

Sermon  
Proper 12  
Genesis 29:15-28  
Psalm 128  
Romans 8:26-39  
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

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July 24, 2011  
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

In July of 1986, I said good bye to my son, and off he went into the Air Force. My son was very concerned about me, because now it meant that I would be living by myself, and he would spend his nights worrying about me. So I made a promise to him that I would give up my apartment, and move in with a friend, just so that he would not have to worry about me.

I kept my promise to my son, and I did give up my apartment, and I did move in with my friend. In fact, the same day that my son left to go into the Air Force, I moved in with my friend.

My son was happy because now he did not have to worry about me, my friend was happy because now she had someone to share the expenses. Everybody was happy, except me. For my son, I decided to hang in there and try to make myself happy. I hung in there for many years (11 years to be exact) and finally I could not take it any longer.

I finally made up my mind to tell my son that I needed to get my own place, and not to worry about me, and I assured him that I would be all right living by myself.

I ran into another friend who was a super of a building, and I let him know that I was looking for an apartment. He told me that there were no empty apartments in his building, but I should go speak to the super in the next building because there were several empty apartments in that building. I asked him if the building had an elevator, and he laughed, and said that none of these buildings have elevators, but I will let the super know that you are coming, and for him to save an apartment on one of the lower floors for you.

I thought to myself, "a walk-up, I'm not walking up any stairs!" So I never went to see this super. My friend kept asking me whether I had gone to speak to the super, and I kept making up excuses.

Finally, unable to find anything better, I reluctantly went to speak to this super. I

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knocked on the super's door, introduced myself and asked him if he still had empty apartments in his building. He told me that the only apartment that he had available was on the third floor. He said that he had saved an apartment on one of the lower floors for me, but I never showed up, and he had to give it away. I thanked him, and turned and walked away.

While I was walking away, I heard a voice whispering in my ear to go back and take a look at that apartment. So I knocked on the super's door again, and asked him if I could take a look at the apartment that was on the third floor.

This particular day was cloudy and overcast. It felt as if it was going to either rain or snow at any moment, for it was in January.

I went with the super, and we walked up the stairs to the third floor. He opened the door to the apartment, and all I could see was the sun shining so brightly through out the entire apartment. Even the super was surprised to see how brightly the sun was shining through out the apartment. I walked into that apartment, and the first thing I felt was home. I had finally come home. I knew at that moment that this was where I belonged.

The super was trying his best to convince me to take this apartment. He walked around pointing out all of the good features. He was an excellent salesperson, but unbeknown to him, I had all ready made up my mind that I was going to take this apartment.

There was something very special about that apartment, it kept saying welcome and home to me. I lived in that apartment for twelve years, and last year due to health reasons, I had to leave that apartment. I now live in a different apartment, which is a street level apartment, in the same building. There is also something very special about my new apartment as well. The sun also shines brightly through out this apartment, and it also says welcome and home to me.

In reading today's gospel, I was reminded of my own story, and how both stories talks about coming home. My story is about the here and now, and Jesus' story is about what is to come in the future. Jesus is an excellent story teller. Story telling is how Jesus preached and taught the people who had gathered around him.

Last week's gospel and today's gospel Jesus tells stories that are called parables. A parable is a simple story that is used to illustrate a moral truth. A parable is a story that may sound very simple, but actually it is not, it gives us something to think very hard and long about its true meaning.

In last week's gospel and today's gospel, Jesus is trying to illustrate to us and to the

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people who are gathered around him what the kingdom of heaven is like, and what it could be compared too. Also in last week's gospel, we heard about the sower who planted wheat and how someone had come in the middle of the night and planted weeds.

The sower's helpers wanted to pull up the weeds, but the sower said, "No, let them grow together."

In today's gospel, we hear about a mustard seed, yeast that is mixed in with flour, hidden treasure that someone found and then hides it again, a merchant who searches for fine pearls, and finally a net that is thrown into the sea that catches fish of every kind, and when the net is full it is drawn ashore and the good and bad fish are separated.

I would like to focus on the later. The sower told the helpers to let both the wheat and the weeds grow together, and the fishermen have both good and bad fish caught up in their nets. In both cases we hear about a separation between the good and the bad.

The super in my story, and Jesus, in both of these gospel readings, are both excellent sales people. They both want something. The super in my story was trying very hard to convince me to take that apartment, and Jesus is trying ever harder to convince us to see where our true home is located.

Since I was told by someone here, that my message is always the same, that we should always follow Jesus, I thought, just for today, that I would change my message.

Instead of saying, JESUS is inviting us, I will say that GOD, is the one, who is inviting us to come and share HIS home with him.

God, out of love for us, has sent his only Son, Jesus, who left his rightful place, sitting next to his Father in heaven, to come down to earth, and invite us to come to his Father's house and spend time with him.

In John's gospel Jesus tells us that there are many rooms in his Father's house, and that he is going to prepare a place for us. Jesus even tells us that we know the way, so that we can never tell him that we do not know the way to his Father's house. (Jn14:1-4)

"Let anyone with ears listen!" Jesus tells us.

We all have ears, but the question is are we truly listening. Are we truly listening to what is being said to us or do we hear what we want to hear. God is always speaking to us, but do we take the time to listen.

I know for myself I sure did not listen to my friend right away, when he told me to speak

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to that super about an apartment. It wasn't until I had been beaten down, did I go, and even then, I still walked away, until I heard that inner voice. That quiet little voice from within, that tiny inner voice that came from that inner ear which comes from that very special place located in my heart.

Did you know that the word heart-H-E-A-R-T, contains the word EAR in the middle of it?

The heart which is where our inner ear is located. The heart is that special place where the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells. We all have that special place in our hearts.

We have a choice, we can either be the wheat and share a place with the good angels, or we can be the weeds and share a place where there will be gnashing of the teeth. We have a choice.

Or we can choose to either become the good or bad fish which has been caught up in the net of the fishermen, who are now waiting patiently, to be separated. We have a choice.

Paul writes in his letter to the Romans:

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In his letter to the Romans, Paul list several THINGS that are NOT able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, but Paul neglected to write that HUMANS are the only ONES, who CAN and WOULD be able to separate THEMSELVES from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Yes, we are the only ONES who can and is able to separate OURSELVES from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Wheat and weeds. Good fish and bad fish, are all intertwined within us. God always gives us a choice to choose in which direction to go. God always gives us the opportunity, at any given time, to change our directions. The choice is always up to us.

God is always extending an open invitation to us, through Jesus Christ his only Son, to come and join him at his place. God has plenty of room for all of us.

The food is great, and the rent is extremely cheap. You do not have to worry about any thing. All of your needs will be met. You can not find a better deal! So come!

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God always leaves the choices up to us.

Jesus wants us to choose wisely.

The Holy Spirit is always whispering to us through our inner ear.

Let us always be willing to open up that very special place in our hearts to hear God's voice speaking to us.

**LET ANYONE WITH EARS LISTEN!**