

LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL



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**NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME**

7th August 2020

Luke 12:32 Jesus said: “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Luke 12:35 “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶ be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

Luke 12:39 “But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

Luke 12:41 Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?” ⁴² And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? ⁴³ Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. ⁴⁴ Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵ But if that slave says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and if he begins to beat the other slaves, men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk, ⁴⁶ the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and put him with the unfaithful. ⁴⁷ That slave who knew what his master wanted, but did not prepare himself or do what was wanted, will receive a severe beating. ⁴⁸ But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating. From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.

MEDITATING ON THE WISDOM SAYINGS OF JESUS

1. Remember **first**, that in gospel meditation a passage must be read very slowly. I mention this because many of the sayings of Jesus are short, and people tend to read them quickly.
2. **Secondly**, the sayings of Jesus are usually metaphors, speaking to our imagination. This is another point we are inclined to forget.
3. **Finally**, the sayings of Jesus are universally true. Many people read them as true only in our relationship with God, and of our spiritual growth. But they also apply to what happens to our Church communities, our village, our country, and the world.

The Metaphor of Waiting

All the sayings in this passage are about waiting. This is a difficult metaphor for us today, because in our culture we experience waiting as something negative. For the Bible, however, waiting is a creative moment, or it least it can be if we enter freely into it.

Reading this passage today, you realise what it means to wait for God’s moment. Be with people you know who are tired of waiting; read the passage in solidarity with them, letting the message flow through so that it encourages them and renews their strength. Waiting is important in our relationship with a community too, a church community or any other. So often we try to manipulate a community rather than letting it grow organically according to its own dynamic.

v.35 See *that you are dressed*. Note that this saying is in the form of a command - which can be interpreted in two ways. It can be read as a warning “better be careful or you will fall away like everyone else”, But it can also be a word of encouragement: “Don’t worry about all the negative signs you see all around you; I can promise you that I am coming soon”. Either way we see here the role of the Church or of the individual Christian to be the voice of Jesus in the world today.

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL - *Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels, Year C*

In the Gospels we find different exhortations, parables, and calls that have only one aim: to keep alive the responsibility of the Christian communities. One of the best known appeals says this: *“Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit”*. What significance can these words have for us after twenty centuries of Christianity?

Today these words of Jesus are a call to be awake to reality and to live responsibly without falling into passivity or lethargy. There are times in the history of the church when everything is dark as the night. Nevertheless, these are not the times to put out the light and go to sleep, They are times to react, to awaken our faith, and to continue our march toward the future, even in a church that has grown old and tired.

Hence we should value, take care of, and be grateful for the awakening of a new consciousness in many lay people, men and women, who today live their adherence to Christ and their belonging to the Church with clarity and responsibility.

Today such believers can create the ferment that can result in renewed parishes and communities rooted in the faithful following of Jesus. They are the greatest power for change in Christianity. We need them more than ever to build a church open to the problems of the modern world and close to the men and women of today.

JOSÉ A PAGOLA – *Following in the Footsteps of Jesus, Year C*

The idea that the kingdom of God is both a gift and a challenge is very present in the extract from the gospel that is put before us today. The encouraging opening words inspire confidence in the hearers as Jesus reminds his 'little flock' that there is no need for fear because the kingdom of God has been given. So if the disciples are not to fear, what should they do? Jesus answers this question in a most challenging way by telling them to think differently about the world and their place in it. They should not be concerned about wealth or the exercise of power; rather they should busy themselves doing what the Lord asks of them. Jesus puts it to his disciples very sternly - much has been given to you, so much will be expected from you.

**This is not to inspire fear
but to inspire reflection on how gifted we truly are.**

SEAN GOAN – *Let the Reader Understand, Year C*

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

This passage is a continuation of Luke's reflections on possessions and discipleship, already noted on the previous Sunday as an important theme for this Gospel. It is really in four parts:

vv. 32-34: counsel on possession, with the image of a thief, in a wisdom key.

vv. 35-38: the household imagery is supplemented by nuptial imagery.

vv. 39-40: the thief imagery returns in an explicitly apocalyptic key.

vv. 41-48: the imagery of keeping watch is developed with a question.

Thought for the day

It is alarming to think that “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” To find out where my treasure is I need to look not at what I think but at what I do. How do I choose to spend my time? Where does my best concentration go? What “things” in life provide me with the greatest challenge and the greatest fulfilment? When am I most truly myself?

Even more, to know myself spiritually, introspection is only a limited guide. What I really need to do is to take account of how I act. What about the last week, for example? What does that tell me about myself?

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POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The opening verses of this gospel invite us to ask ourselves what do we see as our purpose in life? What are our priorities? Is our heart set on material progress and advance, or do we have other priorities? What has helped you to appreciate that there is more to your life than earthly possessions and success?
2. At times one can sense in Jesus an urgency, as if he wanted to shake people and wake them up to take his words seriously. The parable has that tone: “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit”. When have you found that being alert enabled you to grasp a moment of opportunity that you might easily have missed, e.g., when a child or friend gave a hint that they would like to talk and a very meaningful conversation ensued.
3. Another consideration that adds to the sense of urgency in the words of Jesus is that we only have one life, and we do not know how long that will last. So Jesus calls us on us to live in the now and to treasure our time. Sometimes we can drift aimlessly through a day, and on other occasions use a day purposefully. What difference does that make, if any, to how you experience the day?

JOHN BYRNE OSA -*Intercom*

Jesus regularly emphasises the importance of waiting. The sort of waiting he has in mind, however, does not mean sitting around until something happens - it means 'active waiting', and there is an art to it. In this digital age, we have endless options for entertainment. We can seldom claim to be bored or idle. But are we living present, vigilant lives? Are we giving our full care and attention to those we live with and their needs? Are we awake to God's presence in the vibrancy of life around us, in all creation.

Look back over the past week? Where was God present for you? Ask for the grace to be more alert to God's presence in the coming week. **TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLET – Go Deeper**