

Homily Pentecost 9, 10 August 2025

Luke 12:32-40

We take up this week where we left off last week with Jesus speaking to the crowds concerning the love of God and the way to eternal life - a life that is both lived and prepared for here and now - and which extends – with greater blessings than we can imagine -- into the next life.

How often do we think about the next life? Last week Jesus reminded the people of how close that life is to us with a parable about a rich man who was intent on building new and bigger barns so that he can store even more wealth and enjoy it in ease for years to come - who suddenly died - his wealth unspent and he himself totally unprepared to meet God. Jesus said at the conclusion of that story: "So it is for those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God."

This week's reading begins with the words: "Be not afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 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. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Sell your possessions. Give alms to the poor. Make purses that do not wear out. Be rich towards God....Be not afraid, for it is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom...

How many of you have made up a last will and testament? It is a good thing to do in terms of the ways of the world - it is a smart thing to do; by it you go a long way towards seeing that your wishes are carried out; and just as importantly - by it you normally help your

family members avoid the temptations that any unspecified inheritance generally causes a family. It helps the family both materially and spiritually.

A last will and testament sees, of course, to the distribution of your worldly possession - be they many or be they few. It is a thing of foresight and planning for the future. It helps to shape what will happen in your family - and perhaps even in your community for some time to come.

But what if your soul, like that of the rich fool, in last week's parable, is suddenly required of you, or what, as Jesus speaks of latter in today's reading, the Master, the Lord, suddenly returns, if the Son of Man not only comes at an unexpected hour - but comes right now. Do you have a last will and testament that applies towards God? Do you have a plan for eternity. Have you been rich towards God and saved a treasure in heaven?

The other day I overheard a group of people talking about lottery tickets. They agreed that if they ever won the big one they could afford to be generous. Lots of people think about the "Kingdom of God" that way. Once they have it, they can afford to spread good will and random acts of kindness. But that is not how it works. And it never has been.

The kingdom comes in the giving. The gates at the entrance to the way of life open when you are prepared to let your life go, when you are prepared to trust the God who created life in the first place, when, like the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, you are content to let God feed and cloth you.

Be not afraid, says Jesus, for it is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom... Be not afraid, and make for yourselves purses that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven.

How many of you here carry purses? Interesting things purses. As a man I always marvel at them; how so many things can be crammed into them; how they can look so small and weigh so much; how a person can laden themselves down with so much stuff that at first glance seems useless - but often turns out to be needed the very next day...

In the mid-east at the time of Christ - just about everyone carried a purse with various useful things in it including of course money. Jesus tells us that it would be good for us to make for ourselves spiritual purses - with spiritually useful things in them - and especially with treasures that will not fail in heaven - but continue to provide for us the things we need--unfailing treasure in heaven.

What is this unfailing treasure? How do we make and accumulate a purse full of it? It is in giving away God's blessings - here and now. It is in living as Christ lived, here and now.

Treasures in heaven are those things we give away here on earth. The kingdom comes in the giving--which means you will never have treasure in heaven, and you will not be as glad to see the coming of the kingdom as you might be, if you wait until you have enough of whatever it is you think you don't have enough of before you spread good will and engage in random acts of kindness.

How hard it is sometimes to give from what we have today - and to trust God to look after us tomorrow. How easy it is for us to give to those who can give back to us -- but how hard it is for us to give to those we think will not give back.

We keep waiting for more money before we do that nice thing we would like to do. We keep waiting for more time before we do that special something with somebody that we have been planning to do some day. We keep waiting till we have learned more before we give to a project or fundraising initiative. We keep waiting for the right time, the right person, the right circumstance, rather than risking with what we have, and with who we have before us, right now.

Make for yourself purses that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven.

With what we do, with what we think, with what we pray, ultimately, even what we feel, makes our purse - and helps to establish the unfailing treasure we shall enjoy in heaven and here on earth. Remember - the kingdom begins here when we live as if it was coming to us soon, when we live as if it was already here.

So, don't wait to forgive. Don't wait to visit the sick. Don't wait to give alms. Don't wait to begin that special project that God is gifting you for. Don't wait to start thinking better about other people. Don't wait before you adjust your attitude about life. But believe Christ, trust God, and do what the Spirit urges you to do.