

“HOW GOES THE APPETITE” Matthew 23:1-13

Good morning all, may the Lord be with you. Grant joining you again today.

LET'S PRAY:

Holy Father, again we gather to share your word and worship your Son, our Lord Jesus, and we ask that your Holy Spirit will be amongst us and enrich our time together. Bless us Father, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

CALL TO WORSHIP:

- Lamentations 3:22—24

Because of the Lord's great love for us, we are not consumed; for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness.

Jeremiah's lament was written following two catastrophic events in his world. The inevitable conquest by Babylon (586), following the tragic death of King Josiah(621) . The first part of Lamentations has a note of sadness (lament!!)---- later the book turns to reconciliation 4:22, and hope 5:21. The people had lost their appetite for God and His word, which (“good”) King Josiah had sought to remedy until his untimely death at the age of 30. Hence Jeremiah's great sadness at the turn of events (2 Chronicles 25:35, Job, Isaiah 61:1-2). “They are new every morning”.

The reading from Lamentations 3 reminds us that God may allow some suffering, maybe even in the nature of a cleansing, but will always be faithful in the end. Jeremiah remembers that in the end God will prevail, and relationship will be restored.

Hymn by Brian Foley 1919

1. Holy Spirit come confirm us in the truth that Christ makes known
We have faith and understanding through your helping gifts alone.
2. Holy spirit come console us, come as Advocate to plead
Loving spirit from the Father, grant in Christ the help we need.
3. Holy Spirit come renew us, come yourself to make us live
Holy, through your loving presence, Holy, through the gifts you give.
4. Holy Spirit, come possess us you the love of three in one
Holy Spirit of the Father, Holy Spirit of the Son.

BIBLE READINGS:

- Matthew 25 vs 1-13

At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones however took oil with them in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out:

here's the bridegroom! Come out and meet him! Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out. No, they replied, there may not be enough for both of us and you. Instead go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves. But while they were on their way to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet and the door was shut. Later the others came. Lord, Lord, they said, open the door for us! But he replied “truly I tell you I don't know you. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or hour.”

- Thessalonians 4 vs 13-18

“Brothers and sisters we do not want you to be grieved about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

Prior to commencing an operation, the quartermaster gives each soldier the 'C' ration pack for the day. There is a temptation to consume it all at morning break, or lunch, but there is no more to last until next morning. Preparation, and discipline have to be observed. Jesus in the parable reminds all of us, that we need to be sure we are equipped with the holy spirit, not just for today but for life. Jesus return may be at any time, and the wait for it is uncertain Matt 24:36.

I think this parable is something like that, only Jesus speaks about spiritual hunger and “maintaining a right spirit within us”. It is also clear that we are responsible for our own spiritual condition, being ready to be called but also prepared to wait.

A person was terminally ill in a country hospital. The local pastor was sent for. The person wanted to ask the pastor a question. “I went to Sunday school when I was growing up. Is that good enough?” Jesus' parable answers that question for us all. The bridesmaids, desperate for oil to maintain the “Light” in a last minute rush, missed out on the ceremony, the banquet, and the party. Because, we do not know the time of the coming of Christ, surely means a state of readiness must exist in our busy, frantic lives that strive to satisfy our hunger, and thirst for many things.

In one of the earliest N T letters, Paul writes to the Thessalonian church to encourage them about the second coming. He especially gives words of hope about those who have died, and had a hunger for the spirit (the dead in Christ v 14). To those of us who grieve for loved ones, this graphic scenario which Paul gives believers is a beacon of hope.

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I conclude by again looking at the words of Jesus, Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and search for righteousness, for they will be filled.

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD:

Lin and I take an interest in Mercy ships. Its an amazing ministry through medical help (YWAM) . The ship is staffed by volunteer surgeons, dentists, nurses etc, and calls at several west African countries, (Liberia, Gabon, Senegal, etc) there are some Aussies on board. Recently they operated on Umu, a sweet 3yo girl with a massive tumor on her neck, now a happy, bubbly girl with dancing eyes. Let's pray for her: Father bless those who serve on Mercy ships, their work, gifts, and a never say die approach to care and love of those who struggle. Father bless little Umu, may her healing continue.

Lord, also be with Barnabas Aid in its work amongst your people. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

HYMN: (AHB 165) *by Joseph Scriven 1819—1886*

1. What a friend we have in Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear,
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.
2. Have we trials and temptations, is there trouble anywhere
We should never be discouraged, take it to the Lord in prayer
Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share
Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer.
3. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care
Jesus is our only refuge: take it to the Lord in prayer
do your friends despite, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer
In his arms he will take and shield you, You will find a solace there.

BLESSING: 1 Thess 23: (St Paul)

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit , soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

GRANT JEWELL- hoping this is of some interest
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