**8/10/25**

**Our Worth is Indeed Our Identity**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 12:32-40 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

Good morning and welcome everyone! Welcome from a busy week leading up to and preparing for a ministry event, a time of being present with folks in our respective faith communities and with folks in our very own community as we gave out backpacks yesterday. Thank you for joining us today and being willing to be fed here, and not just at coffee hour following our worship service together. Thank you for coming into this space physically or virtually to allow and even expect one another to grow in ways we can and cannot even imagine at times. Welcome yet again to our study time together where we live and desire to be in, with, and for Christ.

So, as we start to dig into the scripture that was offered to us today then we come to the realization that we live lives day in and day out that still have us craving for more, searching for more, asking for more, and even questioning at times if there actually is more. Yes, of course, we know about and we have faith, and we live in the very promise that Christ loves every single one of us deeply with the desire for us to be in the eternal kingdom here and now and forever. Yes, of course, we know that we should not fear and that we should trust, that we should not be greedy and that we should give, that we should not be clueless and that we should be alert. We should not be so silly to think that our Triune God did not have a divine plan all along. This is our reminder that we should be living in faith and hope and even reassurance of what is, what was, and what is yet to come.

So, in my mind it was my design to ask you Last Sunday several times **What’s Your Worth?** However, revisiting it and refocusing on it yet again was clearly the Spirit moving, and the Spirit’s direction this week, and let’s be honest, it was the Spirit direction last week as well. Now, I want you to know that I did not ask that question several times to be silly, or to even repeat something so many times that you would just be annoyed with it. I said that it truly was a call to a lifestyle like no other. It was a reminder that **our identity and self-worth** are way more than we ever seem to allow ourselves to imagine at times. Unfortunately, we seek temporary joy and fulfillment in a life guided only by this world, and the world out there can often confuse us or even have us losing sight of what is, what was, and what will forever be.

If we really think about it then we come to realize that a life of faith has us called into many yet one direction all the time. We are called into a life of trust knowing that we are God’s children, and we are indeed his flock. We are called into a life of service, one where we craft a good purse to hold what is ours, yet to give fully and intentionally from that very same purse. We are called to a life of readiness, one where we are to be always be alert for a God who plans to do the complete opposite in our lives and serve us instead of demanding to be served. We are called into a life of openness, one where the ultimate theft is and has already occurred through our baptism and our continued walk and exploration in faith. We come to the realization that Christ has already stolen our hearts and minds back with a desire and purpose for each and every single child to come home and be present in the eternal kingdom.

It is by no mistake that our Gospel Reading today is packed with so much imagery. It is by no mistake that it even references several other familiar points in scripture. The writer of this gospel was inspired to mix all of these very things together for you and I to ensure that we have been paying attention all along and learning in our continued faith walks. The writer of this gospel is providing reassurance that all the stories are tied together for a purpose, and that they are not just a one and done scenario.

So, you may be asking what we really have to unpack here together today. You may be asking why this scripture was chosen for each and every single one of us to review in this continued green growing season in our time together following Pentecost. You may still be trying to figure out why I posed the question to you last week of **What’s Your Worth?** or why I even brought it up again today. Good! I am glad you are thinking and questioning things. For I am always hopeful that these sermons and our time together has you moving and pondering, and not just sitting there and looking at your watches to see when I will be done. And let me tell you that if our focus and our hearts are where they are supposed to be then we will come to realize precisely what that question last week was all about, and why its reemergence this week is vital. This is also where I will share some of my studies with you and tag in one of the commentary writers that I had the privilege of reading and learning from this week so that they can help all of us here as well. Karoline Lewis summarized the entirety of our text today in this fashion… “Being without fear, knowing the source of your treasure — that is, **your identity, your worth** — makes it possible to be prepared for and (be) an actual participant in God’s kingdom.” (8) There is that word worth again! Yes, it is echoing last week, and it is echoing through today. However, the way she presented it seems so much more deep and so much more profound. So, let me repeat it yet again for all of us to hear and even allow it to sink in… “Being without fear, knowing the source of your treasure — that is, **your identity, your worth** — makes it possible to be prepared for and (be) an actual participant in God’s kingdom.” (8) Did you hear it there? Now we have unlocked something together folks! Let us remember that for sure, and let us claim that as well! **Our worth is indeed our identity.**

So, as we close things out here, as we continue to reflect how **Our worth is indeed our identity.** we come to realize that we heard a lot of key terms today in our Gospel Reading that are worth revisiting. We heard flock, purse, action, alert, serve, thief, and coming. All these key terms are weaved together in an intricate design for sure. Let’s review those terms one final time together before we move on. Our worth is defined by being in and of Christ’s flock, for we have been designed and are continually called by our Shepherd. Our worth is defined by not what we have in our purse, but what we are willing to give. Our worth is defined by the very action we are willing to take, and not what we are saving or protecting. Our worth is defined by always being alert, by being ready for a God who is always pursuing us and our neighbor. Our worth is defined by us being willing to serve, yet being willing to be served by a God who loves us so much. Our worth is defined by us allowing Christ to come in, and allowing God to steal our hearts and minds back time and time again.

We are God’s hands and feet in this world. We are to act like Christ day in and day out. We are not only to define and figure out our worth, but to figure out our identity, and to help others do the very same thing. So, my question to all of you here today, and my question I want you to even share with other people comes from yet another commentary writer that I was able to read from and study from this week. E. Trey Clark put this rather simple yet complex question out there… “How might we be receptive rather than resistant to Jesus’ coming into our life as we grow as vigilant disciples?” (4) This is a call to consider why Christ is continually breaking into our lives and stealing us back to him time and time again. It is a blessing, and it is a challenge for our continued growth for, with, and alongside of one another. So, think about this question as we continue on with our worship service today, take it to the tables at coffee hour, take it to your neighbors out there in the community, take it to your home for those that could not be here today, and most importantly take it home for yourself to ponder more deeply and intentionally. That question yet again is… “How might we be receptive rather than resistant to Jesus’ coming into our life as we grow as vigilant disciples?” (4) With this, and all that we have discussed and explored together here today, and even last week, let us come into the very reality that **Our worth is indeed our identity.** Let’s go out and claim it, and more importantly, offer it to others as well.

**Amen****.**

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 August 10th, 2025

 9th Sunday after Pentecost

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

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 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

 What practices can help us stay spiritually alert amid the many distractions around

 us?

 August 10, 2025

 Commentary on Luke 12:32-40

 E. Trey Clark

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

 We expect the gospels, perhaps Luke especially, to reassure us that we find security

 in Jesus Christ.

 August 11, 2019

 Commentary on Luke 12:32-40

 Matt Skinner

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

 When is the last time they lived unafraid?

 August 7, 2022

 Commentary on Luke 12:32-40

 Jerusha Matsen Neal

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

 While recently watching Grantchester, a murder mystery set in 1950s England with

 an Anglican priest as the main character, I was struck by the simplicity of life at that

 time: no internet, no cell phone, little television, and very few possessions.

 August 7, 2016

 Commentary on Luke 12:32-40

 Erick J. Thompson

(8) WorkingPreacher.org

 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

 We are well into the section of Luke known as the “travel narrative” where Jesus has

 set his sights on Jerusalem and spends about ten chapters getting there.

 August 11, 2013

 Commentary on Luke 12:32-40

 Karoline Lewis

(9) WorkingPreacher.org

 Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

 Every once in a while, I am tempted to add a verse or two at the beginning or end of

 the lectionary reading to fill out its literary context.

 August 8, 2010

 Commentary on Luke 12:32-40

 David Lose

(10) 8/7/22

 Jester, Lamps, & Readiness

 Luke 12:32-40

 Vincent Piekarski

**Luke 12:32-40 (NRSVUE)**

 Jesus encourages disciples to invest their hearts and live fully into God’s reign.

 Instead of facing life with fear, those who know God’s generosity are always

 ready to receive from God and to give to others.

 [Jesus said:] 32 “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.

 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.

 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 hour you do not expect.”