Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost-November 8 2026

Prayer of the Day

O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those young women got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. 11 Later the other young women came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ 13 Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

A bit of commentary:

The parables Jesus tells illustrate his words about the destruction of the Temple and the final arrival of the “on of Man” in glory. The parables in chapters 24 and 25– the fig tree, people taken while others remain, the unfaithful steward, and the bridesmaids point toward the end of time and the restoration of all things. The last parable Jesus tells is the one about sheep and goats where nations will be judged by their treatment of the refugee, the poor, the sick, and the unjustly imprisoned. Matthew’s Gospel is written to the church—in its early days, some forty years after Jesus’ death. So the message about preparedness is for the church. So the question for the church has always been and continues to be “how does the church prepare for the return of the Messiah?”

Robert Farrar Capon (of blessed memory) imagines the parables being different colours; green for growth, like the parable of the mustard seed, purple for passion and selfless grace and finally white suggesting a white hot ultimate love. The parable of the bridesmaids is one of the last stories Jesus tells and it carries urgency because he knows his own days are numbered. Capon's take is that the parables are the judgement of 'faith-in-action'.

You might recall "The Last Lecture" delivered by Professor Randy Pausch who was dying from ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease. He wanted to say all that needed to be said while he was still able. His lecture was formatted into both a book and a video. Jesus' last parables are his attempt to say all he needs to say before his death.

Capon describes the message thus, "Since Christ has already made me new—since there really isn't any of the old me to get in my way anymore—why should I be so stupid as to try to go on living in terms of something that isn't even there?" (Parables of Judgement, page 157). I am reminded of those Jesus heals. The one to takes up his mat and walks doesn't need to lay back down on it for the rest of his life. The very act of getting up and walking because he's healed is the man's 'faith in action'. Paul writes in Colossians 2:6 as we have received Christ therefore we walk in him (literally walk around, live our lives in the newness he brings).

So the word to the church is one of remembering who we are and to live out what's already true—by living the new life the risen Christ has already created for us.