

Devotion: August 27, 2020

Luke 12:32-40

³² “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ 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. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵ “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. ³⁷ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. ³⁸ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. ³⁹ But understand 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, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

A few years back, singer and songwriter Curtis Mayfield passed away. At the height of the Civil Rights struggle back in the 60's Curtis Mayfield, was the lead singer of the Motown group The Impressions. And during that time he wrote some memorable lyrics. One song he wrote, *People Get Ready* sounds very much like it was written for our Gospel lesson: Listen to the Chorus: *People get ready--There's a train, a comin'--You don't need no baggage You just get on board. All you need is faith--To hear the diesels hummin'--Don't need no ticket, You just thank the Lord.*

Those of us who grew up in the chaos of the 60's, know that our nation was in a state of confusion and turmoil during that era. From the Cold War to Viet Nam, from the assassination of President Kennedy to Martin Luther King. There were many reasons to be afraid during that decade. But Mayfield, like many others, understood that something great was on the horizon.

Mayfield could hear it like the distant hummin' of a diesel engine. And where we're going, You don't need no baggage; all you need is faith; don't need no ticket; you just get on board.

For all the words that we use to describe Christian behavior there is none better than servant. And we can find this out if we dig a little deeper into this passage. Jesus says that the master has left to go to a wedding banquet and there is no way for the servants of that master to know when he will return.

Most of our lives are spent worrying about tomorrow, and how much we will need. But what would happen to us if we suddenly sold everything we owned and gave it to the poor as Jesus recommends? I am convinced that if I sold everything I have, I would have a different view of

my BASIC needs, and the needs of others, and I would come to depend on God, truly depend on him, to get by one day at a time.

Now, let me say this, because Jesus is telling us some rough things here. I don't think that God is asking you to sell everything you have and give it to the poor. --Let me share with you one of the struggles I have as a pastor. As I read scripture I come upon these very difficult sayings, "*Sell all you have and give it to the poor.*" And, then measure MY life against that standard, I would have to say that I have come up woefully short. And I would suspect that measuring ANY of our lives against that standard, we will all come up short.

I don't think any of us here this morning could fulfill this command. But I don't think that this is the standard for ALL Christians. I think it is a standard for certain disciples. Because God DOES ask certain people to sell everything because they have been called into the mission field. I am sure that God asks certain people to do this even today. But I don't find Jesus making this a standard with EVERYONE he meets.

Jesus is telling us that God's blessings give us the chance to respond to our human tendency to be afraid, by challenging us to let go of our possessions. Jesus calls his followers to place their confidence in the imperishable things of heaven, rather than the moth-eaten, rusty things in their own backyards.

This passage challenges us with a simple test: "Do we want to live lives of taking, or do we want to live lives of giving?" The answer we give reveals the truth of our hearts and opens or closes us to the blessings God is prepared to give.

The fact is, according to Gospel, the less we want to have, the less we need to have. This fact is in itself one of the blessings God offers, with compound interest. Because the less we need to have, the less we need to fear. The less we need to fear, the more we know that a life of giving allows us to live, not on the brink of destruction and punishment or scarcity, but on the brink of blessings, where we can hear clearly the promise that the "*Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.*" Coming not to punish,--- but to bless.

So People we need to get ready---There's a train, a comin'----You don't need no baggage---You just get on board----All you need is faith---To hear the diesels hummin'---Don't need no ticket,---
-You just thank the Lord.

Let us pray:

Spirit of promise, Spirit of unity, we thank you that you are also the Spirit of renewal. Renew in the whole church the passionate desire for the coming of your Kingdom, which will unite all Christians in one mission to the world. May we all grow in Him who is our Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.