THE LIVING WORD OF THE SEASON AFTER PENTECOST

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

November 5 - November 11

SEASON AFTER

PENTECOST

Proper 27

Every day we wait. For someone. Somewhere. Something. Many, many, times a day. We wait.

Think about the younger years as we waited for the bus (or ride to school), waited for class to begin, waited for the school day to end. We waited to get home and do what we wanted to do. Then we waited for dinner to be ready, a friend to hang out with, and a favorite show or movie to begin. As we grew older, we waited to get our first car, test scores, diploma, right job, right person, and on and on it goes.

Even now, we wait at traffic lights, on the phone, in long lines at the store. Face it, we wait a lot in life. Sometimes for minutes. Other times for hours. And in other stretches, with no idea how long something is going to take. **It's never a question of *if* we wait. The question is: *How* will we wait? More precisely: *Will we wait well?***

Which brings us to our passage in Matthew 25:1-13—another wonderful example of Jesus longing to help us grasp kingdom values. This time there is a noticeable difference in the cadence. As we've studied through Matthew this year, we've read a lot of parables. How the kingdom of heaven is like:

13:24 … a man who sowed good seed in his field …
13:31 … a mustard seed, which a man took and planted …
13:33 … yeast that a woman took and mixed …
13:44 … treasure hidden in a field …
13:45 … a merchant looking for fine pearls …
13:47 … a net that was let down into the lake …
13:52 … the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom treasures …
18:33 … a king who wanted to settle accounts …
20:1 … a landowner who went out early in the morning …
22:2 … a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son …

Matthew 25:1 declares, "at that time the kingdom of heaven will be like …" At. That. Time. Will. Be. Like. Something's shifted in the timeline of the kingdom (in Mt 24), as Jesus begins talking openly about his second coming, which will be after his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. One day he will return.



The parable invites us to reflect on at least three things happening in our own lives at the moment of Jesus' return:

What am I doing?
Who am I serving?
How am I prepared?

The contrasts in categories is revealed quickly in this passage, separating evenly into two distinct groups: those not prepared vs. those prepared. More pointedly: those living as fools vs. those living wisely. Or with even greater clarity: false disciples vs. true disciples. (Please see Matthew 7:21-23 for Jesus' distinction.) A sad scene unfolds in verses 11-12 when the ones who are not prepared cry out, "Lord, Lord," … "open the door for us!" But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I don't know you."

Yet, in all honesty, no one should really be surprised. Everyone had time to prepare. Everyone had time to be ready for Jesus. It's just that half of them chose not to.

Living wisely with Jesus is a daily, hour by hour, moment by moment choice. But still, the choice is yours.

FOR *reflection*

What am I doing?
Who am I serving?
Am I prepared and waiting well?

Prayerfully consider refreshing or renewing your commitment to follow Jesus. Joshua 24:15: "… choose this day whom you will serve … but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."



SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 78:1-7; Joshua 5:10-12; Revelation 8:6-9:12
Friday	Psalm 78:1-7; Joshua 8:30-35; Revelation 9:13-21
Saturday	Psalm 78:1-7; Joshua 20:1-9; Matthew 24:1-14
Sunday	Psalm 78:1-7; Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13
Monday	Psalm 78; Joshua 24:25-33; 1 Corinthians 14:20-25
Tuesday	Psalm 78; Nehemiah 8:1-12; 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13
Wednesday	Psalm 78; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 24:29-35

Why do the daily readings begin on Thursday?

The daily readings for each week begin on Thursday and end on the following Wednesday. The Thursday through Saturday readings prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. The Monday through Wednesday readings reflect on what was presented on Sunday.

The Morning Liturgy

Opening Scripture

O send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto your holy hill, and to your dwelling.

Psalm 43:3

Opening Prayer *(based on Psalm 51)*

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. *Amen.*

Scripture Reading *(read Psalm and Gospel text here)*

Period of Silence

Confessing Our Faith *(Apostles' Creed)*

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect *(Proper 27)*

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

A Midday Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and forever. *Amen*.

An Early Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

A Bedtime Confession and Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy name. *Amen.*

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let Your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let Your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



