18 OT-C “Tick - Tick - Tick” August 3, 2025

[Wind up egg timer and put on altar.] Is that our Gospel today or what!?

How we hear our Gospel depends on how we listen to that clock. Many of us can think of it as a time bomb ticking down to detonation. After all, time is money, right? We are taught that time is a commodity we trade in… we work for so much money per hour. We speak of “wasting time,” “saving time,” “spending time.” Time is a scarce resource. This is why it is so valuable, or at least that’s what we think.

This all gets transferred into how we hear our Gospel today. Once saw a bumper sticker that read, “The one with the most toys when he dies is dead.” Seems to spring from Jesus’ parable today, doesn’t it? With our mindset of seeing time as a commodity we trade in, we hear about “treasure in heaven” and immediately picture a big bank in the sky. Jesus then becomes an investment broker who is advising us to spend our time on Heaven stock. So, we do good deeds (feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, forgive others, worship God on the Sabbath, etc.…) all in order to earn “Kingdom points.”

Now it is true that Jesus wants us to live the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. It is true that doing this “stores up treasure in heaven.” But don’t make the mistake of believing we can somehow “buy” our way into Heaven. We can’t earn a ticket to heaven. Life is not about a big trade between God and us… we trade God our time in this life so he will give us an eternity in heaven. It doesn’t work that way.

It doesn’t work that way because “treasure in heaven” does not equal “credits” we accumulate, rather “treasure in heaven” is time in the presence of God. Think about it, heaven will be spending an eternity before God: basking in his splendor, bathed in his glory… no mediation, no vale of uncertainty. God will again walk in the garden with us. Being before God IS heavenly treasure!

Seeing it this way we realize that time is not a commodity to trade in but a gift. Time is a gift from God given to us so we can choose to be in God’s Presence. So, we can choose to share in the very life of God. (The technical term is “sanctifying grace” = sharing in the very life of God.) And Jesus promises us that if we share in the life of God in this life we will share in it in the next. How do we share in the life of God now? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, forgive others, worship God on the Sabbath, etc.… the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Mercy.

As we listen to our timer, we know that at some point the bell will ring. Of that there is no doubt. The issue is how do we approach the ticking. Is it a commodity we trade or a gift we unwrap? I believe God would have us see it as an opportunity… an opportunity to share in the life of the Trinity. The choice is always ours. How will you choose? The clock is ticking.