

Luke 12:32-40

Last week we heard where you spend eternity is important. Building on that this week we hear we don't know when Jesus is returning, and we need to be ready. There is no need for us to fear the end of this earth as we know it, be it by our own death or by the second coming, that is, if we know Jesus, and Jesus knows us.

Is Jesus a friend? What makes for a good friend? Someone who shares your interests, who you get along with well, to whom you feel closely connected, understood, is there when you need them, and with whom you can trust your most intimate secrets. Once you find a friend like that you want to keep them, so you interact with them on a regular basis, although I have a couple of friends who I rarely see, but we pick up right off as soon as we see one another. To keep a friend you build a relationship, you don't do something that will push them away, when you do, and you want to continue with the friendship you work it out, you talk, you make it right. All of those can be applied to a friendship with Jesus.

You interact with Jesus on a regular basis with prayer, and you aren't the only one talking, you listen for a response, and even though you may ask for something to change you may find that you are the one to change. You get to know Jesus by reading the gospels, and you can talk with Jesus about things you don't understand in the gospels. You can talk to Jesus about anything, he understands. He's always there when you need him, and if you should find that you've done something you think he wouldn't like you ask for forgiveness, and he forgives. Another thing I have found about friends, especially the ones I don't interact with often but am able to start right up where we left off is that I truly love them. Know that Jesus truly loves you. Jesus is someone I want to spend forever with.

Jesus wants to share your Father's good pleasure with you. He wants you to spend eternity with him, and right now is a part of eternity. Jesus wants to be with you. But he doesn't want you to be overburdened. I talk a lot about having too many things, probably because I have too many things. Between pastoring and school, I haven't had time to get through all the accumulation from the past 12 years, plus there was a time when I was buying all sorts of new things without getting rid of the old, so I have a ton of things that need to be either donated or thrown out. At one point I was emotionally attached to some of these things, but that is no longer the case. I am ready to let them go.

I think that is what Jesus is saying about the unfailing treasures in heaven; don't be so attached to things on earth that you can't let them go for a better relationship with Jesus. Don't let your stuff get between you and Jesus because where your treasure is there your heart is also. Jesus is the greatest treasure we can ever know. You think you own things, but in reality, everything you own stays here when you go, so you don't own anything but the bond you have made with Jesus. That will never break, that will not be left behind. Love never dies.

When your heart is with Jesus, when you've developed a strong tie, a strong relationship with him, like those who are dressed and ready when their master returns from the wedding banquet, you will be ready when he returns. And isn't it just like Jesus to turn everything upside down? Don't you expect the servant who is waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet to be ready to help their master to unwind from his trip, to help him relax and get ready to rest for the night? But that isn't what Jesus says the master does. Jesus says the master sits his servants down at a table and feeds them.

It is reminiscent of the time the disciples sat together at a table with Jesus for the last time before his arrest. He served them, not only food, but he also served them as he washed their feet. What a humbling experience, just as Peter said he should be washing Jesus' feet, we feel as though we should be the ones who are doing the "dirty work". The ones who are serving. But in this story Jesus has reversed the role and the master is serving.

One time when I was on a retreat the schedule for Saturday said dinner, then Sunday said banquet. On Saturday the dinner was a full out turkey dinner, turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, and everything else you'd expect for a Thanksgiving dinner. I thought that the dinner was so amazing what would they serve for the banquet? Imagine my surprise when Sunday banquet time came around and it was Holy Communion. A banquet. The best that we can be offered. The lifegiving body and blood of Jesus. When Jesus returns we will be given life, not as we know it here on earth, but a perfect life filled with blessings.

Our life now is not perfect, even though blessings abound we still have hardships. There are still major catastrophes, floods, tornados, hurricanes, famine, wild fires, water shortage. There are still acts of violence, school shootings, random attacks, war. There is still loss and grief. This world will never be perfect again. Adam and Eve made sure of that when they disobeyed God in the garden. God knew the chance was there for them to disobey him so from the beginning he had the plan ready to give his own son Jesus to rescue us from our broken world. We have Jesus.

Having built a relationship with Jesus is what allows us to go through the brokenness of this world and still have the faith that God is in charge and will bring his promise of new life to fruition. Abram had this faith. He and Sarai followed where God led. And when things didn't seem to be working out the way Abram thought God said they would, he questioned God. God had promised Abram that he would have many offspring, and, only having a child from Hagar, not his true wife, he was looking for that promise. God assured him he would have offspring that outnumbered the stars. And in his righteousness Abram believed God.

We are reminded in Hebrews that Abraham never saw this promise come to fruition. He had faith: the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And God has prepared a city for those who keep the faith, those who have a strong relationship with Jesus and know he is their savior, those who lean on him to make it through the difficult times in life, those who trust that God is in control even when this world seems to be spinning out of control, and that even though we cannot know the time nor the place, we can trust that Jesus will return and the kingdom of God that we are yearning to be established will be forevermore. All glory be to God.