

## CHAPLAIN'S BULLETIN AUGUST 7, 2022



Dear Folks,

Our Gospel today talks about being ready at any moment to meet Jesus.

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we shall go into such and such a town, spend a year there doing business, and make a profit’ – you have no idea what your life will be like tomorrow. You are a puff of smoke that appears briefly and then disappears. Instead you should say, ‘If the Lord wills it, we shall live to do this or that.’ But now you are boasting in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil (James 4:13-16).”

Life is full of things we can neither predict nor control. If things have been steady for a while, there is danger that we will think we can count on things just continuing. Life can change in an instant. Empires can rise and fall with amazing rapidity.

Two books come to mind. “Who Moved My Cheese?” by Spencer Johnson and Kenneth Blanchard talks about the human tendency to think we are entitled not to be affected by change, and how we can choose to stay stuck or to adapt. “Age of the Unthinkable” by Joshua Cooper Ramo speaks of how life is changing faster and faster, compared to previous centuries. He recommends resilience. St. Paul understood resilience: “I have learned, in whatever situation I find myself, to be self-sufficient. I know how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living abundance and in need. I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me (Philippians 4:11b-13).” Our relationship with God gives us something to cling to when the storm hits, and the stronger that relationship, the more powerfully it can carry us through the turmoil.

That brings us to Treasure in heaven.

Luke 12 talks about giving alms and talks about a prudent (phronimos) steward who is found doing God’s work when the Lord comes (which could be any time). Matthew 6 talks about prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and that we must be careful not to do it for the wrong reasons. Story of the rich young man Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30 all tell of Jesus saying that giving alms will bring us treasure in heaven.

With all those in mind, it might be worth rereading the parable of the dishonest steward in Luke 16:1-13, and understand Jesus is talking about stewardship that builds treasure in heaven. There is a point I want to emphasize really hard: this is not about buying heavenly bitcoin. If we ever reduce Christianity to a business transaction, we have missed the point. Christianity is a love relationship with God, and the more powerful the relationship, the more joyfully we encounter our beloved. Heaven is consummating our relationship with God, and the more our hearts are by our discipleship here, the more we are open to that love in heaven. How do we get our hearts widened? Love relationships stretch us by being attentive to the presence of our beloved (as in prayer), choosing our beloved over other goods (as in fasting), and doing things to please our beloved (as in almsgiving).

May our desire for God ever grow, and enable us to seek first His Kingdom.

Blessings,

Fr. Jim