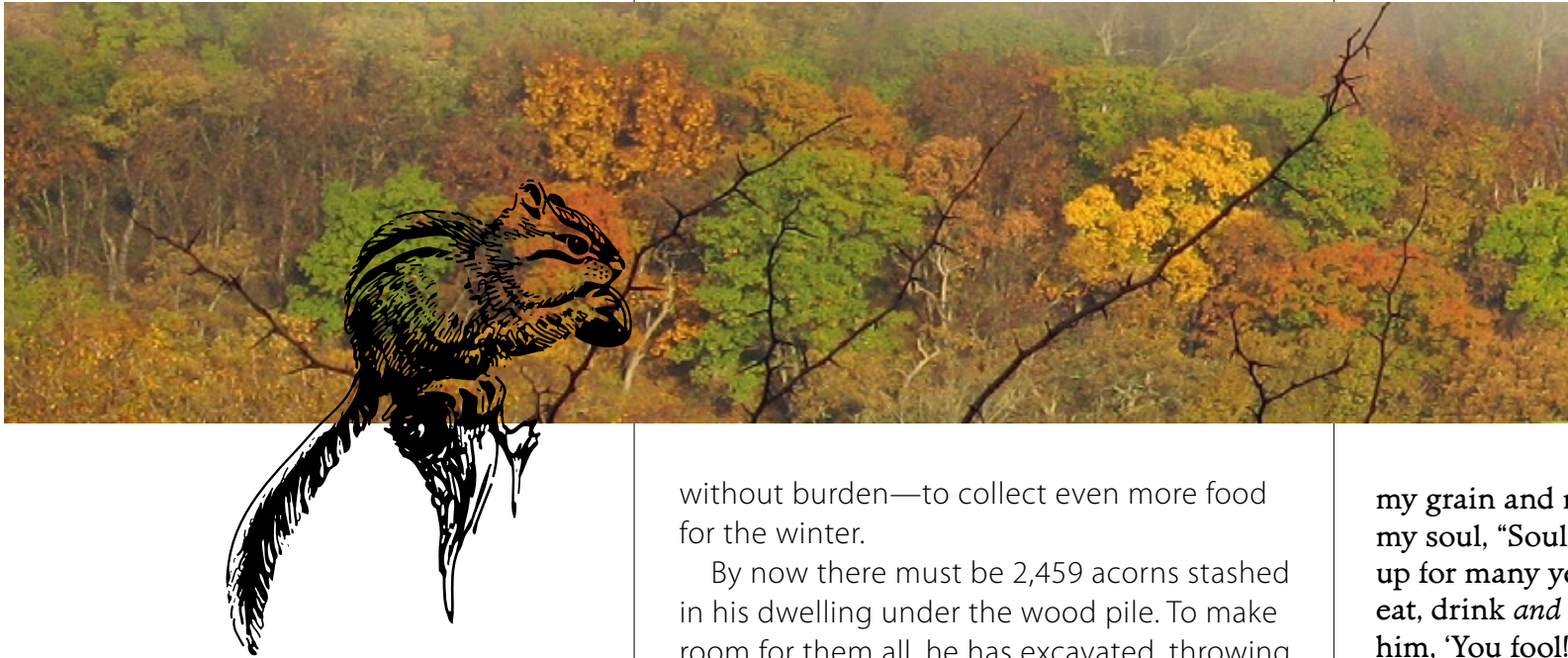
Our resident chipmunk is very real. And hard at work. Day in, day out, dawn to dusk, rain or shine he labors in preparation for the approaching winter. He scavenges in the lawn behind the house, beneath the oak trees that dot the slope that falls gently toward the pond, collecting acorns several at a time (no doubt unearthing many of the gems secreted by the local squirrels). He stuffs two or three or four of the nuts in his cheeks, then scampers back toward the house, along the outside wall of the workshop, over the rain gutter, past the air conditioner, then halts under the last step of the stairs that come down from the west door of the sun room.

Here he pauses, for his next step will take him across the open pavement of the patio that spreads outside my library window. Like a well-trained child standing on the curb at a busy intersection, he stops, his cheeks bulging with their payload, and checks for danger. Is anyone watching? Is there a predator in sight? His destination is near, but first he must traverse this treacherous open expanse.

The coast clear, he dashes across the patio, across the view from the window and door of the library, and if the door is open the acorns in his cheeks can be heard clattering together—clacketa, clacketa, clacketa—as he races to home and safety. There he deposits his treasure, then races back across the patio—even faster now, just a blur since he is

KINGDOM LIVING

Even as I respect the industrious chipmunk for his diligence and unflagging work ethic—indeed, even as I mirror his efforts with my own preparations for winter—his example is yet a cautionary tale. For there is but a hair's-breadth of difference between responsible laying in of stores—and hoarding.



without burden—to collect even more food for the winter.

By now there must be 2,459 acorns stashed in his dwelling under the wood pile. To make room for them all, he has excavated, throwing up dirt that has covered the bottom row of oak logs I have been splitting in preparation for *my* winter. Beneath the heavy plank on which the wood has been stacked, the chipmunk has made for himself a treasure house of food that will sustain him over the cold and snowy months to come.

And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all

my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.” But God said to him, ‘You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?’ So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Luke 12:16-21

As I watch that busy chipmunk flying back and forth, I imagine I can hear his thoughts:

the rhythmic, prodding cadence, “More. More. More.” And I wonder if that siren song can ever be heard between my own ears.

“More. More. More.”

Jesus tells me not to worry about tomorrow. He tells me not to concern myself with the trivialities of food and clothing.

And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you, do not worry about *your* life, *as to* what you will eat; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.”

Luke 12:22-23

My heavenly Father created this world, the world of nature that surrounds me, and He watches over it with tender, attentive care. Every fall, as now, He clothes the trees in their very finest apparel, the brilliant shades of autumn that are the true glory of the wooden giants. And then, because He knows it is for their best, He lets the clothing fall away, and the naked trees go dormant during the winter months. But then, come the warming after the snow, He will drape them in their fresh green clothing, the new life of spring, and then the luxuriant growth of summer.

“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed

himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more *will He clothe* you? You men of little faith! And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows



that you need these things. But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.”

Luke 12:27-32

I don't know what tomorrow will bring. I don't know if I will be wealthy or poor, well-dressed or attired as I am now. I don't know how much food will be on my table, or whether I will be drinking water from an imported bottle or from the garden hose.

But I *do* know that when tomorrow comes,

it will come with me a subject of my heavenly Father's kingdom. And so long as I have that—so long as I seek that kingdom above anything else—I haven't a care in this world.

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