

Homily
19th Sunday in OT
August 7, 2022

What do you do when there is a tornado warning? You're at home, you've have been listening to the news, you've heard the sirens and now you must do something. What do you do? We've all been trained; we go to the center of the house, preferably a room without windows, close the door and wait it out.

What about at work? Most likely, and this has been my experience, we have drills or training to instruct us on what to do and where to go. Typically, there are designated storm shelters and even maps posted with arrows pointing us where to go.

When an emergency arises, we are hopefully prepared. We practice what to do, so in the unlikely event of an actual emergency, we can take action and be safe.

Jesus prepares His disciples; He tells them what they need to do. But for what? For the time the Lord comes for us; for that eventual moment when we meet God face to face. In today's Gospel, He tells His disciples to, "provide ...an inexhaustible treasure in heaven..."

This is a continual theme, especially in this long stretch of Gospel messages. Over the last month, Jesus has sent us into the world as lambs among wolves, told us who our neighbor is, shared with us the better part of listening and serving, taught us to pray, and warned us of focusing too much on earthly belongings. In all these messages, He is telling us to prepare.

Jesus tells His disciples that His Father is pleased to give us the Kingdom. But in this giving, we must be prepared to receive it. It is not ours to take; we are unable to take this gift on our own. We can only receive it as it is freely offered. Just as we receive Jesus, freely offered in the appearance of simple bread, as we approach Him with our hands open and extended or our mouth and tongue open, we open ourselves to receive God's gift of everlasting life.

And God gives us instruction in His Word proclaimed. And we listen, we prepare, we pray, we serve one another. Every day, we have the opportunity to choose to prepare for the glory God has in store for us.

As a husband, am I doing everything I can to get my wife to heaven? As a neighbor, am I being a blessing to those around me, or a burden? As a deacon, am I fulfilling my vows to serve in this diocese and this parish? We all have our commitments we've embraced. Are we accepting the responsibilities we've undertaken? In whatever vocation we accept, in every endeavor we choose, we are tasked by our Almighty Father to do it well to the best of our abilities, with the same abilities He has gifted us.

And what of Peter's question, "is this parable meant for us or for everyone?"

Just as we must prepare, those responsible for more must prepare more. In my example of the tornado warning at work, someone must develop the training program and implement it; that

person must do well to make sure that everyone is knowledgeable and practiced; that person must report to his superiors that the training is effective, the protocols are in place and the documentation is on file. Much is expected of this person.

Jesus tells Peter that those with whom much is charged, much is expected. This reminds me of the famous adage, “be careful what you wish for.” For example, I love our faith. I love learning more and more about God’s love for us and His plan for our lives. I love the simplicity and beauty of how salvation history is interwoven into our messy and chaotic lives. From Adam and Eve through the apostles and even to today, God is present and active in all this world’s events.

The more I learn, the more I realize I am sorely unprepared for God’s gift. I need to continue to prepare; I need to pray more; I need to serve better. I need to look deeper into the person I am and see what God has in store for me. It doesn’t end with baptism, or marriage or ordination. We continue to grow and learn until we meet God face to face. And I pray that when that day comes, I am prepared.

God wants us to be with Him. He wants us to prepare and tells us how to do so. He has given us everything we need. The choice is now in our hands; we must look deep within ourselves and find what God has in store for us; we must do what it takes to prepare.

And when that moment comes, I pray that we all may hear those beautiful words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”