

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 13

Year C RCL

July 31, 2022

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23; Psalm 49:1-11

Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

"One's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

By: The Rev. Dr. Fabian Villalobos

"I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind."

Today's readings remind us of the necessity of living our time with wisdom and purpose. Human life has always had two sides- the wise and the foolish; and it is essential to understand where and how to be wise, since as the first lesson mentions- all is vanity. Everything will pass- all things, all our efforts or dreams or disappointments, all we possess, and all we do will pass, and our own life will pass without fruits if we do not work intentionally to find purpose.

President Jimmy Carter in a speech mentioned our confusion of meaning and lack of purpose:

“Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We've learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.”¹

To do our own will or possess things, is different from being what God has created us to be; often we want to overturn and invert the meaning and reality of life, and we fool ourselves thinking that we humans control life, that we understand better than the Creator. Paul in the second lesson says that our last reality, our only meaning in life is to be in communion with God through Jesus, to work for things that are above, to learn to be wise understanding that all in life is vanity if we are without God.

“If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”

¹ Jimmy Carter, Crisis of Confidence, a televised speech on July 15, 1979.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/carter-crisis/>.

Seeking the things of God, setting our minds on things above is ultimately our highest call and human vocation. The gift of time we received from God is to use it for the purpose of learning to transform ourselves in the children that God has created us to be, not in what we want to become for ourselves.

The greedy man in the parable of the Gospel is called “fool” because he has no idea of what he did with his life. He was not looking for things above, but was looking only after himself.

“What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?” Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’

Building larger barns, storing grains and goods, is not the solution for our meaning of life. This rich person has lost the sense of his stewardship and sense of belonging to God. All the things he possesses are not his own- everything belongs to God. When he mentions about his crops, he is forgetting that the land produces out of the abundance from God to meet the needs of all the people who live in it- not only to satisfy the desires of those who are managing the land.

Larger barns are typically for our society to store and try to control times, fearful about tomorrow and keeping for ourselves, always thinking in the

future, always planning, and preparing for tomorrow. Out of the abundance of the blessings we receive, as this rich fool reminds us instead of sharing with others, we choose to build larger barns and to store more thinking only in ourselves.

This person of the Gospel is thinking in short term, he imagines he is preparing for years to come; instead, *God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you."*

Life, the very precious gift we received from God, belongs to God. Nothing of what we do or possess can change of the sacred moment when God demands our life. So, our work here and now, is to be wise and to use time wisely; our time as a gift of life to learn about God and to be rich in things that are about God.

Yes, is important to plan and prepare for the future, but is more important to first understand that our future is in God's hands, our entire life is in God's mercy. The abundance or the scarcity of our crops is to share with others, to be sensitive to their needs, to care for the poor. The land produces for all; and we are stewards of our own lives and of the things that God bestows upon us. So, let us apply ourselves to become in Christ- all to all, to enjoy our lives with

prudence and wisdom knowing that God will ask us one day, not how big is our barn or bank account, but how much we love and care for others. Amen.