

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

November 12, 2023

Old Testament Reading; Amos 5: 18-24

Responsive Reading; Psalm 78: 1-7

Epistle Reading; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18

Gospel Reading; Mathew 25: 1-13

Sermon Title;

Don't Wait, Wait!

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary; At a restaurant you expect the waiter to wait on you. Your turn.

This past week while Jackie and I were on our honeymoon we ate at a little diner that had a large assortment of tongue-in - cheek signs.

One of these said, "Everything cometh to him who waiteth, so long as he who waiteth worketh like heck while he waiteth." OK so I cleaned it up a little bit.

The point is that I used Isaiah 40: 28-31 as my call to worship because I believed that it spoke to the message that the texts seemed to be giving me.

Hear that again, “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth. Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall utterly fall. But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not fall.”

I do not believe that God is asking us to sit back and twiddle our thumbs until He arrives on the scene.

Our selection from Amos not only says that the people were not being proactive for God, Amos says that the people were using ceremonies to pretend they were being true to His word but were not living the life of service and compassion that He had created them to do. Amos ends this passage by saying, “Let justice rain down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.” Amos did not want the people to wait for the Lord, Amos wanted them to wait on the Lord.

Isn't that precisely what God is asking us to do?

Our Psalm selection for today says that God will speak in parables, or dark sayings from the past that will expound on the messages of the past that our fathers have told us and that we are not to let these truths be lost or hidden from the next generation. The Psalmist is telling us that if we pass on what our predecessors learned, the youth will set their hope in the Lord and not forget the works of the Lord and make a better world by keeping His commandments. Unfortunately, in this WOKE world that is now frowned on.

Country singer Aaron Tippett sang a song that said You got to stand for something or you will fall for anything. Aaron praised his father for sticking up for what was right even if it might have made him unpopular and maybe even cost him some promotions. This is exactly what Amos and the Psalmist were advocating thousands of years ago. It was true then and it is still true today.

In Revelation 3: 14-22 the angel wants the people of the church of Laodiceans to be hot or cold, at least be something. Even if they were cold, they could stimulate conversation that would cause people to think.

The Epistle speaks to people who thought that the second coming of Christ would have already happened and assured them no one gets left out once they have committed their lives

and actions to Jesus. “Those who died will be raised first and then, those who are living at the time.”

A side note here, when they speak of people who “sleep” as being dead it is being used to show the relationship of man to God. When a person goes to sleep it is symbolic of death and when they wake in the morning it is symbolic of rejoining the Lord in the day that the Lord has made. This is meant to give the believer hope in that He always wakes in the morning so he can expect the same thing to take place in death and resurrection.

The Gospel encourages active preparation to be ready when the bridegroom arrives. Although the trimming of the lamps and having oil enough to spare are pretty worldly it does speak to being ready. Personally, I prefer the examples used in Amos and the Psalm. Amos says, “Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.” The Psalm says, “He commanded our fathers, that they should make known to their children. That the generation to come might know them.”

If we are going to wait on the Lord instead of waiting for the Lord we need to actively love and serve God and we should teach our children and grandchildren to follow in our footsteps. If we want to know what we should do to wait on the Lord we need to listen to what Don told Jackie and I a week ago yesterday.

From 1 Corinthians 13, LOVE and LOVE RIGHT. “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

This is not just for newlyweds; this is for everyone that is willing to wait on the Lord and not just for the Lord.

Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments are all the laws based.

Do it with joy, and pass it on to the next generation with conviction.

Don't wait for the Lord. Wait, I say wait on the Lord and you will be greeted in Heaven with those beautiful words; Well done my good and faithful servant. Hallelujah and Amen!