

Faith and Expectant Waiting

King of Glory Lutheran Church

Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry

August 9-10, 2025

Pentecost 9: Year C: Luke 12:32-40

[Jesus said:] ³²“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵ “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes during the middle of the night or near dawn and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹ “But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he set out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith, with Sarah’s involvement, he received power of procreation, even though he was too old, because he considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”

¹³ All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, ¹⁴ for people who speak in this way make it clear that they

are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Our ancestors walked by faith. They kept hoping in God and God's promises to them, even though those promises weren't fulfilled in their lifetime. In Luke's Gospel, the bridegroom is coming. What can help us wait in a disciplined way that Jesus suggests?

What are you waiting for this morning? More zucchini and tomatoes in the garden? For retirement? For your children to go to church? Grandchildren? A better golf score?

Isn't an awful lot of life about waiting? We get a diagnosis, we wait for the surgery. We get engaged, we wait for the wedding. We lose a spouse, we wait for the grief to ease up. We watch the news, we wait for the wars to end.

Jesus tells a parable about slaves waiting for their master to return home from the wedding banquet. Blessed are those who are ready when he returns, because their reward is that the master, will now serve the slaves. Jesus doesn't tell the story saying, 'if the master returns.' No. Jesus tells the story saying the master is going to return. It's only a matter of time. It might be in the middle of the night, or early dawn. But the master will come. It's a promise. Take it on faith. Wait expectantly.

12 year old boy – accepted Jesus

Did you see a vision? No

Did you hear God speak? NO

How did you know you were saved?

Like fishing. You can't see or hear fish. But you feel them tugging on your heart.

(Illustrations Unlimited Pg 188)

In the lesson from Hebrews, we are given an excellent definition of faith. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. In other words, faith is an unfolding into a future that only God knows. (repeat)

If I were to ask you to offer some examples of those, you might say things like:

I have faith there is life after this one, because of Jesus' resurrection.
I have faith tides go out and come in, because of the gravitational pull of the moon.
I have faith my spouse will be true because of our wedding vows.

None of us saw the resurrection. We cannot see the moon's gravitational pull causing ocean tides, nor can we see wedding vows. Yet, we trust and believe in all those things.

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. The writer of Hebrews goes on to tell about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham set out for a land God had promised him. Yet the text says, 'he did not know where he was going.'

That sounds a little crazy to our ears. Unless we're going off grid and become a nomad for a year, most of us know where we're headed on a trip. We've got the name of the airport, the ticket, the arrival time, who will pick us up, etc. Who leaves not knowing where you're going?

God had called Abraham to leave everything he knew – all that was familiar. Abraham didn't need to know where he and his family were headed because they were going there with God. They were travelling with God. God had given the two-part promise: you shall have land and descendants. God's promise was good. Abraham didn't need to watch the stars for a roadmap. He had God's word. He was walking by faith and hope.

Sarah had no children. She laughed to herself in the tent when the three visitors told her husband, Abraham, his wife would bear a son. 'Have you seen these gray hairs? Did you notice my cane?' But the Lord said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh?...Is anything too hard for the Lord?'

We don't all laugh in God's face. When the wait is long, we might use humor to deflect our real emotions. We might get scared. It could be easy to trust for a while, but then the days turn to weeks turn to months...and nothing changes. We don't see; we don't see God or anything else. And we begin to doubt God's promises.

What helps you and I trust the bus will come, the tides will keep going in and out, our spouses will be faithful, the treatments will work, our children are in God's hands whether they go to church or not? What helps us walk in expectant faith like Abraham and Sarah?

In the parable, Jesus says, 'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit.' The slaves have no idea when the master will return. But they will be ready. This isn't 'ready or not', it's only, 'ready!' In the Matthew version of this parable, the foolish ones have to run buy more oil. They weren't ready. When they are gone, the master comes. Here, Jesus says 'be dressed for action and keep those lamps burning.' For waiting is not passive. It is a spiritual experience where God can refine our faith as we seek to take the next right step.

Atheist and Convert story

"How can you know Christ if you have never tried Him?"

(Illustrations Unlimited James S. Hewett. Editor. Pg190.)

For Luke, it is understood that God's kingdom is here and now, besides being something that will arrive in the future. God is at work whether God is seen or not. Abraham and Sarah trusted God was at work. Even though they didn't get to see the final provisions of God, nevertheless, they trusted God's word to them.

What helps us walk in expectant faith like Abraham and Sarah; trusting in God's promises to us even though we might not see it unfolding now?

In coming to church regularly, we receive Holy Communion a promise of God's presence with us and a foretaste of the life to come. We hear God's Holy Word, the Good News, feeding our spirits and souls.

There are other ways to wait in the disciplined manner Jesus asks. We can literally light a candle at mealtimes, trusting God's promise that God's light is stronger than darkness. Trusting God will return.

We can keep a thumb cross in our pockets. Each time we touch it, we are reminded that God is with us, and with all people regardless of where they live or what they look like.

We can pray for courage to trust, and resilience. More importantly, we can tell God about those spaces where we don't want to trust, don't like waiting.

God did not leave Abraham or Sarah or Isaac or Jacob. God doesn't leave us abandoned ever.

Let us be dressed for action with our lamps lit! Amen.