

Rev. George Arceneaux

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Pentecost 24

This morning, as I consider our gospel story about the 10 bridesmaids and having oil to keep our lanterns lit... I would like to begin by saying I am personally offended. Lo, the very morning I sat down to write this thing I noticed I left my laptop charger when I arrived at the church, thus necessitating an early departure to go back and get it. I have left hats, bags, keys, coffee cups, and bibles in places ranging from restaurant tables to the top of the car. I have wasted a not insignificant period of my life going back for things that I have not remembered.

So for those of you who are here this morning, who are with me in our attention deficits, I hope you join me in saying thank you Jesus, for this parable, I feel seen.

Of course, when you get to it I don't think this parable is one that is entirely about the importance of remembering one's keys or laptop charger. Though as an aside, if you are missing something, St. Anthony is the patron saint of lost objects and a good prayer is "Tony, Tony, come around, something's lost and must be found!" But not, this is not a story about forgetting things, I THINK. Instead, it is a passage that has historically been configured as one of revelation and salvation. The notion of being left behind at the

coming of Christ, for our lack of readying ourselves. That we should prepare, that we should have enough oil for our lanterns as it we, ahead of that judgement day.

I hope it doesn't come as too much of a shock when I say it that thinking about second coming of Christ, and revelation, and the transformation of all things at the end of time is not something that I have definitive answers on. I hope to God that I am, at the end of all things, not left behind because of my consistent forgetfulness. And to be honest, this parable doesn't very much speak to me in that capacity, doesn't really get me excited as I frame it around that judgement day. What excites me about it, is what it has to say about today. Not the distant future, but this amazing day when we baptize Andrew. And it's a really good gospel for a day like today.

Right after I get finished talking we're going to baptize Andrew. He and all of us will speak the promises of baptism. And for all the rites and rituals of the church, all of the smells and bells and prayers, this is the big one. The most significant thing we do. If any of you find yourselves here at the Easter Vigil, that Holy Saturday service we do late at night where we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, historically, that's the place where baptisms would happen. And it was because when Christ is risen, he is risen in us. If you look at your books of common prayer in your pew, that's why the baptism ritual comes right before the Eucharist. Because we get to celebrate the Lord's Supper with him risen indeed in each baptized Christian.

And this isn't just some cheap, superficial thing we say. A part of God is in each of us and the promises we make at baptism are meant to keep us true to who we are called to be. And it's not just in the pieces about coming to church or breaking bread at the Eucharist, though you know, butts in pews and all that. Andrew, when I ask "will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ," that's not about some weird, out there sort of holier than thou sort of thing. That example shows up when I think of you in your hotdog outfit for Halloween. When you enjoy life and share that joy with others, when you are kind to your mother, or your grandmother, or uncle, or brother, or anybody on the street. You have gifts that will be like others' and you have gifts that are totally unique. And the hope of baptism is that you will use those gifts to both enjoy the life you live and to love others, helping them do the same.

And friendly reminder, that goes for everyone here. It means sharing the joys of the mystery novels you read, or the moments you tell a story to someone you love, or when you prayerfully come to this space and join all of us in prayer and worship. It also means that we are there for each other. And doing so is not a once-in-a-while sort of thing. It happens every day.

This parable today, it's great because it reminds us that our baptismal promises to seek and serve Christ in everyone, we have to prepare ourselves for that. The habit of love is just that: a habit. When the time comes we want to be prepared, to like these bridesmaids have our oil ready, to have stocked ourselves up with days and months and

years of being kind to others and trying to make the world a better place. Because the world gets better. People from this church have been opening those adam street doors and gathering supplies for people who are suffering on the street, people from this church have stepped up to teach kids in youth formation and to set up coffee hour, people here and out there are stocking up on the experiences of loving others that make virtue not an extraordinary thing. But something every day.

We neither know the day nor the hour when someone will need us to listen, or to love them. We won't know when we'll need the same. So lets do this baptism with gusto. And let's work on that habit of love with Andrew, and with one another amen.