

“Storing Up Or Pouring Out?”
Pentecost 12, Luke 12:32-40
August 7, 2016, CUCC, Buena Vista, Colorado
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I. WHAT WAS THAT, AGAIN, JESUS?!

Luke 12:32-40 The Message (MSG)

29-32 “What I’m trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with *getting* so you can respond to God’s *giving*. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don’t be afraid of missing out. You’re my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself.

33-34 “Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can’t go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bankrobbers, safe from embezzlers, a bank you can bank on. It’s obvious, isn’t it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

When the Master Shows Up

35-38 “Keep your shirts on; keep the lights on! Be like house servants waiting for their master to come back from his honeymoon, awake and ready to open the door when he arrives and knocks. Lucky the servants whom the master finds on watch! He’ll put on an apron, sit them at the table, and serve them a meal, sharing his wedding feast with them. It

doesn’t matter what time of the night he arrives; they’re awake—and so blessed!

39-40 “You know that if the house owner had known what night the burglar was coming, he wouldn’t have stayed out late and left the place unlocked. So don’t you be slovenly and careless. Just when you don’t expect him, the Son of Man will show up.”

II. BITING OFF A BIT OF BREAD AND CUP

Whew! What a passage! I don’t know about you, but just hearing that again made my heart rate change about three times!

“Relaaaaaxxxxx. Don’t be all about the stuff. Don’t pile up possessions. But, while you’re relaxing be sure you’re giving to the poor and being over-the-top generous with your time, talent and treasure. And then, be sure the electric bill is paid and you’re ready for the wedding, cuz the Bridegroom might just show up.

Oh! And be on guard in case burglars show up instead! Don’t be TOO relaxed, and forget to lock the door.

And finally:

Look busy! Jesus is coming!

Where do we even *begin* with this? Probably by not being *too* schizophrenic ourselves, and not try to bite off more than we can chew in the middle of a busy summer weekend! Scholars say this passage is likely several of Jesus’ key sayings and wisdom sound bites all mashed together. Rolled into one Ted Talk.

I'm thinking for today a communion-sized bite of bread would be good for us to delve-into!

III. CONSIDER THE SQUIRREL...

Consider the lilies. Consider the sparrows. Consider the sheep!

32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. **33** Sell your possessions, and give alms.

Consider that all these creatures, dearly beloved by God neither toil nor spin. They don't fret and shop and store up goods. Yet, they are cared for –fed and nourished—*every* day.

Consider how *we* might take a deep breath, alight on a branch or lie down in a pasture beside still waters, and let God feed us.

Give us our daily bread. Give our souls sustenance for this day. Exactly what we need. Not too much, not too little so we're left craving more. Our daily bread. Enough.

Consider the squirrel. (slide)

Stretching out of its usual food cupboard—nuts in a tree—and reaching for something sweeter. Seeking needed refreshment. (Now, there's a question here. Or, maybe a fine line, between stretching out and being resourceful to find the life-fluid that you need, vs. stealing from someone's else's refrigerator!)

But, you have to congratulate this guy on his resourcefulness and willingness to take a risk—in order to "stretch out to connect!" He's not looking all that stable stretched out there and could fall easily!

Where do we need to stretch *in order to* feed our souls, find what we need for sustenance?

Where are we afraid to risk, and need to understand on a deeper level that God wants to give to US? To serve US? That's what Jesus is saying here! God doesn't just ask us to serve God and neighbor. It's a two-way street. "For it is your Father's good

pleasure to give you the Kingdom—the abundance, all that you need!

IV. PURSES OF ANOTHER KIND

Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. **34** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What is a purse that we make for ourselves that does not wear out? And how does one begin to go about making one?! I'm sure Janet Steiner could give us some lessons.

Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out. Instead of being afraid. Instead of building bigger barns and *clinging*, grasping desperately to what we have, afraid of losing it, afraid of thieves breaking in and stealing what we already have. Instead of putting our hearts in places that get trounced and betrayed.

Make purses of a different kind. Purses that don't wear out, treasures that won't fail you. Value with your heart and your life what truly matters—not the baggage or trinkets—kitsch if you will—that petty moths of distraction and mis-direction can permeate and eat away.

How do we do that? By giving away what gets in the way. For starters. By reducing and reusing and re-gifting when we have more clutter than our life has room for. And boy, are we ever shoulder-deep in that with clothing right now! Really!

We also make purses that don't wear out by building better and stronger and more lasting relationships. By realizing and living out the truth that life is ultimately the relationships we build and keep.

Let's face it, it's a difficult, cantankerous time. In our world, and even right here in our community and our neighborhoods. We are faced with decisions every day: will we "divide and conquer" or will we come to the Table and talk and explore together how to live in harmony?

And I'll be the first one to say: IT'S NOT Easy! Just in our own town this week were countless debates and discussions about growing businesses, need for new schools, crazy traffic and construction. Oh, and a little Music Festival! These times and the tension that they bring call for even greater grounding ourselves in our faith, in the teachings of our Lord, and taking a deep breath. Of gathering in worship and community together; of gathering around the Communion Table with our brothers and sisters.

*Love is something if you give it away
It's just like a magic penny,
Hold it tight and you won't have any.....
Lend it, spend it and you'll have so many,
They'll roll right over the floor!*

We make purses that don't wear out when we let God fill them, like a well with never-ending water. Then we don't need to count the cost. We don't need to cling tight like a penny in a clenched hand. Just give and give and pour out—knowing God will keep the tank filled and overflowing.

If we cling to the "stuff"—whether goods or energy or attention or love, the well runs dry and we shrivel up and die inside. Pouring out, with God as the filler of the well, then it's never ending.

Slide: PIC of well pump!

I received a text right in the middle of working on this. Just a

"thinking of you we love you" kind of message. Can't tell you how that filled my well to overflowing. Such a simple thing, but THAT is heart treasure—something to go in the purse that doesn't wear out! We can do that for each other every day—imagine what the world would be like if we each did—even just once a day!

V. DO NOT BE AFRAID

David Lose says this is a promise: "Do not be afraid, little flock," he says, "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you all things." And from that astounding promise comes the invitation, rather than command, to prioritize, to share, to be prepared for what comes, to give things away. And what's the difference between a command and invitation, you may wonder. Only the force of how a statement strikes you. The one implies coercion; the other freedom. And promises always lead to freedom. Because we have Jesus' promise that it is God's good pleasure and heart's desire to give us all good things, we are suddenly free to give away, to care for others, to lose ourselves in service, and in all these ways find our security and confidence not in our earthly possessions or accomplishments but rather in our relationship with God.

"We are born for community and find a sense of self and meaning and purpose as we trust God's promises and give ourselves away in love."

VI. KEEP THE FAITH!

Don't be afraid, little flock. Keep the faith. Be ready for God to give us all good things.

A preacher named Pastor Dawn says we struggle to keep the faith and face down our fears because we think it depends on us and our ability to believe.

Pastor Dawn: We were taught that we had to believe in order to have faith.

But faith is not about believing. Faith is about trusting, about loving, about living.

Faith is not about believing. Faith is about trusting. Faith is putting one foot in front of the other trusting that the ground will be there.

Faith is not about believing, faith is about loving. Faith is about looking into the darkness and trusting that there is love and having the courage to open yourself to that love, about trusting enough to give love in return.

Faith is not about believing, faith is about living. Living knowing that the darkness awaits us all. Living trusting that Love will see us through the darkness.

Faith is not about believing. Faith is having the courage to embrace the morning, trusting that we can put one foot in front of the other and the ground will be there. Faith is about trusting that the Ground of our being is love. Faith is about loving, living and facing the darkness trusting that the darkness will not overcome us.

Faith is not about believing, faith is about trusting, loving and living. Trust the longing of your hearts, love and live.

VII. STORING UP OR POURING OUT?

Storing up or pouring out? Which will it be? And maybe it's both/and. Storing up the heart treasures—the things that matter and are worth building, and holding and keeping close.

And, pouring out ourselves and our life-force in giving, serving, loving and supporting other. Tapping into the Source, pumping the Well that never runs dry, and pouring out, without reserve—knowing we will be filled over and over and won't run dry.

Love is something if you give it away.....

You end up having more! Let us gather at the Welcome Table!
Amen.