

The Best Is Yet To Come

Texts: Genesis 29:15-28

Romans 8:26-39 (Series A, 8th Sunday after Pentecost) Ps. 105:1-11, 45

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Let us pray: Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of your Word. Instill in us also reverence for your sacred writings, so that having experienced your love and grace, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to you. For You, Christ our God, are the light of our souls and bodies, and to you we give glory together with your Father who is without beginning and your all holy, good, and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Over the last three weeks we have heard Matthew retell a series of the parables of Jesus. This Sunday we end this series – with five of those parables.

When Sheena our first daughter was little child, I remember her having a favourite blanket that she carried around. And when she got older, she still kept it on her bed. There was something very comforting about that old blanket. Regardless of our ages, we too still hold on to our security blankets. We need something to anchor our lives, to give us stability and security such as:

- Family
- A familiar routine we follow every day
- Bank accounts, investments, pension programs
- Good health and physical fitness
- Lots of friends...

There are all sorts of grown-up security blankets that we hold on to for dear life, to give us a sense of stability and certainty and comfort in an ever changing and often dangerous and threatening world. We spend a lot of time, money, and energy trying to find some anchor, some foundation, for our lives. We keep trying to control our own fortunes and our won destiny. We keep trying to play God by trying to make the world work the way we think it should.

But sooner or later we discover, sometimes tragically, that the ultimate answers in life, the security and safety we long for, simply cannot be found in the things we cling to.

The answer to life is beyond us, beyond anything in this world we hold on to. We build our Kingdoms on earth where, Jesus warns, things rust, or thieves steal, where flowers fade and moths eat through. *'Seek Ye first the Kingdom of God - and God's Goodness - God's Right Way.....* and then the good life, the truly good life, will come our way. And it's not a life of having things go our way all the time. But having things going the right way. God's way.

That's a hard lesson to learn. I want things to go perfectly - don't you? But what is happiness? Sometimes, I want to put my happiness in possessions or achievements. Perhaps you do, too. But happiness, true joy, is found in what cannot be **possessed** but only **received**. And that joy is what comes from above.

St. Augustine in 387 AD said: *'The thought of You stirs him so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises You, because You made us for yourself and our heart finds no peace until they rest in You.'*

Why do we have so many desires, and yet remain so unsatisfied? We all want to live a happy, fulfilled, and satisfied life. To obtain this we try things like: wealth, entertainment, alcohol, love, career, spirituality, and many other things.

But, with all this we feel empty and unsatisfied. Why? Well, 800 yrs. BC., a prophet by the name of Isaiah wrote: *"Why spend money on what is not bread and your labour on what does not satisfy?"* (Isa. 55:2) A good question, isn't it?

Thomas Aquinas, a 13th century philosopher once said: ***"There is within every soul a thirst for happiness and meaning." But do we ever find it?"***

Almost 3000 years later we still spend our resources on what does not ultimately satisfy us. Jesus came to deal with the heart of the human problem-which is the problem of the human heart. Jesus said: *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the fullest."*

The Kingdom of Heaven, said Jesus, is like a man who came across a treasure hidden in a field. He was so happy that he went and sold everything he had and bought that field. The field came at a great cost, but the man knew what was beyond.

Jesus told a story about a pearl buyer who found a special pearl of great value. So, he sold all that he had and bought the one perfect gem. That was a good business proposition. The man wanted what was the best - everything else paled in significance.

Another parable about the Kingdom, Jesus told. The fishing boat went out on the lake. And all sorts of fish were caught; everything was pulled in. Both the good, and the bad. They did the sorting. And they kept the best.

Here the issue seems to be about collecting valuable things. You and I probably don't come across treasures in fields, or collect pearls, or go out on a fishing boat. Jesus' audience were, perhaps, in better position to understand them. But the parables are simple **truths** about God and his Kingdom, about Christ and his **Love**. Perhaps in order to understand them we can hear this modern-day version, if we may:

The Kingdom of heaven is like a boy who went fishing. He caught several nice fish and thought he had a good catch. Then he caught one big fish. So he threw all the small fish back in the lake and ran home to show everyone the one big fish. It's a good story with a good ending. But don't forget that it started by saying "The Kingdom of Heaven is like..."

That story is like our being in the Kingdom of Heaven, because we, like the boy with the five fish, have many nice things happen to us. We often complain and gripe about what we don't have. We forget what we've got. And we fail to appreciate our blessings. Example: during this difficult moment in the history of humanity Covid-19 pandemic, we are reminded by God of his love for us and the assurance that God is with us ... alleluia.

Perhaps we can think of many other good things that have happened to us. All of those good things make us happy. But something much greater has happened to us. God has sent His Son to be our Saviour. He's the big fish! God loves us so much that He asked Jesus to live with us and show us a new way to live.

One message here is that there is no perfection in humanity but in choosing well, our smallest efforts can grow and yield a large return. We are to remember that God is always present even if that discovery sometimes requires some digging on our part. Paul tells us that to be separated from the love of God through Jesus, even with all of our faults, is nearly impossible. After all, *If God is for us, who can be against us? Only ourselves!* And the choice to be separated would have to be our own.

The Spirit of God, if we open ourselves in faith, is the yeast that expands our understanding, our relationship, and the willingness to seek God's purpose in all that we do. The love of Christ is what blends us all, as Christ's own, together, and God gathers the yield of all the harvest. Some days in God's Creation are better than others yet God is the constant that draws us. All we have to do is choose what's in our basket: a great pearl or bad fish?

Our faith in Jesus is like this one big fish. It makes us forget the other blessings in life. Or at least it lets us put them into their proper perspective. Knowing Jesus becomes the most important part of our life. We want to tell others about Him. We want to tell what He has done for us.

Yes, the Kingdom of heaven is like this one big fish. And it's the fish that doesn't get away! All other things in life, pale in significance when measured up to Jesus. And this is true joy! This is true living! This is the Kingdom!

'Seek Ye First the Kingdom' the words of Jesus ring truth in my ears time and time again 'Seek Ye First the Kingdom!' And everything else will be added to it.

What is the chief end of humanity? The Catechism asks. Our chief end is simply this -- To glorify God and to enjoy God forever? When we learn this simple lesson of faith -- This simple truth for life -- it reduces the anxieties that we have, or the pains and ills that we experience.

The other gifts in our life are good gifts. Let us not discount them. Because they also come from God. Whether it be that new house, promotion, friend, or relationship. But remember, the gift of Jesus Christ is the greatest gift of all.

Knowing Him as our Saviour is the gift that will last forever! For it is not what we take when we leave this world behind, rather it is what we leave behind when we go. And that for me is *Faith*, is what the Kingdom is all about! That for me, is true living. That for me, is true joy! That for me, is true satisfaction!

For the Best is yet to Come. Amen.

My sisters and brothers in Christ, we are once again call upon to pray, to encourage and call one another in the household of faith and ALL nurses, doctors, truck drivers, all essential workers etc. I would like to take this opportunity to say many THANKS to all members and friends of St. Ansgar's for generous continue support during this Covid-19 pandemic. Have a blessed week.

Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:

- How Great Thou Art # 856
- Take My Life, That I may Be # 685
- Great Is Thy Faithfulness # 733

**Happy birthday and Happy belated birthday to all individual celebrating in
July 2020**

July 26, 2020