

# REFLECTION OF GRACE

A Weekly Reflection on Stewardship from our Members



*Sunday, August 7 | Gospel*

*Luke 12: 32-40*

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not be afraid, little flock, 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 thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

"But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."



## GRACE: A GIFT FROM GOD

By Jon Dunfee

Grace: Love, as a freely given gift, comes from God. A gift from God that "forgives our sins, enlightens our minds, stirs our hearts, and strengthens our wills." As we approach this Stewardship season at Ascension, our theme is Grace in Action. How are we putting the gifts of Grace that God has provided us into action?

Today's Gospel from Luke talks to us with a sense of preparation and renewal. Jesus reaches out to the disciples, asking them to embrace God fully and focus not on the ephemeral, material gifts that surround us but on God's eternal gifts. To make purses that collect the gifts from God, purses that "no moth destroys." Then he asks us to prepare ourselves to act at any instant and be ready for God's Grace when we least expect it.

Years ago, I sailed on a ship where we spent weeks at sea. We carried our water with us in tanks and had to be careful how we used it. The result was many little annoyances, but the most significant impact was no baths or showers. The only way we bathed was when it rained. Everyone onboard would be notified when spotting a rain line in the distance.

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We would immediately race to the deck in our swimsuits, douse ourselves with seawater, and lather up with liquid Joy detergent. The timing was crucial – too soon, the sun would bake the soap, and the rain would not take it off. You would end up rinsing yourself with seawater, which left you pretty much where you started. If you lathered up too late, you were in a race to finish before the rain started, meaning you either didn't get completely clean or were left with soap that had to be rinsed again with seawater.

But – if you were ready and timed it just so – you got blasted by a cold rain that took off all the grime and grease. As with most grooming issues in life, this was easier for the men than the women on board, especially for the few of us who shaved our heads and had no hair to rinse. The cold rain would hit, and with our arms raised and smiles on our faces, the soap and grime disappeared. We were left lemony fresh to enjoy the rest of the storm. This state of being was an example of God's Grace falling from the sky. Whether the crew member was the best at their job or the worst, whether they were friendly to all or mean-spirited, God's Grace in the form of rain came down and washed over them, and everyone left with a smile. Well, everyone except those who did not prepare. If you weren't ready for the rain, open to stop what you were doing and head for the deck, then the offer of Grace would pass, and you would be looking forward to the next storm line on the horizon, usually smelling even more like the sea than when you started.

Jesus tells us much the same here in Luke, to be ready for Grace at any unexpected hour. Be prepared to accept God's Grace whenever it appears at our door. And then, be prepared to sit down with our friends and enjoy the love as God serves that Grace. Like standing on a deck and getting cleansed with rain, the joys of Grace are best felt when shared with everyone around you. My challenge to you, then, is to be ready to receive God's Grace and share that Grace with others. Be prepared to put God's Grace into Action, whether it's a donation of time, money, or a smile. Be ready to share God's gift of love to everyone around you, and to help Ascension share that gift of that Grace with the world.

**Question for Reflection:** Are you ready at the door to greet God's Grace and share that Grace through your Stewardship of Ascension?

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