

“Wait and See” Equals “Your Walk in Faith”

January 29, 2023

Rev. Davena Jones



*The Welcome Table*

Suzy Norris

Readings

Psalm 15

from *Psalms Anew: In Inclusive Language*

by Sister Nancy Schreck and Sister Maureen Leach of the Sisters of Saint Francis

O God, who has the right to enter your tent,  
or to live on your holy mountain?  
Those whose way of life is blameless,  
who always do what is right,  
who speak the truth from their heart,  
whose tongue is not used for slander,  
who do no wrong to friends,  
cast no discredit on neighbors,  
who look with contempt of the reprobate,  
but honor those who fear you,  
who stand by a pledge at all cost,  
who do not ask interest on loans,  
and cannot be bribed to exploit the innocent.  
If they do all this, nothing can ever shake them.

Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

It's a new day, it's a new season, it's a new year, and we are in the last few days of our first month, with eleven months of uncertainty and wonder to go. So far in this New Year we've had storms, snow, rain, floods, uprooted trees, and so much more. We have ongoing Covid outbreaks, variants of flu virus, and RSV. And as pastor Bill stated, we have mass shootings, passing of loved ones, both in our congregations and families. We cannot get through life without losing something or someone important to us. Some of us find comfort expressing grief. Others cry alone. Either way, if we dare to open our hearts to love, there is no avoiding loss and sadness. James Lively says it this way: *Jesus promises that comfort is coming ... and that no loss is overlooked.* Beloved, if you don't get anything else from this sermon today, get this and don't forget it. God sees you. God cares for you. God bears the burden with us in love. In both Psalm 15 and the Gospel of Matthew 5:1-12, which is the Beatitudes, one can centralize oneself in waiting and praying with Faith. And for you, this beloved congregation, in a time of transition and discernment, you are all waiting to see who God will send to serve alongside you in this season. I encourage you all to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in this season.

I know many folks don't care for *The Message* version of the Bible, but for those who are still trying to make sense of the Word of God, *The Message* makes it plain. *The Message* version of Psalm 15 reads like this:

God, who gets invited  
to dinner at your place?  
How do we get on your guest list?

Walk straight  
act right,  
tell the truth.

Don't hurt your friend,  
don't blame your neighbor;  
despise the despicable.

Keep your word even when it costs you,  
make an honest living,  
never take a bribe.  
You'll never get  
blacklisted  
if you live like this.

The first two questions asked here are still being asked today. Who gets invited? What must they do to be added to the guest list? These are strange questions, especially when we as Christians and the Church profess that ALL are welcome. As you prepare for your new minister and new members, I ask you *have you prepared a place, for them at the table here at CCC?* Have you prepared a place in your heart for the new person or new thing or new ministry that God is sending your way in this New Year?

What is read here is the commandment to love thy neighbor as thy self, to be mindful of how we use our words to express and defend ourselves. Once you make a covenant and commitment with yourself, to love yourself as God has created you, love your family and friends, God and the Church, be mindful to keep your word. Be thankful for the diversity of gifts and talents God has called you to share collectively as the body of Christ.

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James Lively writes:

The Beatitudes are not primarily descriptions of how we ought to behave. They are declarations of blessedness for those who don't feel blessed. Jesus pronounces grace on those who need it. What Jesus declares is upside down from ultimate reality.

The poor in spirit get caught up in their doubts and struggle to find a way out. They are a long way from overcoming damage done to them by those who should have loved them. They include those who stand bankrupt before God because of their tattered past. Jesus says the poor in spirit are not cursed, as their current situation suggests. They are blessed. God has compassion and shows them the abundance of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus frees us to admit our poverty of spirit. We no longer need to be ashamed of it or limited by it. We can rejoice that God will overturn the occasion of our spiritual poverty for our edification and God's glory.

During your time of "wait and see," trust God, hold on to your faith with both hands, remember that the very one who made the promises in today's scriptures also lived it, bearing loss all the way to the cross for you and me. God's compassion gives us hope that we will not be forgotten in our grief, trials, tests, and waiting. God promises fulfillment to those who have been waiting for a long time for the world to be as God intends. The way the world is now will not last forever. Trouble don't last always. All God's children will know their worth and will treat each other fairly. Hunger will be fed. Justice will roll. Peace that surpasses all understanding will come. Just wait and see with deep faith. And during that time don't forget to do the Hokey Pokey and put your whole self in with your God, your family, and church! Have a closer walk with Jesus, with rays of hope.