

Pentecost 11C 2010
Luke 12:32-40
Sermon for Advent LC
August 8th, 2010

“Fear? Give it to Jesus”

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

Our Gospel for today brings up the idea of fear, and I gotta tell you it seems to be a perfect theme for us to think about in this time we live. It seems that not a week—maybe even a day goes by when I encounter somebody who is struggling with a fear of some kind. The word from our scripture gives us some hope and instruction in how we as Children of God are to respond to that— we’ll get there in a little bit— but to get us thinking about fear let’s begin with a few good quotes on the subject —“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance”—Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his first inaugural address. “The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.” – Nelson Mandela. “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” – Jesus Christ. Some good thinkers there with some provocative thoughts on fear— fear has the power to truly freeze our existence— to truly alter the way we live and to make it impossible to move forward in where we need to go. Fear, if we let it has the capability to alienate our relationship with our God— hence the vigor in Jesus’ assurance that we shall not be afraid, for our God has given us all we need! If it was just that simple eh? Truth is— fear exists for most of us at some time and in some place— fear takes a hold— fear of the unknown, fear of the present, fear of someone or something— and often times become a burden. But...you heard Jesus— do not be afraid.

So...what are you afraid of? What do you fear or what brings you fear in your life? I realize this is a vulnerable subject— and perhaps one you don’t feel comfortable sharing— but you know that if you can’t share it hear, how can you truly let the community carry you. This community is to be here for you, to carry you when you need, and this is a god place to start so...(Share). Great— thanks! Good stuff— fear comes in all different shapes and forms, all different things impact different people depending on their life. Yet what we can gather from the word of Christ today is this— we do not need to fear— anything. Nothing, nothing has more power than what God has granted you...nothing can counter the gift of God. But...you might be thinking what do you mean— how can you say that, how can you say that I don’t need to be afraid— you don’t understand...you’re right I don’t know all your situations, I don’t know all the details of what you face— but I do know that at the end of the day the promise of God is this— he will take your burdens, he will take your fears, he will take your very life and replace it with his life and the promise of new life. Do not be afraid little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

The Gospel for today is quite interesting in that it starts with this declaration from Jesus that we need not to fear— for we already have all we need in God and then quickly moves to these instructions from Jesus to sell possessions and give alms. As I thought

this week what possessions and alms have to do with fear it became clear to me– Jesus is setting a case for priority in this little ditty here today. Jesus is letting those disciples and us know that all you are and all you have and all you do needs to begins and ends with your Father in heaven. When your faith is there, when your trust is there, when your life is there....naturally you will be able to let go of your stuff– your possessions sure– but also your fear, your worries and your burdens. But if you aren't there– if you let other things fill that void– other things push you away from God your nature will be to grasp tighter to those things. Jesus calls us out with this statement today that we need not be afraid– he reminds us of the heart of the Lutheran Doctrine– notice he says it is the Father's good pleasure to GIVE you the kingdom—there is nothing you can do to make things right with God– it is God that gives you all you need– namely new life and the promise that you are never alone! So then, the questions become– now that you don't have to do anything, now that you don't have to fear anything for God has you–what will you do?

Now it would be absurd for me to think for a minute that all of us are at the same place in our faith– that all of us truly have no fears anymore– that these simple words from Christ have already taken effect and you all are now free of burden so we can get to work serving the Lord without any baggage– that just aint the way it is! So I say to you today– whatever you fear, whatever you hold onto, whatever you cannot let go of for one reason or another– God is bigger than that– and furthermore God demands it from you. We talked a few weeks ago about what it means to follow God as a disciple fully and we concluded that it is hard work, demanding work, life–work. Dear friends, that call never goes away and to truly follow God wherever he leads and calls you means that you must give up your whole self to him completely and honestly– it begins there. So stop for a minute, take a deep breath, think hard about where God is in your life– about what blocks are there– fears, burdens, temptations, possessions, guilts, or whatever– and then think a bit more about what you have to do to get closer to God and further away from that which binds you. Friends, I know this is a process for all of us– but I pray that your process can begin today in a new way and can continue to lead you to a fresher, newer, deeper life in Christ– give it all up dear friends God wants it all from you– don't hold back for God certainly has not.

God loves you and so do I. Amen.