

EXPECTANT TRUST / DO NOT BE AFRAID

PENTECOST 11 SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, 2010 GENESIS 15:1-6

PSALM 33:12-22 HEBREWS 11:1-3, 8-16 LUKE 12:32-40

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE
FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

AMEN.

OUR CHURCH YEAR IS PRETTY MUCH SPLIT INTO TWO PARTS. FROM THE
BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH YEAR IN DECEMBER UNTIL PENTECOST
SUNDAY IN LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE, OUR THOUGHTS ARE CENTERED
AROUND “WHO IS JESUS?” AND THEN FROM PENTECOST SUNDAY UNTIL
CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER THE QUESTION ASKED IS “AND
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS?”

SO WE SPEND THIS TIME OF THE YEAR LISTENING TO WHAT HE HAS
TO TEACH US AS FOLLOWERS OF HIM? TODAY IN OUR GOSPEL, ONE OF
THE LINES JESUS SPEAKS IS **“SELL YOUR POSSESSIONS AND GIVE ALMS.”**
ALONG WITH OTHER THOUGHTS WE MIGHT HAVE ABOUT THAT, WE
MIGHT WANT TO ASK THE QUESTION (NOT IN OUR READING TODAY)
PETER ASKS JESUS AFTER HE HAS SAID THIS:

“LORD ARE YOU SPEAKING THIS TO US, OR TO EVERYONE?”

LUKE 12:41

SO I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A QUESTION THIS MORNING:

WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET? THE QUESTION MIGHT REMIND YOU OF A TV
COMMERICAL: **WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET?**

IN LIGHT OF JESUS' WORDS TO US THIS MORNING, WOULD YOU PUT YOUR WALLET OR YOUR PURSE IN THE OFFERING PLATE THIS MORNING? WE ARE AROUND \$15,000 BEHIND IN OUR INCOME VERSUS EXPENSES. WE HAVE USED UP HALF OF OUR SAVINGS THIS SUMMER AND ARE NOW BORROWING MONEY FROM SPECIAL FUNDS JUST TO PAY NECESSARY BILLS AND SALARIES. WHILE THE ABOVE IS TRUE, THIS MIGHT MAKE YOU FEEL SAD, DISTURBED, GUILTY, ANGRY, ETC. AND IT'S NOT WHAT YOU CAME TO WORSHIP TO HEAR. LIKE WE DO WITH OUR COMPUTER'S WHEN THEY LOCK UP. LET'S REBOOT. LET'S RESTART. WOULD YOU GIVE ME A MULLIGAN? A DO OVER? WE GET DIVINE MULLIGANS EVERYDAY YOU KNOW.

BUT LET ME ASK AGAIN "WHAT IS IN YOUR WALLET?"

SCARY MOMENT THIS LAST WEEK.

EARLY TUESDAY MORNING I DISCOVERED THAT MY PICKUP WAS BROKEN INTO? MISSING - BILLFOLD & CHECKBOOK STARTED KICKING MYSELF, GOT HOME LATE, WAS TIRED, COMPANY WAS COMING, HAD WANTED TO GET GAS FOR THE LAWNMOWER AND THE PICKUP BUT DIDN'T HAVE TIME SO WOULD HAVE TO PUT IT OFF UNTIL LATER. SO I LEFT THE PICKUP UNLOCKED AND WHEN THE COMPANY LEFT I FORGOT ALL ABOUT GOING TO THE GAS STATION AND I WENT TO BED. GOT UP TUESDAY MORNING AND COULDN'T FIND MY BILLFOLD.

I FRANTICALLY SEARCHED THE HOUSE AGAIN, AND THE PICKUP AGAIN. FINALLY GAVE IT UP AND DECIDED I NEEDED TO CALL THE POLICE. EMBARRASSED BECAUSE THE SAME THING HAD HAPPENED TO MY NEIGHBOR ABOUT A MONTH AGO. EVERYBODY HAS BEEN TOLD TO KEEP YOUR CARS LOCKED. KEEP VALUABLES OUT OF SIGHT. SCARED TO TELL WENDY, I FINALLY TOLD HER WHAT WAS GOING ON. SOME THINGS YOU JUST CAN'T HIDE. BEFORE CALLING THE POLICE, I STARTED DOING A MENTAL INVENTORY OF WHAT WAS IN MY BILLFOLD AND HOW MUCH MONEY I HAD IN THAT CHECKING ACCOUNT.

A LITTLE MONEY, DRIVER'S LICENSE, CREDIT CARDS, DEBIT CARDS, AN OLD SLIP OF PAPER WITH SOCIAL SECURITY CARD NUMBERS ON IT, MY PUNCH CARD FOR BOTH BUBBA'S AND PERKINS, AND THEN TO TOP IT ALL OFF, MY FISHING LICENSE WAS IN MY BILLFOLD ALSO.

JUST BEFORE I WAS GOING TO CALL THE POLICE – LOOKED IN THE PAIR OF JEANS HANGING UP IN THE CLOSET THAT I HAD WORN THE DAY BEFORE AND THERE WAS MY BILLFOLD AND CHECKBOOK. YOU MIGHT THINK THAT WOULD BE OBVIOUS, BUT I DON'T CARRY MY BILLFOLD WITH ME THAT WAY.

BUT I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHAT'S IN MY WALLET? WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET? CONSIDER MY DRIVER'S LICENSE, CREDIT CARDS, DEBIT CARDS, FISHING LICENSE, THEY ALL HAVE EXPIRATION DATES DON'T THEY? AND THE MONEY DOESN'T STAY IN THERE VERY

LONG. HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW. SO WHAT IS THERE TO THINK ABOUT ALL OF THIS? WHAT IS THERE TO SAY? WHAT IS THERE TO DO?

SO MUCH OF OUR IDENTITY DEPENDS ON WHAT IS IN OUR WALLET, OUR PURSE. SO MUCH OF OUR SECURITY IS THERE. OUR FUTURE DEPENDS UPON IT. LOSING IT IS SCARY. WHAT WOULD BECOME OF US?

WELL, LET'S BACK UP JUST A LITTLE BIT. JESUS BEGINS OUR MORNING'S WORD WITH THIS, "HAVE NO FEAR LITTLE FLOCK, IT IS YOUR FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM." IT IS YOUR FATHER'S INTENTION TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM. THE FATHER'S PLAN. THE FATHER'S DELIGHT TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM. NOTHING PLEASES HIM MORE THAN FOR HIS CHILDREN TO REST IN THE THOUGHT THAT THE FUTURE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SO SCARY. HIS PROMISE IS OUR SECURITY. AND SO JESUS SAYS, "MAKE PURSES FOR YOURSELVES THAT DO NOT WEAR OUT, WHERE NO THIEF COME NEAR AND NO MOTH DESTROYS." IN OTHER WORDS, CARRY HIS PROMISE IN YOUR WALLET. PUT IT IN YOUR PURSE. "HAVE NO FEAR LITTLE FLOCK, IT IS YOUR FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM."

GOD MAKES A SIMILAR PROMISE TO ABRAHAM OF OLD THAT WE READ ABOUT IN OUR FIRST LESSON TODAY "DO NOT BE AFRAID, ABRAHAM, I AM YOUR SHIELD; YOUR REWARD SHALL BE VERY GREAT."

OF COURSE IT'S A PROMISE. BUT CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMISES IN OUR LIVES:

WEDDING VOWS, BAPTISMAL PROMISES, HOLY COMMUNION!
PROMISES CREATE A SHARED EXPECTATION ABOUT A FUTURE TOGETHER.
THEY BIND TOGETHER THE GIVERS AND THE RECEIVERS OF THE PROMISE.
WHEN YOU MAKE A PROMISE TO SOMEONE, THAT CREATES AN
ASSUMPTION, A NOTION, AN IDEA THAT THERE IS GOING TO BE A FUTURE
BETWEEN YOU AND THE ONE YOU ARE MAKING THE PROMISE TO. IT
CREATES HOPE.

THE CHALLENGE IS THAT ALL OF US HAVE LIVED WITH BROKEN
PROMISES, PROMISES MADE OR PROMISES RECEIVED. SO WE SEE WHEN
THE PROMISE IS MADE TO ABRAHAM TODAY, HE RESPONDS WITH “BUT....”
WHEN YOU HEAR THE PROMISE OF GOD GIVEN TO YOU, YOU MAY VERY
WELL DO THE SAME, “BUT.....”

SO YOU ARE GIVEN EXAMPLES IN OUR SECOND READING TODAY OF
FAITH, OF REAL BROKEN PEOPLE BELIEVING THE PROMISES OF GOD, TO
ENCOURAGE YOU IN YOUR OWN LIFE OF FAITH.

FAITH THAT IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE
CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT SEEN.

“DO NOT BE AFRAID, ABRAHAM, I AM YOUR SHIELD; YOUR REWARD
SHALL BE VERY GREAT.” ABRAHAM FOLLOWED HIS “BUT...”, HIS
WONDERING, WITH BELIEVING. HE CARRIED THE PROMISE OF GOD IN HIS
WALLET. HE MADE A PURSE FOR HIMSELF THAT WOULD NOT WEAR OUT.

IT MADE HIM GENEROUS. IT HELPED HIM FEEL MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT HIS FUTURE.

AND THE PROMISE IS TO YOU, “HAVE NO FEAR LITTLE FLOCK FOR IT IS YOUR FATHER’S GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM” IT’S FOR EVERYONE, IT’S FOR YOU. PUT IT IN YOUR WALLET. CARRY IT IN YOUR PURSE. IT WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM THERE. IT WILL GIVE YOU LESS ANXIETY ABOUT BEING GENEROUS. IT WILL GIVE YOU HOPE FOR YOUR FUTURE.

“HAVE NO FEAR LITTLE FLOCK, IT IS YOUR FATHER’S GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM.”

EVEN TODAY, YOU GET ANOTHER TASTE OF IT AS YOU COME TO THIS ALTAR RAIL WHERE YOU HEAR THE PROMISE OF THE CRUCIFIED AND RISEN JESUS, “**THIS IS MY BODY GIVEN FOR YOU. THIS IS MY BLOOD SHED FOR YOU.**” EVERY WORD OF IT PACKED WITH PROMISE – NOT FROM A PASTOR, BUT JESUS HIMSELF, THE SON OF THE FATHER, WHO HAS HIS BODY AND BLOOD TO GIVE. IT IS A FORETASTE OF A FEAST TO COME. STAY ALERT NOW BECAUSE JESUS WILL COME AGAIN TO YOU TODAY. IT IS HIS PROMISE CONCERNING YOUR FUTURE WITH ONE WHO LOVES YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE. ONE WHO GIVES YOU PERMISSION AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO PUSH THE REBOOT BUTTON, THE RESTART KEY, TO TAKE YOUR MULLIGANS OVER AND OVER AGAIN. TO ENTER INTO DIVINE DO OVERS.

DEAR BROTHES AND SISTERS IN CHRIST.

“HAVE NO FEAR LITTLE FLOCK, FOR IT IS YOUR FATHER’S GOOD
PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM.”