

PROPER 14 C

Luke 12:32-40

God's Treasures

Be ready, fear not!

So often in the scriptures, we hear God's message, ***“Do not be afraid.”***

We hear it again and again, from God's intercessory angels,
from Jesus during his ministry, and from the risen Lord,
we receive these consoling words, ***“Fear not.”***

We seem to learn early in life that there is much to be feared,
but God clearly has compassion for our anxiety and worry,
our moments of terror and seeks to soothe us.

Jesus begins with these words ***“Do not be afraid,”*** today, for good reason,
because he then asks his disciples to be ready to give up everything:
possessions, money, and all modes of security.

Sell your belongings and give the money away.

Be dressed for action and be ready for the one
who is coming like a thief in the night.

Such mandates don't usually put one's mind at ease.

Jesus describes a vigilance that is akin to
putting the disciples on high alert: they must be ready for action,
they must travel light.

Any experienced travel guide will tell you that the lighter your load,
the easier your journey.

But it is also true that if we reduce the burden of the “**stuff**” we carry,
we enable ourselves to move on in life with less fear.

After all, what motivates us to go on a trip
with everything but the kitchen sink?

The Answer: We want to be prepared for every possibility,
to have a solution for every anticipated problem.

Over-packing arises from fear and uncertainty
about what the future will bring.

We are invited instead on this day to come together
with just a few needed items.:

God's word comes like a lamp casting light on the journey;
to an open and waiting spirit;
and a readiness for the unexpected coming of Jesus into our midst.

These are the treasures that we can set our hearts on.

God will provide whatever else is needed – a loaf of bread,
a cup to share, some water – ***so fear not!***

For those of us who live in this land of remarkable abundance,
in a culture of consumers, the words of Jesus in today's gospel reading
may sound simply antiquated or hopelessly out of touch.

Sell your possessions. Give alms?

Thereby gather a treasure in heaven?

Oh my, we may think, this is utterly impractical.

Perhaps it was possible for Jesus,

after all, He was the Son of God in human flesh
and did not have to care for a spouse and children,
maintain a home or plan for retirement.

How can we ordinary people take seriously his admonition?

But look again at what he says:

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

What is his point?

The things to which people devote their energy and time
indicate what they value most in life.

The things or persons we value most

become our ultimate concerns, **our treasure.**

And where our treasure is, there our hearts will follow.

We confess every week that Jesus reveals God's heart.

A life centered on God will be attentive to those

who are of great value in the eyes of Jesus:

the poor., the sick, the homeless, the hungry,

and all those who may think that God is at a distance.

It may not be difficult for us to imagine

that the word and sacraments are the treasure God gives us in Christ.

Before we can even ask for them,

God has already come to us with the living Word and Supper.

Nothing encumbers God from caring for his children,

even to the point of sending the Son

who poured out his life in service to a needy world.

Might we imagine, then,

that Jesus is inviting us in this Gospel and his Supper,

to pour out our lives in thankful service to our troubled world?

Then, we might ask ourselves,

from what do we need to be freed of

in order to continue in that kind of ministry of Jesus?

May we ponder this in our hearts and fear not! Amen.