

Pentecost 10C 2010
Luke 12:13-21
Sermon for Advent LC
August 1st, 2010

“What Owns You?”

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Several years ago there was an interview on a cable news show. The interviewer was talking with a man, standing in front of million dollar homes and estates in California that were burning up due to a wild fire that was being pushed by the Santa Ana winds. The man, who was one of the homeowners was talking quite openly about the loss he was experiencing as his home was burning literally before his eyes. Yet he was not upset- maybe he was just in shock- but what was truly unique about the interview was his attitude about what this fire was doing to his life. He reflected on a conversation he had just had weeks before with his brother- they mused about how they, both very successful business men, living the dream needed to be careful not to let themselves become possessed by their possessions. As he looked into the camera, just having lost everything but the shirt on the back he said “Now, I am free man.”

Many years ago there was a successful farmer. The land was good for him. In fact he produced more crops than he even had room for in his barns so he decided that he should tear down the barns he had and replace them with new, bigger ones that could keep his crop for a rainy day. He thought, this way I will be set for life and I can eat, drink, and be merry forever- completely taking care of myself. So he did that, making sure that all was well with his crops, they were same and he was set for his whole life. But then God came to him and said “you fool what are all those buildings for?” The man replied, “well sir, they are to keep my crops so that I don’t have to worry any more about myself.” God said, “you poor fool, this day your very life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be for you have no one to give them to because in your efforts of storing up treasures for yourself only you have neglected to see the goodness of what I have given you.”

Two very different men from two very different situations- one a true story from modern times, the other a parable told by our Lord Jesus which comes to us loaded with the opportunity to see ourselves in that story. Now, I don’t tell those two stories in an attempt to say which one will you be and then guilt you into thinking that if you store things up and don’t share your wealth you are an evil person. Nor do I tell them hoping that you will see freedom ultimately in losing all you have. Rather, I think both of these stories represent two very different poles of how we can deal with what we have. And hopefully all of us, like-minded believers at least around the issue of God’s grace can come together to talk about where we are to be. Sure it will be different for all of us, but I gotta think we can share some wisdom together-not just today in the sermon, not even just in worship but as a community that has been called to be together, as a community that has been charged with the task of being stewards- that is care takers of what God has given us- we can help one another grow in our life of faith and be wise disciples living for the other rather than foolish, self-centered people living for only our own good. To me, that is where we need to go- to work together in

our life as Christians...in our life as followers of Christ to help one another see how we are to live. Life is hard, these days things are really hard for some of you- yet in the midst of that angst and in the midst of that life we are community, we are the Church, we are the one's that God has given each other so it is a shame if we let one another walk through this hard life alone. So what does that mean...what does Any of that mean?

Notice with me the way the foolish farmer in our Gospel speaks of his possessions and his life. He talks a lot about "I" and is concerned only with himself so it becomes clear that his greatest folly truly is his not the fact that he is wealthy but rather that he is missing so much because his concern is only for himself and his possessions. Notice also with me the way the man who lost everything feels freedom now that his possessions are gone- a sense that he had been made by what he had now can go away and he can be what he is in himself. Friends, let's face it it's hard to talk about our possessions- it's even harder to talk about money, and it's even harder to talk about those things in the midst of a recession and a terrible economy. And I struggle with what I, as preacher, am supposed to say when we are faced with those things and a Gospel which demands us to think a bit about what we do with what we have. The fact of the matter is all of us are guilty at times of not being good stewards with our life and our possessions. But don't fret we won't dwell on money- rather we will talk about something easier- your life ☺. What possess you- think about that would you and truly consider what are the things in your life that dictate your very being. For the man who lost his house it was his belongings his possessions his wealth- for the man in the Gospel it was his crops, his ego, his need to be number one and his inability to care for anyone but himself- those things trapped those men and made it impossible for them to be free by God's grace. So I ask you again to be serious with yourself- what are things that possess you, that own you that hinder you and your walk with God and your life with the community of Christ?

The job of this community and of this church and of the body of Christ is this- to help one another let go of that trap of being owned by those things- if it's material items, money, work, addiction, hate, hostility, grief, whatever....the job of the community is to help you become free. So friends I urge you take seriously the warning in the Parable today- don't let anything run your life other than the freeing words of Love which is Jesus Christ. And know that me as pastor and these people around you as church are the ones that can help you carry your load. So be honest today, as we sing as we worship- take an inventory- what owns you- what run's your life- where is your creator and redeemer in that? He's there...he's loving you...but do you see him or does something else cover him up?

God Loves You and So Do I. Amen.