

One of the resources I use when thinking about the next homily suggests that today we listen to our readings as the early Christians did, before anything was written down, and talked about the things that concerned them, and what they had learned.

In line with that I'd like you to imagine yourselves as a group of Christians talking about how things are going in the world. Concerned about the conflict between Donald Trump and his North Korean counter-part, you wonder how much longer this world can last, especially when you also take into account global warming, nuclear proliferation, the lack of response to the plight of refugees, masses of people affected by famine and terrorism, our own political in-fighting with the citizenship saga. And you ask yourselves, when will God step in, or when will Jesus appear to announce the end of time?

As we listen one of the older Christians mentions that St. Paul, in his letter to the Christians of Thessalonica faced just such a situation, where they wondered how much longer they would be able to go on, and when the end would come? St. Paul reminds them that nobody knows when the end will come, telling them not to be so worried, but also not to get too comfortable either. All they need is to be ready, - when the time comes.

With that, someone else in the group remembers one of the parables Jesus told about a master who left his servants in charge of his fortune, while he went away; trusting one with 5 million dollars, another with 2, and a third with just one.

But then, instead of repeating the whole story, he turns to the group, - that is us, and says: "Why are you sitting around nagging and speculating about things you can't control or even guess at? Have you any idea of what you've been given to work with? What are you doing with your millions?"

At that point one of the women chips in: "And what do you think is the point of the story? Do you think it is about how much work the servants did? Do you think about the profit they made, or the risks they took? No, friends, it is about what they had learned from their employer, and who they became by doing or by ignoring their master's work!"

Then all the elders started to speak at once, - and amazingly, they all agreed about the parable's message. The point of the story, they said, was that two servants had learned to love doing what their master did. They had seen him at work, and learned to do it the way he did. They even replicated what he had given them. What a surprise it must have been to them, therefore, when the master hardly paid attention to the money, but said: "Well done.... Now come share my joy!"

Those elders would have us understand that the master in the story isn't really interested in the money, but in what his employees had become, - and God, our Master, wants us to experience that as well, to find out what the business of life is all about, and then He wants to know what has become of us. Servants who imitate their master's way of working, get caught up in his way of living, and so by the time the master returns the servants are already sharing in his joy.

Pity, then, those who refuse to get involved, like that third servant. Given much, they choose not to enjoy it. Unlike the servants who respond with gratitude to the opportunities given to them, the unwilling see everything with suspicion. Refusing **the trust** they are given, they bury their master's offer in a grave, -suffocating their own potential. As those who get involved in the master's work begin to share his joy even before he returns, these others grind their teeth in their darkness and their loneliness, even before it is time to render an account.

If, instead, we want to imagine the daily life of a joyful servant, we can look at the example of the housewife in our first reading. She is shown as the ideal woman, She takes all she has been given, - does more with it, - and dedicates everything she has **and is** to the good of those who need her. She is a hard worker; but there is not one hint that she feels imposed upon or compelled. She enjoys what she does, and that brings joy to others.

Following her example, we can learn how to relish the millions of moments that make up the time of our life.