

Genesis 15:1-6

Luke 12:32-40

Hebrews 11:1-3,8-16

“Let your steadfast love be upon us, O God.
As we hope in you.” AMEN!

We wait in line for coffee or food.

We wait for car repairs and maintenance.

We wait for our loved ones to come home or
to see them again one day.

We wait for healing.

We wait for peace.

Wait, wait, wait...

Are you like me and you hate to wait?

We think that time is wasted while waiting
because it detracts us from the todo list.

Yes, that blessed shot of dopamine we get
when something's accomplished.

How addicting it can be.

Yet, wisdom tells us that waiting is a normal part of life.

It takes time to grow and prepare food.

Time to make repairs and time to mature.

Pregnancies cannot be hurried nor can
healing from physical and emotional injuries
be rushed.

It appears that God is teaching us some
very important things when we find
ourselves waiting.

Some processes take time,
necessary time,
holy time - in order to come to be.

And the truth is sometimes, waiting, is the only option.
(Pause)

Jesus' words today are like bullet points
for humans to ponder while processes unfold.

He said, "Do not be afraid, for it is your
Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions, and give alms.

Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out,
an unfailing treasure in heaven where no one
can steal it nor will it wear out."

These teaching points have not one simple answer

nor are they easy to achieve.

They are challenging to our senses of logic
and self-preservation.

In fact, any attempt to answer are presumptuous,
yet we know two things for sure.

The first is that when we are forced to wait it
becomes abundantly clear that we are not
in control of every circumstance.

An awareness is revealed that says
life is a vocation of powerlessness.

Ohh, that's hard.

In our power conscious culture it is crucial to appear
to be in charge, but waiting serves as a reminder
that we are not running the show.

You see there are boundaries.

A clear line between our power and God's ability. (Pause)

Please note this doesn't mean it's better to do nothing.
That's not what our lessons today reveal.

They reveal the understanding that
human beings need God.

People are not complete without a divine factor,
One out of our control, yet loose in the world,
limitless, and full of love.

No matter how much we think
we're the center of the universe,

we are not, and neither is God at anyone's beck and call.

God is not bound by religion nor is
the Divine burdened by a
single organization's prayers. (Pause)

So, let's say one has taken advantage of the
wait time and thus has come to understand
the completeness with God.

It hasn't happened to me but it has happened
to those who live for others
no longer being afraid.

Revealed by those who've sold possessions
and given the proceeds away to care for the poor.

And seen in those who are patiently prepared
with their lamps ready.

Which lead us to the second thing we know for sure.

We need one another. (2X) (Pause)

Most of us know the devastating accident
Christopher Reeve had.

The actor who played Superman was instantly
paralyzed from the neck down when he fell
from his horse.

He woke up five days later and the news was
scarier than death itself.

His first thought was that he was going to be
such a burden on everyone in his family.

Why not just die, he thought, and save
everyone the trouble.

When his wife Dana came into the room,
Reeve was unable to talk because he
was on a ventilator, but he was able
to communicate these words,

“Maybe we should let me go.”

With tears welling up her eyes, Dana said,
“I am only going to say this once,
I will support whatever you want to do
because this is your life and your decision.

But I want you to know that I’ll be with you
for the long haul, no matter what.”

Then she added these words that saved his life:

“You’re still you. And I love you.”

That was when Reeve made his life affirming decision:

“I can’t drift away from this. I don’t want to leave.”

He lived nine more years.

Not a long time, but in that time,
he wrote memoirs, spoke publicly about
paralysis and advocated for medical research.

He directed an Emmy nominated film and oversaw
the formation and activities of the Reeve Foundation.

Lobbied Congress to increase funding
for stem cell research.

Amazing achievements following a devastating tragedy,
but he couldn’t have done it alone.

Through his experiences (tragedy)
he found a mission built on the desire that
we can do better.

He probably knew, deep down,
that the miraculous innovation wouldn’t
come soon enough for him, but he did it anyway.

(Pause)

That's what the generous parent does.

You don't need to have biological children
to be a generous parent.

You simply work for a better community
for those who come after. (Pause)

Maria Shriver wrote about the suffering,
pain and heartache that we see today.

"Struggle and loneliness," she writes.

"I sense a yearning for something different,
something more spiritual.

What *is* often feels fragile and uncertain,
everything we thought we knew about ourselves
and the world seems to change by the day.

We are told these are unprecedented times,
but I think this is simply life.

In this time, each of us has an opportunity
for introspection, an awakening, AND
a more fulfilling life.

If all the old rules are gone, then that means
it's a good time for each and all of us to dig deep
and ask ourselves why we are here,

what is our purpose, what do I want to become and
what kind of mark do we want to leave on this world.”

We cannot do it all alone.

It will take courage and community to work our way out.
(Pause)

So, that’s the deal.

The kingdom of God journey we are on
makes commitments to one another,
commitments to love and be vulnerable.

To show up.

It sets us up to be hurt.

That cannot be excluded.

The only way to avoid being hurt is
to retreat entirely from others.

Yet, if you and I care for no one but ourselves
we might avoid some hurt and heartbreak
but it’s a path away from God, a journey to Hell.

And inevitably a life full of hurt and heartache. (Pause)

Thankfully we are not in control, nor are we controlling.

We have a community at St. Stephen
that's imperfect, yet resilient.

Worried about tomorrow,
yet generous today.

We ready ourselves and encourage one another
to be prepared for this Jesus who will
keep breaking into our lives and
make all things new.

AMEN!