

Genesis 15:1-6
Psalm 33:12-22
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16
Luke 12:32-40

Sermon August 7th, 2022

“God Is Pleased to Give Us the Kingdom”

We feel a lot of anxiety and fear over whether we will have enough to meet our needs, as we talked about last Sunday. A major reason for this is our inability to trust in God for our wellbeing, as we heard Jesus state in last week’s gospel reading.

Well, in today’s gospel, Jesus gets us to dig a little deeper into why we are so anxious and scared. And what we find out is that as much as we get anxious and afraid of not having enough. We get even more anxious and afraid of not fitting in. Of being rejected by society for not having enough.

Fitting in is so important to us. Remember what it was like being a teenager? We would change our appearance monthly to try and fit in (**Image**). We would do or say things that we look back on now and shake our heads. Surprised that we are still among the living. Drag racing down a residential street. Drinking too much at a house party. Cheering for the Edmonton Elks or Oilers while living in Calgary.

If we couldn’t afford the most popular designer jeans, or the most popular expensive haircut we would feel rejected by our peers. Did you get your tips frosted? Did you get a professional to die your hair all sorts of different colors or did you have to settle for the dreaded home kit? Do you remember the mullet? Fitting in is so important to us.

Unfortunately, this fear and anxiety we feel when trying to fit in doesn’t go away when we become adults. If our neighbour has a nice RV, we want a nice RV (**Image**). If our close friends live in a 2000 square foot house. We want to live in at least a 2000 square foot house. If our sibling is wearing the most stylish fashion of today, we want to be wearing the most stylish fashion of today. If our friends have beliefs about certain groups of people that come off as exclusive, we may keep quiet out of fear of standing out. Out of fear of being rejected.

As parents, we will do everything in our power to make sure our children fit in. As anxious as we are about fitting in ourselves, we get even more anxious about our children fitting in. We will spend thousands of dollars on our children, just so that they can keep up with their peers. So, they are not part of the group of children who get bullied.

In Jesus’s day, in our day, the amount of money you have is the amount of status you have. The more money you have the more accepted you are within the community. The less money you have the more marginalized you are from your community. Money has become something we depend on not only for our physical wellbeing, but also for

our social wellbeing. We need to fit in, and in our society, having a lot of money helps us do just that.

Well, like our anxiety over not having enough is driven by our inability to trust God with our physical wellbeing. Our anxiety over not fitting in is driven by our inability to trust God with our social wellbeing.

I think a lot of us doubt whether God welcomes us as much as Jesus states in our gospel today. As the church we have created a lot of barriers over the centuries that have prevented many people from being welcomed into our community. This action in itself reflects our inability to trust in God's grace. God's promise that God is pleased to give us the kingdom. And that everyone is welcome into this kingdom (**Image**).

In response to these doubts. In response to these barriers we create. In response to our anxiety and fear over not being able to fit in. In response to our dependency on money as the means to fitting in. Jesus challenges us to sell our possessions and give to the poor.

Now, on the surface this request is about being generous. But if we dig deeper this request is about more than just being generous. This request is about challenging our dependency on status. If we give away our possessions, we will have less, which will lower our status.

On the other hand, the poor person will gain some status when they receive our possessions. They will be able to re-enter their community from the margins. They will join us on equal ground.

Jesus challenges us to give up some of our status because Jesus wants to highlight his point that the kingdom of God that we receive through God's gracious hospitable love is a kingdom where status doesn't matter. Where no one is marginalized. Where we all fit in as equals. As children of God.

Jesus invites us to trust in God for all of our wellbeing. Both our physical and social wellbeing. Even though we don't always fit in in the way we want. God is there welcoming us into the kingdom. As we are, whether we have five dollars in our savings account or two million. We are all children of God, welcomed and loved for who we are.

This is the community Jesus envisions the church to be. A community that is hospitable to others (**Image**). A community where everyone is equal as children of God. Where the barriers society places on us are taken down.

Where we keep our lamps burning bright. Transforming our wider society into one where people don't need to depend on money to fit in. But, can depend on the hospitality of God to fit in. Can feel welcome for who they are. Experiencing the hope and new life that comes with trusting in God's grace.

Let us pray, gracious God, thank you for welcoming us into your kingdom. When we deal with the pressures of fitting in, help us depend on you. Help us depend on your grace. Seeing that with you, we are all welcome as your children. **Amen.**

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