

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 14

Year C RCL

August 7, 2022

Genesis 15:1-6; Psalm 33:12-22

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

" It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

By: The Rev. Dr. Fabian Villalobos

"Do not be afraid" is a way in which Jesus shows how much he knows our human limitations and our fears. When he says, "Do not be afraid", he calls us to recognize and evaluate everything in which we have no control, and to understand what we should or can control. The fear that is positive awareness that we must have for God as being superior to us that we must respect and revere; is different from fear as a negative feeling that manifests itself in distrust, uncertainty, anguish over any real or imaginary situation that provokes normally an irrational reaction to the inability or manage one's own emotions.

"Do not be afraid" in the Gospel of Saint Luke is the preamble of something that teaches us of what God is going to do; the wonderful intervention of God that

reassures man about who is in control. It is always fundamental, important, and necessary, to listen to and remember these words of the gospel "Do not be afraid", because indisputably as human beings and as Christians, we continually face situations that threaten our peace and tranquility. The fears on the Christian journey can be caused by ignorance and lack of trust in God. We are afraid because we lack faith. Logically, if we know God and we are in communion with him, in the obstacles or adversities of life we walk safely hand in hand with him. "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing... Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. " Psalm 23:1,4. Walking in faith was the experience of Saint Paul and that is why he tells us in the letter to the Romans. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

"Do not be afraid" on the teachings of Jesus is the introduction to why we should be calm. "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This statement in today's gospel clearly confirms what the will of the Father God is: He generously, kindly, selflessly, and lovingly shares his kingdom with us. No one can pay for the kingdom; this is an initiative and decision of the Father to make us participants and heirs. Perhaps for this reason Jesus included this

request in the Our Father prayer "Thy kingdom come" because Jesus knew that giving the kingdom is a wish of the Father.

If God wants to give us his kingdom, then we must be free and willing to receive it. We have to understand that everything we have comes to us as a gift, a gift from God, logically the first gift is life, then comes faith, the gift of being sons and daughters of God in baptism, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And every little or big thing that we receive from God every day. It is important to recognize how much we have, most of us live in abundance and do not always recognize it. We often live in fear, and with fear; we are like blind people who only see scarcity and needs. Instead with faith everything looks different and what we have is always enough, with faith we walk with God and there is always abundance.

When Jesus invites us to sell our possessions and share with the needy, or to accumulate treasures in heaven, he calls us to reorganize our attachments to things. The priority for the Christian must be the freedom to receive the kingdom. As the Gospel of Saint Matthew says, " But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Mt 6:33. Although material things are necessary- the house, the car, the luxuries, the furniture, the money, etc., none of these things define what a person is before

God. That is why Jesus adds, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Indicating that material priorities cannot captivate or enslave our hearts. This teaching of the gospel is difficult for many who today live according to their things, their success, their work, their accounts, their possessions, etc. Contrary to what the Father God wants to "give his kingdom" to everyone; these slaves of things, are attached to their possessions and want to accumulate more every day because their hearts are in wealth. They do not have time for God or for others because they live in function of accumulating and possessing.

Jesus' call to review priorities is indicating that we must live free from material ties and always prepared for his return. Today's gospel expressions: "Be dressed for action", "have your lamps lit", slaves "waiting for their master", and those he "finds alert when he comes" refers to an attitude of vigilance and expectation that should characterize the Christian. We live in the present, always ready to meet Jesus who comes at the least expected hour. This is the strength of our faith, and we understand why we should not be afraid but trust in God. Our vocation- our call is to receive and enjoy the kingdom that the Father wants to give us and for this, we must always be ready. Amen.