

Last week, we got to sit with Jesus' parable about building riches on earth verses being rich in God, and I hope that we are still letting that word ruminate in our spirits, troubling our temptation towards capitalism and greed, and affirming our call to be a people of justice (I recommend going to our YouTube page and listening to that sermon if you haven't yet).

As we continue on in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus jumps straight into another random story about how we are called to be like household staff/servants, waiting upon the return of the property owner. One thing I wondered about was if the staff had anxiety because they didn't know when the owner is supposed to return. And any of you that work with a employer like this, this anxiety might be familiar to you.

When you read this passage, the assumption that we can make is that Jesus is making the connection that the household staff are the disciples and whoever else was present. For our purposes today, we, the people gathered in this place are the household staff. Now, maybe the anxiety piece feels a bit distant, but maybe this story will help you enter into this text:

About 2 years ago, there was a young adult who found themselves in a precarious place. Having just graduated from their Master's program, they had hopes and desires to see their dreams come true. This young adult moved to New England, both to support their partner's dream while also hoping that their own dreams would come true. But, like many people during that time, dreams met the cold, harsh brickwall of COVID-19. Dreams held in suspension, jobs unavailable, the world felt like it was constantly quaking and nothing felt secure anymore; it would be an understatement to say that anxiety became this young adult's most intimate friend.

Maybe you know this person (it's me, I am them haha), but also maybe you are this person. As I look back at the last 2 years, trying to find some meaning and reason to this never ending cycle of transition and uncertainty,

one thing became clear: life can feel terrible if you are forced to wait for something that feels like it will never come to pass. Can I get an amen?

So what might God have to say to those of us that feel stuck in this season of waiting, in this season of perpetual transition? There are few things that this passage invites us to do during times like this, but the one I want to focus on is this: “waiting”

In the Greek, the word waiting is translated from the word *prosdéchomai*, which is often translated as “waiting” or “awaiting”, but there is a deeper meaning behind this word. The more accurate translation would actually be “to expect, to look for, the fulfillment of the promises.” Waiting, then, is not a passive action where one is idly standing on the sidelines, but rather waiting is a conscious choice to continuously expect & look for the fulfillment of God’s promises. **Let me say that again: waiting is a conscious choice to continuously expect & look for the fulfillment of God’s promises.**

What has God promised you? What has God promised us at Old South Church? What are you waiting for?

I know that for the Israelites during the time of Jesus, one of the promises that God made to them was the restoration of their people and the destruction of the empires & nation-states that oppressed, colonized, and destroyed them. As we look back in history, we have can clearly see that those empires indeed fell: some to never return from the rubble, others that our society can’t seem to let go of. What about for you? What about for us?

There are many promises that God has given you, has given us, some of which have been fulfilled and others that have yet to be made real. But one promise I want to name is this: God has given you, has given us the agency to live our lives to the fullest, even in the midst of uncertainty & anxiety.

Now, I don't know what that may look like for you individually, and I don't know what that may look like for our congregation as a whole, but what I know is this: If we change our posture from a place of idleness into conscious waiting, then God's promises being fulfilled is not necessarily waiting for the sky to rend open and see the heavens, but it means being able to see yourself, to see each other as maybe, just maybe, the enfleshment of God's promises.

You, yes you the individual, and this community, are the enfleshment of God's promises fulfilled. You, the person sitting next to you now, the people you sit next to in the pews on any given Sunday, the people in your committee and group, all of you are the enfleshment of God's promises fulfilled. Each of you reflect the image of god, each of you carry gifts and talents that make this church come alive, each carrying a different valence of God's fulfilled promises. What if we started to live a life that reflected this? Not in an egotistical or narcissistic way, but in a grace-filled, love abundant, "let's get through this together" type of way?

If we start living this way:

- I imagine it will look like us working together & setting up mutual aid funds to help each other thrive.
- I imagine it will smell like the aromas of potlucks & food banks, making sure no one goes hungry.
- I imagine it will sound like prayers, laughter, & tears saturating this building with care and love.
- I imagine it will taste like this bread and cup, filling us up with the mystery of God's love.
- I imagine it will feel like home, a place where justice is the norm and injustice a whisper in the wind.

Waiting on God is a conscious choice, one that calls us to continuously expect & look for the fulfillment of God's promises & continuously find it enfleshed in yourself and in each other.

I don't know about you, but I'm ready.

I'm ready to see myself as the enfleshment of God's promises fulfilled.

I'm ready to see you as the enfleshment of God's promises fulfilled.

I'm ready for you to see yourself as the enfleshment of God's promises fulfilled.

I'm ready for all of us to see each other as the enfleshment of God's promises fulfilled.

So let's get ready. Dressed and ready to live lives to the fullest, waiting on God's return. Amen.