

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, August 7-13 (C) - Luke 12:32-40

Stories of Discipleship: *A Prepared Person's Story*

Focus Question: *Are you prepared for Christ?*

word of life

"You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour." Luke 12:40 (NRSV)

Read Luke 12:32-40

This passage begins with a refreshing and tender reminder of God's pleasure to share God's kingdom with "the little flock". A flock of sheep depends on a shepherd who tends to its needs, defends it from danger, and leads the flock to green pastures. Ultimately, God's will is to have believers receive the blessings of God's reign.

1. What image comes to mind with the phrase "little flock"?
2. What does it mean for God to receive pleasure by giving believers the kingdom?

It is one thing for Jesus to tell his listeners to not be afraid, but another for them to listen and trust his word. Fear can immobilize or send people into a panic. Thus, Jesus encourages 'the flock' to act intentionally and overcome fear.

Jesus calls them into action with a long 'to do' list, beginning with selling of their possessions. Once disciples place their lives in God's protective care and trust in the promises of the kingdom, then they will change their attitudes towards earthly possessions and their time on this earth. They will invest their time and energy in treasures with God, not finite things of this world.

3. *What might have been some of the responses from the disciples to such a list?*
4. *Is Jesus micromanaging his disciples by providing such a list? Why or why not?*

Jesus challenges his followers to always be ready. He adds to the list, "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit." (Luke 12:35 NRSV) In the house, the robe was worn loosely and without a belt. To be dressed for action is have your belt on and prepared to walk out the door.

Next, he uses the illustration of servants who wait for their master to return from a wedding banquet. They do not know the hour, but hopefully they will be ready to open the door when he knocks and be prepared to serve him. In the first century, there would have been no refrigeration or electricity. Thus, the role of the servant to make preparations would have been significant. If there was to be any food at the home, it would have been prepared during the day. That would be true of trimming the wicks and having oil in the lamps. The master on his return would have known if the servants had wasted their time or wisely prepared themselves for his visit.

5. *What might be a modern-day example?*
6. *What makes waiting so difficult?*

If indeed the servants are prepared, then the master will be pleased and bless the servants not just with words, but by his own actions. He will fasten his own belt, invite his servants to sit at the table, and he – the master—will serve them. Roles will be reversed. The master becomes the servant, prepared to bless those who kept ready and believed in his return.

The bottom line: be prepared. Chris is returning at an unknown time.

7. *How prepared are you for the return of Christ?*

word among us

Jacob and Rebeca waited anxiously for the Internal Revenue Service agent to show up at their home. They were told which week to expect the agent, but not the specific time or date. Supposedly, they would get a phone call to announce the agent's arrival time. And so they waited. This couple never had their taxes audited by the IRS, so they were anxious. They felt they had completed the forms accurately and honestly. Rebeca was the one who actually took the time to complete their tax forms each year. She spent hours pouring over every detail. She wondered if it was a mistake not to consult with an accountant. Otherwise, why would the IRS waste their time with them?

Finally, the inspector came and was escorted to a study filled with neat boxes. Each box was clearly marked with a year and filled with neatly filed receipts. The inspector was impressed at their readiness for his visit. After the IRS agent spent some time with their taxes, he too questioned his assignment to their case. Quietly and apologetically, he left.

1. *Share a story of being prepared.*
2. *Share a story of not being prepared.*

During the four weeks before Christmas, the church celebrates the season of the church year called Advent. We emphasize being awake and prepared for the second coming of Christ. Preaching and teaching about being awake as people move in high gear to complete their personal preparations for Christmas can be a challenge. In reality, it is difficult to spark any real urgency about the Son of Man coming. We have waited for over 2000 years for the return of Christ; what makes anyone think it will be soon?

3. *How often do you think about the return of Jesus Christ?*
4. *How often do you consider the end of time?*
5. *Explain your answers.*

Jesus begins this passage by reassuring disciples of all ages of God's commitment. God cares as a good shepherd watches over a flock. Jesus affirms God's delight in sharing the kingdom. We do not deserve God blessing us in such a way. We have not earned God's generosity. God gives not out of obligation, but sheer delight. It gives God pleasure to share God's kingdom with us.

6. *Describe a time when you delighted in extending a gift to someone.*
7. *How was that gift received?*
8. *What if the gift would have been rejected or ignored?*
9. *Relate your delight in giving gifts to God's pleasure in sharing God's kingdom with us.*

It is humbling to ponder God's joy and delight in sharing with us. As recipients of the gift of grace extended to us, Jesus urges us to be conscious, aware, and prepared to receive such a gift.

10. *What might you do this week to be ready to receive God's gifts?*
11. *How do you personally delight God?*

Prayer

O God, create in me a clean heart so I might be ready for you. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Luke 12:41-48

last word

Stop and ponder God's good gifts to you.



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Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

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