

8/10/25
9th Sunday after Pentecost
For Group Meetings from August 3rd – August 9th

OUR MISSION: As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, you sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your church. Open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may be ready to receive you wherever you appear, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER

Share: How did last week's scripture (Luke 12:13-21) work in your life this week?

Mission:

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

Hear: Luke 12:32-40

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What does Jesus call his followers in verse 32, and how does he describe God's attitude toward them?
2. What does it mean for the disciples to be "ready" according to this text?
3. How does Jesus describe the joys and blessings that will be experienced by those that are ready for his return?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What would it look like in your life to live with "your lamps burning"?
2. What is one step you could take this week to loosen your grip on material things and become more openhanded?
3. In what area of your life are you still trying to be in control rather than trusting God?

Memorize this verse: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) What would you love to try if you knew you couldn't fail?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Meditate on Psalm 33:12-22. How does this speak into your life?

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

Jesus' words "Do not be afraid, little flock," can seem like a tall order. We only have to glance at our own lives or scan the headlines to find plenty of reasons to be anxious. And then come the commands. Sell your possessions. Give alms. Store your treasure in heaven. Be dressed for action. Beyond not understanding exactly what each of those means practically, these, too, can be overwhelming, to the point of wanting to ignore this passage altogether.

But the phrase that helps make sense of this passage is the line stuck right in the middle of the opening sentence: "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Except that it's not just a line, it's a promise. And one incredibly mind-boggling one at that. God wants to give us the kingdom. God wants and works for all good things for us. Two elements of this promise stuck out to me. First, it's God's good pleasure. That is, God takes delight in giving God's children good things. Any parent or grandparent or aunt or uncle – anyone who's bought a special gift for someone they love – understands this intuitively. There is nothing better than doing a kindness for, giving a gift to, or taking care of someone you love. What's amazing is that this is what God is like. Not a rule-enforcer or distant monarch, but a loving parent who delights in giving gifts.

Second, God gives the kingdom. We don't earn it. Can't, in fact. We can only receive it as a gift. And that changes the rest of what we hear. If our inclusion in the kingdom is by gift and invitation – and it is, in fact, God's good pleasure to give us this gift – then what follows aren't conditions, but the invitation to set our priorities in line with what we've already been given. In other words, we're invited to live into the identity and reality we've been given. When we realize it's God's good pleasure to care for us, love us, take care of us, and give us all good things – even God's own kingdom – then it's a lot easier to give rather than hoard, live from a sense of courage rather than fear, operate out of a sense of abundance rather than scarcity, allow ourselves to be seen rather than presenting only what we think is acceptable, and so on. Promises, in other words, create a sense of freedom.

So maybe we can invite each other to name the fears we're holding right now. And rather than expecting those fears to disappear into thin air, we can commit to walking with each other. Praying for each other as we name and wrestle with our fears, praying together about the frightening realities in our world, and from a place of freedom and courage, working together to respond. Because if it's true, as Jesus says, that God wants to give us the kingdom, then why not? Why not acknowledge our fears? Why not name them, and begin to loosen their grip? Why not step boldly into the challenges of our time? Why not risk ourselves in love and take a stand for the people who matter most? Why not show up — awake, ready, and willing?

Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

Traditional version:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us
from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Contemporary version:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen