

**The Reverend Heinz D. Raidel**  
**Message**  
**Ninth Sunday of Pentecost, August 7, 2022**

**One of the things that changed my faith and changed my life was pretty simple**, it was when a teacher said “Look for the grace” or “look for the good news” or “look for the gospel”

- teacher was suggesting that when we read a parable or a Jesus story, that we first identify what the good news is from Jesus in the story
- because that's going to be good news for the ancients,
- and it's going to be good news for us here and now
- that advice changed my life because it changed the way I read scripture
  - it helps me to see God's love for us comes first
  - it helps me to see that we worship a God of Grace and not a God of punishment
  - it changed my understanding of my faith from trying to live in a way I could not,
    - to living as faithfully as I could and trusting everything else to our loving, merciful, and redeeming Creator.
- I want to encourage you to try that today and every day
- look for the good news, look for the grace

**Prayer:**

**Well, earlier this week I had a conversation with my friend. Steve, who wanted to argue again and claimed that not all of the scriptures that we read have the Good News of Jesus in them. He claimed that some are all law and judgment, fire and brimstone, sin and suffering**

- So I explained, what we read on Sundays is chopped out of the bigger scripture (even out of context sometimes)
- and sometimes to find the good news, we have to read what comes before, and maybe what comes after what we read in the scripture for that day
- friend said hang on, if you do that, keep looking before and after for the good news, where does it end, do you take it all the way to the start and end of the New Testament?

- That's not a bad idea, and I pointed out
  - because the NT scriptures do start out with the good news of Jesus' Birth
  - and the NT scriptures end with the good news of Jesus' resurrection, God's victory over evil, and the good news of the promise of salvation, and eternal life for all of us.
  - in all of scripture, God's love for us through his son Jesus, comes first, and last,
  - and... that's kinda the theme for today's scripture, good news, and faith life lesson
- and having shared that...

**We have a short gospel reading today, there is indeed good news in it, and a faith life lesson in the good news for us**

- I want to share a few details about the good news,
- it is a good summer time faith life lesson
- and of course it comes with my summer warning:
  - short sermon today, so please hold on because we will be traveling fast.

**This is where ch 12 starts, with Jesus leaving those Pharisees and Jesus going outside to a completely different group of people who have gathered in the thousands**

- it is probably a good thing to toss in some context here
  - this outside crowd is a mix of Jewish people and gentiles
  - none of them have anything like the knowledge we have of Jesus and who he is
  - none of them know what a faithful life is
  - none of them know of the Spirit
  - but they want to know
  - they are there to hear the teachings of this Rabbi Jesus
  - some of them may have heard he is the messiah,
  - some have no doubt heard the stories of the healings
  - they want to learn and know and experience
  - they are very much unlike the persons inside the house Jesus was just in
    - the people inside the house were Pharisees and experts in the law
    - the people inside the house were judgmental

-in contrast, this outside crowd is curious and faith and life seeking

-So Jesus starts teaching this curious, faith seeking crowd,

-and **first** thing he mentions: be very aware of hypocrisy

-he points out the evils and consequences of hypocrisy

-note Jesus had just come from a house where he had severely condemned some Pharisees and experts in the law for being hypocrites - as they should know better

-whereas outside Jesus is teaching the curious and the seeking as to what being a hypocrite is, how dangerous and destructive that is and how to avoid it

-then what follows is Jesus teaching the people to pray,

-because they did not necessarily know how to pray

-teaching them to feel free to confess and to proclaim who Jesus is and what God's plan is

-and to trust God for everything

-and you might recognize the next part where Jesus uses the parable of the rich fool to teach the folks to trust God and not their own devices

-remember that from last week

-and this is where today's scripture comes in,

- with Jesus continuing to teach the people to trust him and his Father

-and assuring the people that God will provide for them

-trust me, trust God Jesus says

-it is OK if this sounds like last week's message

- It should, it takes over right where last weeks' message left off

-and yes, what we are reading today pretty much reinforces that same lesson as last week,

-that being:

-do not fear

-put God first

-and then there is kinda new thing... "and be ready."

-be ready for what? It's a very good question,

-and I would caution you to not read too much of what we know about Jesus into it

-Please, please don't read too much into the idea of being ready here in this Jesus talk

- what I mean is,
  - please note: all of the metaphor and analogy,
  - all of Jesus's similes
    - all of the words and phrases Jesus uses up to this point in ch 12
    - they are about keeping the faith
    - they are about living the faith
    - they are about a life spent trusting God instead of trusting themselves
    - because, the way to always be ready for Jesus, is to live faithfully all the time
  
- to be clear, Jesus' teaching here is much more about how to live a faithful life than any warning for Jesus' return
  - first, Jesus has not shared his plans for resurrection and return in any sort of detail yet
  - (but he will shortly)
  - second, all this fits into the continuing concept from Luke, especially ch 12, of Jesus teaching people to trust God, God will provide, put God first.
  
- Right now, the astute might be thinking, "this is what we heard last week"
  - yes, that is pretty much so
  - this scripture does follow the parable of the rich fool from last week in style and content
  - and it is pretty much the same teaching,
  - reassurance from Jesus that God will provide
  - reassurance that a faith life is the best life
  - reassurance that a life spent following Jesus is a better life than a life without Jesus
  - reassurance that faith in God comes first.
  - and a life of faith in God is a worshipful faithful life
  - seems obvious, but it's good to hear it again as Jesus repeated that idea more than a few times himself

**Next please let me point out two more short but useful things from this scripture:**

First, remember how I mentioned "look for the grace"?

- like, when you're reading scripture, "look for the grace"
- and I mentioned looking for grace is a life changing thing?
  - hope you see that this is not life changing because it ignores or somehow makes troubles or evil go away
  - it is life changing because it focuses us on what Jesus and his Father do for us out of love.
  - it's life changing because it shows us that Jesus through God's love can and will do for us what we just can't ever do for ourselves.
  - and it is life changing because it teaches us to trust God first.
  - and base our lives on trust in God

**And second, our search for the grace or good news in this scripture are as life changing as they are easy to find:**

**-Consider the first thing Jesus says:**

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"

-that is pretty straightforward good news or grace

**-Consider the last thing Jesus says:**

"You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

-the son of man (Jesus) is coming

-more straight up good news

**So when I mentioned "look for the grace" earlier?**

-well, seems like this lesson starts and ends with good news

-and as I mentioned earlier the whole of scripture starts and ends with good news of Jesus

-so consider that a life of faith starts with the good news of God's grace at baptism

-consider a life of faith proceeds to good news of life eternal in God's kingdom

-and if we put trust in God first and foremost, we can live that faithful life and make the world here and now a better place in anticipation of the world to come.

**Word, Amen.**