

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C
Wisdom 18:6-9 || Hebrew 11:1-2, 8-19 || Luke 12:32-48

BE WATCHFUL AND FAITHFUL

Synopsis:

Keep eyes open and stay alert before walking in any situation.

Be watchful and be ready to meet the Lord.

The Lord delights in those who wait for his love.

If we are doing our jobs, our reward will be great.

We are to be “WATCHFUL” or “On Guard” duty.

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“Watchfulness is the path of immortality: Unwatchfulness is the path of death. Those who are watchful never die: Those who do not watch are already as dead. Those who with a clear mind have seen this truth, those who are wise and ever watchful will feel the joy of watchfulness, the joy of the path of the great. And those who in high thought and in deep contemplation, with ever-living power advance on the path, they in the end reach NIRVANA, The peace supreme and infinite joy,” says Buddha.

Once upon a time, there was a lion that grew so old that he was unable to kill any prey for his food. So, he said to himself, I must do something to stay my stomach else I will die of starvation. He kept thinking and thinking and at last an idea clicked him. He decided to lie down in the cave pretending to be ill and then whosoever will come to inquire about his health, will become his prey. The old lion put his wicked plan into practice, and it started working. Many of his well-wishers got killed. But evil is short lived. One day, a fox came to visit the ailing lion. As foxes are clever by nature, the fox stood at the mouth of the cave and looked about. His sixth sense worked, and he came to know the reality. So, he called out to the lion from outside and said, How are you, sir? The lion replied, “I am not feeling well at all. But why don’t you come inside?” Then the fox replied, I would love to come in, sir! But on seeing, all footprints going to your cave and none coming out, I would be foolish enough to come in. Saying so, the fox went to alert the other animals. This story alerts us always to keep our eyes open and stay alert before walking in any situation. “Developing a spirit of alertness is a Godly character quality that will greatly benefit you in your career for promotion and protection,” says Sharman Dow, a motivational speaker and author.

First of all, today in the Gospel reading, Jesus asks us to be watchful and be ready to meet the Lord. He also gives us instruction how to make use of this time in order to make us more yearning towards the Lord. He calls us... “little flock” and encourages us “not to be afraid.” Jesus’ instructions on “how to be ready” for the coming judgment continue in the stories and sayings found in today’s Gospel. Not like the rich man, we are all called to share our belongings in order to inherit the kingdom. We are all called to share our wealth with those in need. Jesus promises us that our treasure will be in heaven where it will not wear out or be destroyed.

Secondly, Peter asks if this parable is meant for the Apostles or for the large crowd that has gathered to listen to Jesus. Without answering Peter's question, Jesus responds with another parable about servants awaiting the return of their master. It begins with a question: "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?" This parable adds to the theme of watchfulness; it explains how to wait and reminds us of the reward for the faithful follower at the heavenly banquet after the judgment. If it is addressed to the Apostles, then it could also be addressed to leadership in the early Church.

Thirdly, the other major way to be ready for the coming judgment is to be watchful. We must be like servants waiting for the master's return from a wedding banquet. We must be watchful so that even if the master comes after midnight, we will be ready for him. This is what the coming of the Son of Man will be like. Therefore, we on our part are reminded to change our lifestyle. We have to keep our lamps burning; our faith must shine. It is in this perspective that we must understand the Bible expression 'waiting for God', which we find, for example, in Psalm 146: "His delight is not in horses nor his pleasure in warrior strength. The Lord delights in those who revere him, in those who wait for his love." Being watchful means being spiritually awake and focused on your priorities. It means that we constantly examine ourselves to see where our faith stands. Self-examination often occurs in prayer, so prayer and watchfulness go hand in hand.

Either way, the parables remind us that we should respect the responsibilities and should make our life meaningful. We should be found doing our jobs when the master arrives. If we are doing our jobs, our reward will be great. But if we relax, neglect our duties, and begin to act like the greedy rich man - eating, drinking, and making merry - we will not have a place in the kingdom. Watchfulness means living in such a consistently moral and obedient way that we are always ready to give an account to God of how we have lived. Finally, are we just killing time WAITING for Jesus to return, or are we really making time productive while WATCHING for His return? One role of the Church awaiting Christ's return is that of a sentry! We are to be "WATCHFUL" or "On Guard" duty. We are to understand the days in which we live. A good guard is alert mentally and disciplined or self-controlled. The Church is moving closer to the day Christ will come ... Let us be watchful and be ready to meet the Lord.

Quotes for further reflection:

"Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Manage and watch your words, for they will become your actions. Consider and judge your actions, for they have become your habits. Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they shall become your values. Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny." – Mahatma Gandhi

"Those who are wise and ever watchful, will feel the joy of watchfulness." - Buddha

"Awareness and alertness help us in various aspects of our lives." – Dr. Prem Jagyasi

"Your faithfulness makes you trustworthy to God." - Edwin Louis Cole

"Kindness and faithfulness keep a king safe." - King Solomon