

Fear Not, Trust God

Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time - Matthew 25: 14-30

The gospel for this week moves us one week closer to the end of our current liturgical year. We've heard over the last few weeks that the gospels are pointing us toward the reality that our human condition is limited. There is no such thing as "**Peace and security**", as St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians. Paul affirms that "**sudden disaster comes upon them, like labor pains upon a pregnant woman and they will not escape.**" In this week's parable Jesus is speaking about the final judgment. Death will overtake each one of us. So the question for us this week: Am I ready?

Given the final sentence from the gospel, "**And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth**" it would be easy to succumb to fear as the way to eternal salvation. However, Jesus is making the exact opposite point. Fear has no place in the Kingdom of God. If one is a baptized Christian who is in a relationship with Jesus, one knows the responsibilities of that relationship. We are called to take the God-given "talents" given to us to build up and grow the Kingdom. There is no excuse. There is no place for fear in the life of a Christian disciple.

This is much easier said than done. Fear is the number one enemy these days. It is the core stimulus for violence in the world. It is also the core excuse for many of our failures or resistance to change, difference and lack of control. We see fear in the eyes of parents sending children off to face a very complicated world. We have seen fear propel anger and accusations on both sides of the political realm. Fear has been the dominate mindset in the reality of nuclear war. Fear is a pivotal human trait that Jesus warns against in today's gospel because fear can keep us from doing the work that God has called each of us to do for the world.

As we approach the end of this liturgical year and look toward a new journey in the life of Christ, I am suggesting that we take time to consider four very basic concepts. These include **God, Gift, Gratitude and Generosity**. The four G's as I call them. These include taking time each day to spend with **God**. Silence is the best location to come into contact with the Creator. In that time spent with God, reflect and acknowledge the many **Gifts** that God has given you. This is not to be a momentary acknowledgement but rather a time of realization, an AHA moment, in which one is overcome by what has blessed our life. In **Gratitude**, take time each day to thank God for these many gifts.

The final action is **Generosity**. This is what Jesus is calling us to this week. We are called to take the many blessings (talents) we have and grow them into something that moves the truth about Christ forward in the world. We are called to be proactive, not reactive. Fear is reactive. Trust is proactive and is a central attribute for Christian life. We are called to be Christ in this world "**each according to his/her ability.**"

Blessings!

Sue Schettler