Pentecost 12/School Opening Luke 12:32-40
August 28, 2022 511-508-910*-510
*CW-21 – "Lord Jesus Christ, the Children's Friend"

Jesus Teaches Us Lessons for Life
I. A lesson about who we are.
II. A lesson about our priorities in life.
III. A lesson about the purpose of our lives.

Dear Christian friends,

It may not seem possible but ANOTHER SUMMER has basically **come and gone**. Our school starts this Tuesday. Some schools started already last week.

School years COME AND GO but the lessons **basically** don't change. Teachers and pastors **come and go** but the One who stands behind them is ***"the same yesterday, today and forever."*** These verses illustrate that. **Jesus** is THE TEACHER here with some AGE-OLD LESSONS that are still true today. Jesus here TEACHES US LESSONS FOR LIFE -1)**a lesson** about who we are, 2)**a lesson** about our priorities in life and 3)**a lesson** about the purpose of our lives.

**I. A lesson about who we are.**

Parents – WHO ARE **those children** you get ready and **send off** to school – YOUR children? Teachers – **who are** those children squirming in their desks in front of you – YOUR students? Members of St. Johns – **who are** those children enrolled in our school – OUR children – the future of our congregation? Listen again to what Jesus calls them – calls ALL of us. ***"Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom."***

Parents – those aren't just YOUR children but "children of the HEAVENLY FATHER" **through faith** in Jesus. You are raising them FOR GOD. God holds you responsible for their **physical** and **spiritual** well-being. Teachers – those **aren't just** YOUR students but lambs of the ***"Good Shepherd."*** God hasn't called our teachers TO REPLACE the parents but to ASSIST them ***"in bringing up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord."*** Members of St. John's – those **aren't just** the children of OUR CONGREGATION but JESUS' LITTLE lambs – our younger brothers and sisters in Christ. To us – **parents**, teachers, congregation – Jesus says, ***"Feed My lambs."***

**Our children** are not little angels. Their parents know that – **but then** our children don't have PERFECT PARENTS. Their **teachers** will soon enough know that – but then **parents** and **children** will soon enough know that they **don't have** PERFECT TEACHERS. Our children's sinful natures are CAPABLE of **as many kinds of sins** as our adult ones are. As we UNFORTUNATELY CATCH our **children** being lazy or **disrespectful** – cheating or **lying** – PICKING ON other students – let's not forget HOW OFTEN GOD has caught us in our sins. That's NOT TO EXCUSE their sin but be a needed reminder that we ALL HAVE PLENTY to repent of and that we all live **by grace**. As our love and perhaps **patience** ARE TESTED by our children's behavior let's not lose sight of HOW OFTEN we have caused our heavenly Father ALL KINDS of **grief** and **frustration** with our sins.

WHAT'S AMAZING is hearing Jesus call us His ***"little flock."*** We are not LITTLE ANGELS **by nature** but by faith in Jesus we ARE SAINTS **in God's eyes**. We are sheep of ***"the flock Christ bought with His blood."*** We are God's children NOT BECAUSE we're **such great** people but because God was PLEASED TO MAKE us that in Jesus.

That is such a simple lesson but also the MOST IMPORTANT LESSON **in life**. It is the key to understanding life – **our lives**! Jesus – the **eternal Son** of God – is our Savior. God has given us the CREDIT for Jesus' perfect life. Jesus took the blame for the sins of the whole world and was punished

in our place. **On the cross** Jesus shed His precious blood – sacrificed His innocent life – to ***"take away the sin of the world."*** On Easter morning Jesus came out of His grave ALIVE – the CONQUEROR of the death – and He shares His victory with us. **For Jesus' sake** God has forgiven all our sins. Trusting in Jesus we are promised eternal life in heaven when we die. That's the GOOD NEWS of the gospel. We hear it EVERY WEEK in church. Our children will hear **every day** in school. We know those **simple facts** WELL but we can never know them TOO WELL. We can never hear them TOO OFTEN. We can never out grow them. **Those gospel facts** ARE OUR LIFE! **Trusting** in Jesus we are God's children – SHEEP of the ***"Good Shepherd"*** – heirs of eternal life in heaven.

**II. A lesson about our priorities in life.**

Life and education are BASICALLY NO DIFFERENT than **in Jesus' day**. Sure, there's another 2,000 years of **history** to study. Children back then didn't become COMPUTER TECHNICIANS or **rocket scientists**. But it STILL BOILED DOWN to getting a **good job** – making a **living** – paying your **bills**.

So Jesus teaches us the same lessons about OUR PRIORITIES in life. ***"Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not become old, a treasure in the heavens that will not fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."***

WAIT A MINUTE! If we ***"sell our possessions"*** and give our money to the poor HOW will we pay our bills or take care of our children? Jesus didn't say SELL ALL your possessions and GIVE AWAY ALL your money. But Jesus is teaching us that life is more than HOW MUCH MONEY can we make or having the LATEST STYLES in clothes. We heard Jesus say last week, ***"Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because a man's life is not measured by how many possessions he has."***

By telling us to ***"sell our possessions and give to the poor"*** Jesus is teaching us some IMPORTANT LESSONS. One is that we are to TRUST GOD to **take care** of us. The Israelites in the OT reading – building their homes and barns BEFORE building the temple – that MADE SENSE – but that's not what God wanted.

Or take money's role in our lives. Money buys our **food**, clothes, etc. Money pays our bills and gets us **good medical care**. We SEE MONEY DO that and it looks like the DOLLAR IS ALMIGHTY. It's not surprising that **for many** people money is everything and more money is THE ANSWER for everything. But BY FAITH we know it's really God who provides ***"our daily bread"*** and ***"meets all our needs."*** That would a LOT EASIER **to believe** that if God went shopping with us and opened His wallet at the checkout line but we ***"walk by faith and not by sight."*** We have God's promises and we TRUST GOD to keep His promises.

Jesus is teaching us to make God NUMBER ONE in our lives AND to show that **in or lives**. We DO THAT by making worship and **Bible study** a TOP PRIORITY on our schedules and not the first thing BUMPED OFF the list when we get busy. We do that by PUTTING OTHERS **ahead** of ourselves. Yes, the more I give to **God** and **others** the LESS I HAVE to **spend on myself**. Only it doesn't work that way ACCORDING to **God's** promise. We may give MORE AWAY but we still have enough to **take care** of our needs. God makes sure of that!

Jesus brings home this **lesson on priorities** by comparing the ***"treasures of heaven"*** to what this world has to **offer**. The treasures of **this life** WEAR OUT – they break and **fall apart**. NONE of them can comfort a **guilty conscience** – bring peace with God – keep us from **dying**. But the treasures of heaven ***"will not fail."*** God's forgiveness in Jesus is FULL AND FREE for **every** sin – for **every day**. The privilege of prayer ISN'T LIMITED to **so many minutes** a month and then you're cut off. The comfort and guidance of God's Word can never be FULLY LEARNED or OUT-GROWN. **How** can you put a DOLLAR FIGURE on Holy Baptism and Holy Communion and their blessings? In the face of death WHAT CAN TOP Jesus' unfailing promise, ***"Because I live you shall live also"***? Are those

THE TREASURES of **your** heart? Do YOUR PRIORITIES in life reflect that? ***"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."***

Closely tied to our PRIORITIES in life is our PURPOSE in life. So Jesus also teaches us…

**III. A lesson about the purpose of our lives.**

***"Be dressed, ready for service, and keep your lamps burning. Be like people waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. Blessed are those servants, whom the master will find watching when he comes. You also be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you are not expecting Him."***

Our lives now have a TWO-FOLD purpose. First and foremost we are to BE READY for **Jesus' return** on the Last Day – OR for our death if that **comes first**. The only way to **be ready** is BY TRUSTING in Jesus as our Savior – looking to Jesus **for forgiveness** – counting on Jesus to **bring us** to heaven. There's only one way we can HAVE AND KEEP that faith in our hearts – by faithfully and diligently using the **means of grace**. The less we use our Bibles and the sacraments the WEAKER our faith will be – the EASIER it will be for the devil to pick us off. We need to be STUDENTS of God's Word **every day** of our lives. The catechism is not something to PACK AWAY or HAND DOWN to someone else once we're confirmed. To BE READY for Jesus makes worship – **Bible class** – **daily devotions** – TOP PRIORITIES in our lives and schedules. If that seems like an EXAGGERATION then remember what we are **talking about** – BEING READY **at all times** for Jesus coming to TAKE US HOME to heaven!

The second purpose of our lives is TO SERVE **Jesus** and **others**. If we make education only a MEANS TO BETTER ourselves so we can get a good job and **make big bucks** then we're only teaching our children to BE SELFISH. God has given ALL OF US **different gifts** and talents to be used FOR THE GOOD of our **families** – the **church** – our **country**. As we share with others the blessings God has given us LET'S NOT FORGET to share with them the greatest blessing God has given us – Jesus our Savior.

THOSE are Jesus' lessons for us today. Lessons not just ON LIFE but lessons FOR LIFE. God grant that we learn those lessons well! Amen.

Hymn #910 – printed in the bulletin