

Sermon by Keith Brosious, August 6-7, 2002

Luke 12: 32-40 10th Sunday A Pentecost

I. Introduction

- A. I teach speech communication.
 - 1. So, students have to come in and give speeches.
 - 2. I give detailed plans and schedules.
- a. I go over all of the procedures.
 - 3. When it comes time for the speeches, I usually see one of two types of speakers.
 - . The type who prepared and practiced and did a great job.
- a. The type who didn't prepare or didn't practice
 - 4. When I ask the first group to talk about why they did so well, they lean into all of the effort and work that they did.
 - 5. When I ask the second group to analyze why they did so poorly, they readily admit that they did not do the work necessary until the last minute and didn't really do that much.
- B. In the gospel today, Jesus is talking about this idea of preparation
 - 1. It is not just any type of preparation.
 - . It is preparation for the coming of the son of man.
 - 2. It also requires effort on our part.
 - . We don't just show up when it happens.
- a. We need to be ready for it.

II. Preparation

- . What does that mean?
- A. I grew up in a family that had lived through the Great Depression.
 - 1. My grandparents had lived through it.
 - 2. My dad was born in the middle of it.
- B. They had perspective on what it was like to live without.
- C. They also had perspective on what it was like to prepare to live without.
 - 1. When I was a kid my family and my grandparents all grew gardens
 - 2. What we didn't grow we went to orchards and farms and bought in bulk
- D. We then prepared for the eventual.
 - 1. We spend part of the summer and fall preparing all of that produce for either freezing or canning.
 - 2. I remember snapping string beans, frenching string beans, husking corn, digging potatoes.
 - 3. That was just the beginning.
- . Then came the canning or the freezing. In some cases, the process was hours long.
- a. But, we did it, every year.
- E. Why did we do all of that work?
 - 1. My family knew what could happen if we didn't and something happened.

F. As much as I complained about doing all of that work, I certainly enjoyed all of the food that we had canned or frozen during the winter months.

1. To this day, I have a garden that I can and freeze food from.

G. This is really the same thing that Jesus is asking us to do in Luke.

1. "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit"
2. Always be prepared.

H. He wasn't telling us to sometimes be prepared.

1. He was telling us to always be ready.

I. We don't know when that return will happen.

1. But just like stocking up on food during the harvest, it is important for us to always be ready for the master to return.
2. Because we don't know when that will happen.

III. What does that preparation look like?

. In a lot of ways, it is the things that we do normally as Christians.

A. For example

1. It can be helping others.

. The whole idea of God's Work our hands is helping others.

a. Donating or volunteering at soup kitchens or the Back Mountain Food Pantry

b. There are lots of others

2. It can be praying for others
3. It can mean celebrating God's presence in our life with others
4. It can be as simple as holding a door or talking with someone who might be lonely or spending time with our loved ones

B. Preparation means being a good Christian.

1. It means that we don't put off doing something to help others today.

IV. Doesn't that take a lot of effort

. Aren't we putting a lot of effort into something that may or may not happen immediately?

A. There are two real responses to this question.

1. First, the more we prepare, the better we are at it.

. In his book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell discusses a concept from the renowned social scientist Anders Ericsson.

1. Ericsson talks about what it takes for individuals to be successful in any line of work.
2. After studying violinists, he determined that without any exceptions, no one got to the elite level without putting in 10,000 hours.

a. There were no naturals.

b. There were no special skills that got people further.

a. So, have we reached our 10,000 hours in preparing for Christ's return?

1. Or are we just watching others and putting off our preparation for the return of Jesus.
2. Or, are we really getting those difficult hours in by continually practicing and preparing for Jesus?

2. The second response to the Why question is this.

. What is the harm?

- a. If we are out there preparing for Christ's return by doing all of the things that help others, aren't we making the lives of others and, by default, our lives better?
- b. What is the downside in that?
- c. Whether Christ comes tomorrow or next weekend, next month or well into the future, we will still have made a positive impact on our world and we will still be ready.

V. So, where does that put us.

- . Generally, most of my speakers who struggle with a presentation because they didn't practice recognize that it was on them.
 - 1. Some of them continue to not prepare and struggle with future presentations.
 - 2. Many, however, understand that it does take work and effort and put that work in and improve on future presentations.
- A. Jesus challenges us to always be ready for his return
 - 1. It is not easy.
 - 2. It may take time and effort.
- B. But, in the end, it will make our world and better place and we can live in comfort knowing that one day will be able enjoy and appreciate all of that effort