

**August 7, 2022**  
**Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Meditation: "Taken For Granted"**

"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. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

When I read those two verses it took me back to my homiletics class at Emmanuel. You see, we were each expected to preach a sermon in front of the class, and the professor assigned scripture texts to each of us that we would be preaching from. A friend of mine got this text, and she was stumped. Between the two of us, her sermon started something like 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. I think this text falls flat with our modern day lives. We can't relate. We don't wait up to protect our homes from thieves anymore. We set the security alarm and go to bed, secure in the knowledge that the thief will be caught in the act of breaking in without our losing a whole lot of sleep.

If the first part of this doesn't make any sense, that what do we do with the second part – 'You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'? New from K-Tel, the second-coming alarm. You simply set the alarm, and when it senses the imminent return of our Saviour, it shouts, "Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming." Get yours now for only \$49.95, or five easy payments of just \$9.99. But wait, there's more. If you order now, we'll also send you a free overnight bag to prepack in preparation for the rapture.

As I thought about this, I realized that, living in a world of instant gratification and technology that protects us from ourselves, we don't

anticipate things anymore. We don't even need to anticipate that the car in front of us might slow down, because the cruise control will slow us down and even put on the brakes if needed, without any intervention on our part. The not anticipating anything is another way of saying that we take an awful lot for granted now. We take for granted that the technology that surrounds us will keep us safe from many things.....thieves included. We take for granted that the monthly pension cheque will keep arriving each month. We take for granted that the health care system will always be there when we need it. What other things do we take for granted?

What about the church? Do we take for granted that it will always be there? Or our faith? Do we take our faith for granted? I think there is a fine line between taking things for granted and being indifferent or even apathetic about things. Elie Wiesel once said, "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference." If we are not passionate about God's church, or about our faith; if we take the church or our faith for granted; if we are indifferent or apathetic about the church or our faith, of what benefit is it? And will they be there when we really need them?

There are days when I am as guilty as anyone else in feeling apathetic about the church. There are days when I am as despairing as anyone else regarding the future of the church, yet that isn't my job. That is God's job. The church isn't mine. It's God's. Or to go back to the lesson, I am not the owner of the house, I am the servant.

So, if it's not my job to worry about the future of the church, what exactly is my job as a Christian? Jesus calls us to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man, not to set the second-coming alarm and then hit the golf course, or the beach, or even to head over to Shaw's

for a cone. Readiness is not passive, it's active. My job, as a follower of Christ, is to, well, to follow Christ; to point out injustices in our society – injustices like racism, sexism, ageism, and all the other isms. My job as a Christian is to not only perform acts of charity, but to also work to solve the root causes that make charity a necessity ....you know, to work for justice. My job as a Christian is to prepare, to wait, to watch, and to build God's kingdom while waiting.

And what is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is what this place, this world, would look like if God were in charge, and not Justin Trudeau or Joe Biden or Vladimir Putin or Xi Jinping or anyone else. Whether the church survives or not, is up to God. Whether we live in a world where all life is valued and treated with respect and dignity, where all life has what it needs to thrive, that is up to me, and up to you. God wants us to be prepared for the second-coming, to have things ready, not to be trying to improve our handicap on the golf course, or amusing ourselves to death – metaphorically speaking.

How do we do that? Well, we can volunteer for organizations that work for justice, like Amnesty International or Indwell or any one of hundreds of other organizations like them. We can support them with prayer. We can support them financially. We can petition our governments to stop worrying about trivial matters, like how many days our Prime Minister flew somewhere in the last month, and do something about fixing the health care system that we all depend on. There are countless ways we can prepare, how we can build a world that is more just than the one we live in. The question is, will you be a sleepy slave, hoping the second-coming alarm works, or will you be a wise and waiting worker?