

**Readings:** *Wisdom 18:6 – 9; Psalm 32(33):1,12,17 -21; Hebrews 11:1-2,8-19, Luke 12:32 – 48.*

In the Gospel Readings over the last five weeks we have been hearing aspects of the teaching of Jesus which Luke sets during the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.

They are presented as things which the disciple who is following Jesus must take seriously.

We have heard about- evangelism, love of neighbour (meaning anyone in need), choosing '*the better part*', prayer and, last Sunday, the folly of trusting in our worldly possessions.

Today's theme is one which is often implied in Luke's presentation of the Lord's teaching, but in today's Gospel reading it is clearly set out. Jesus tells the disciples: *You must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Chapter twelve continues the teaching we heard last Sunday about the rich fool. Jesus goes on to tell disciples not to be anxious about their material needs, because God will provide. They have a much greater security than possessions, because, he says, *It has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom.* The Greek in *it has pleased* indicates something that has been done once and for all. The kingdom is ours because that is what the Father has decided.

So we can stop worrying about our possessions and concern ourselves only with being ready for the fulfilment of God's promise. This has a practical implication: *Sell your possessions and give alms*, and alongside that a spiritual implication: *Get yourselves...treasure that will not fail you, in heaven.* So we are to be ready at every moment in our lives for the call to enter into the heavenly inheritance which God has promised us.

As so often, Luke provides a striking parable to make the point: *Be like people waiting for their master to return from a wedding.* However late in the night he returns they must be *dressed for action and have the lamps lit* so that they can serve him. But they're in for a surprise: instead of sitting down to his own supper the master will *put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them.* This parable anticipates the Last Supper when Jesus provides his own body and blood as food for his disciples, and (as a response to their debate about who would be greatest in the kingdom) says *I am among you as one who serves* (22:27). In the Father's kingdom authority and greatness have their expression in service.