

Luke 12:32-40.

August 7/22

Be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks.

Are you good at waiting?

I'm afraid I am not.

I will do everything to avoid it.

In the grocery store,

I look for the shortest line.

But I must confess I have grown accustomed to waiting for doctor appointments.

And I invent ways of making it tolerable by playing games on my iPhone.

One of the realities of life, however, is waiting.

As children we wait for Christmas,
we wait for summer vacation,
and we wait to grow up.

AS adults we wait for just the right job,
for that special someone
who will make our life complete,
for a promotion and for retirement.

Some wait for the day
the pain will stop and the grief will end.

Others wait for the answer to their prayers.

Many of us wait for that day
when we have enough time,
enough money, enough freedom
and the day we will live happy ever after.

When I think about my own waiting, I
realize I generally don't wait in the present.

I either move into the past
or into the future.

The great tragedy is, in doing so,
I lose the present moment.

That's part of what makes waiting
so painful and difficult.

Waiting for the future often brings fear
and anxiety about what will happen.
We are haunted by the unknown
and lack of control.

Waiting in the past brings sadness,
anger or guilt about things
that have happened,
or the things done and left undone.

As difficult as our present
circumstances may be,
that's the only place
where we can be fully alive.

It's the only place
we can truly experience God.
And yet Jesus does not eliminate waiting!
If anything, it sounds like just the opposite.

He tells the crowd,
**Be like those waiting
for their master to return.**

If we think **today's gospel
describes an absent God,
a God who left some time ago,
for whom we wait for the return.
We are mistaken.**

Jesus is teaching us how
and where to wait.
He is inviting us to be present
to the One who is always already present.

He is inviting us to be present to the reality of God in each other, in the world and in ourselves.

**As the Hindus say in the greeting,
“Namaste”
‘The God in me greets the God in you’.**

This is the God who is present in the ordinary circumstances of our lives, even in our waiting.

When I was in Seminary,
Each year I would go to the mission field,
west in the diocese of Caledonia in
northern BC for 4 months in the summer.

One of those summers I was in the
diocesan Camp in Terrace BC.
I was chaplain to children who came from
around the diocese.

One of the counsellors asked her campers,
Where did you see Jesus today?

A very surprised and excited camper cried out:

You mean Jesus was here today?

Jesus responds to our surprise saying,
**Yes, I was here, I am here,
and I will be here.**

In the gospel Jesus says to us,

Be dressed for action

Something is going on right now,

And I want you to be part of it.

**Have your lamps lit, he says in the
gospel. There is something to see.**

**Move out of the darkness,
come into the light.**

**See what is in front of you,
what is all around you,
and what is within you.**

**For the Father wants you
to have the kingdom.**

All of this, Jesus says,
happens at an unexpected hour.

Like a thief in the night, the Son of Man
is coming at an unexpected hour.

The most unexpected hour,
is the hour spent
in the hospital waiting room;
*The hour sitting next to the phone waiting,
for news of a loved one:
*The hour praying for a miracle,
*The hour in which we wait for clarity
and a way forward.
*The hour waiting for the grief to end
and life to return to normal.
*The hour in which it seems as if
nothing is happening, life is not the way
we want, and there is no place to go.

Jesus in today's gospel reminds us,
God never gives up on us.

Be watchful, attentive,
especially in times of stress.

There is a story of the Fern and Bamboo,
I want to share with you.

It goes like this:

**I went to the woods to have
one last talk with God:**

**“God”, I said, “Can you give me
one good reason not to quit?”**

God's answer surprised me.

**Look around,
do you see the fern and the bamboo?**

Yes, I replied.

“When I planted the fern and the bamboo
seeds, I took very good care of them.
I gave them light, I gave them water.

The fern quickly grew from the earth.
It's brilliant green covered the floor.
Yet nothing came from the bamboo seed.

But I did not give up on the bamboo.

In the second year, the fern grew
more vibrant and plentiful.

And again, nothing came
from the bamboo seed.

But I did not quit on the bamboo.

The third year there was still nothing
from the bamboo seed.

But I would not quit.

In the 4th year, again, there was nothing
from the bamboo seed.

Still I would not quit.

Then in the 5th year, a tiny sprout
emerged from the earth.

Compared to the fern, it was seemingly small and insignificant.

But in just after 6 months, the bamboo rose to over 100 feet in height.

It had spent the 5 years growing roots. Those roots made it strong, and gave it what it needed to survive.

I would not give any of my creations a challenge they could not handle. God said to me.

“Did you know my child, that all this time you have been struggling, you have actually been growing roots?”

“I would not quit on the bamboo, I will never quit on you!”

Don't compare yourself with others.
The bamboo had a different purpose
then the fern.
Yet they both make the forest beautiful.

Your time will come, God said to me,
You will rise high.

How high should I rise?, I asked.
How high will the bamboo rise?
He asked in return.

As high as it can? I questioned.

Yes, he said, Give me glory
by rising as high as you can.

And remember...
I will never leave you, nor forsake you.
I will never given up on you.
Just wait and see. Amen