

## **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PIGLET**

**Genesis 12:1-8 / Luke 12:13-21**

**Preached by Dr. Cahill**

**Babcock Presbyterian Church**

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Winnie the Pooh and Piglet were deep in conversation.

“Pooh,” asked Piglet, “When you wake up in the morning what’s the first thing you say?”

“That’s easy, ‘What’s for breakfast?’” “What do you say Piglet?”

“I say, I wonder what’s going to happen exciting today!”

Pooh nodded thoughtfully, “It’s the same thing”

“Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land I will show you I will make you a great nation and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.””

When I read obituaries I’m always impressed when reading about people who lived for a noble cause greater than themselves and tried to make a difference, people who woke up every morning wondering if something exciting was going to happen and desperately wanting to be part of it.

On the other hand I’m saddened when reading about people who spent their lives in trivial pursuits with the highlight of their lives being something like making a hole in one thirty years ago. Then I wonder, was the obituary an incomplete summation of the deceased’s life? Didn’t he or she ever do anything exciting to make the world a better place?

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves.’” (Luke 12:20-21)

In the Book of Revelation John the prophet was instructed to write letters to each of the seven churches. A few churches were praised, some got mixed reviews and one church was called on the carpet.

“And to the church in Laodicea write...I know your works, you are neither hot nor cold so because you are lukewarm...I am about to spit you out of my mouth...I reprove and discipline those I love. Be earnest therefore and repent. Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into you.” (Revelation 3:15-16)

The Rich Fool wasn't necessarily bad or evil, just foolish. He was the poster boy for mediocrity, bland and insipid, ready to be spit from God's mouth.

Honest people will readily identify with both the insipid members of the church in Laodicea as well as the equally insipid Rich Fool. Far from waiting for the next exciting thing to happen, these folks not necessarily ice cold, but not necessarily blazing hot either, settling for a safe and comfortable existence, content to drift aimlessly, oblivious of the problems of the world.

The Rich Fool is a metaphor for living only for yourself and your own tribe. The Fool's mantra, "Eat, drink and be merry," betrays life, never venturing beyond its safe and cozy comfort zone to the place where Piglet's "something exciting" always happens.

Abraham was an old man who worked hard all his life. He deserved a comfortable retirement with his remaining time on earth devoted to enjoying the fruits of his labors. But God had other plans. "Abraham, go from your country, your kindred, your father's house...to the land I will show you."

You have to wonder if Abraham ever really enjoyed his retirement since he readily accepted God's invitation to pack up and leave behind everything he knew. Though an old man, he was obviously young at heart, rejuvenated by this new, exciting opportunity to completely change the course of his life and not look back. Possibly, for the first time in a long time Abraham discovered a new sense of purpose. Something exciting was about to happen!

Chances are good to excellent God will never ask you or me to do something as exciting as Abraham, but that doesn't mean God won't ever ask you to take risks to reorder your priorities and purpose in life. A time will come when God will shake you up so you can shake things up in your neighborhood, pressing you to escape from your comfort zone into the messy chaos of life. Most of us spend our lives protecting ourselves from the messy chaos. But hasn't God mostly revealed himself in the messy, chaotic episodes of the human story? Periods of peace and calm are necessary and needed, but isn't it in the dangerously chaotic stories of our past that God advanced his Kingdom? But the record shows God's people usually avoided the chaos, or at least tried to, but sometimes we can't.

Look at it this way, if no one ever dared to embrace the chaos, if everyone always played it safe, it would be harder, not impossible, but harder, for God's Kingdom to come, because his will isn't being done on earth as it is in heaven. That's why God calls people like you and me to stop playing it safe because redemption is found in the chaos.

Robert Fulgram, best known for his book *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* keeps a picture of Mother Teresa taped on his bathroom mirror for inspiration. Each morning facing himself in the mirror, he then looks over to see the face of a woman who woke up every morning asking the Piglet question, "I wonder what's going to happen exciting today?"

When Dietrich Bonhoeffer was arrested and jailed after failing to kill Hitler in the July 20 bomb plot he wrote a friend, "I have discovered and am still discovering right up to this moment that it is only by completely living in this world that one learns to have faith. In doing so we throw ourselves completely in God's arms, taking seriously our own suffering, but also those in the world who belong to God. That, I think, is faith."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Mother Teresa both knew it was "only living completely in this world that one learns to have faith" because in doing so, "we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God."

Lent is an opportunity to throw ourselves completely in the arms of God by opening our hearts, minds and souls to Jesus, and equally opening ourselves to the suffering in the world around us. You can't have one without the other. Isolating yourself with the intention of intense scripture reading and prayer, all the while being content to indefinitely stay up on the mountaintop with Jesus isn't good enough. Faith, real faith, only comes when something exciting happens and you roll up your sleeves and take the plunge, mindful of the risks to do something exciting anyway.

When you wake up tomorrow on Monday morning instead of asking yourself "What's for breakfast?" ask the Lord, "What's going to happen exciting today?" Then keep your eyes and ears open. The church in Laodicea and the Rich Fool were more concerned about their breakfast. Abraham, Bonhoeffer and Mother Teresa woke up each morning wondering and waiting for God to make something exciting happen. When they woke up the day before they learned how to experience real faith, absolute trust in God's provision, especially when something exciting and maybe even terrible was happening in their neighborhood and they chose to get involved.

Isn't that how faith is learned, getting involved in risky ventures, putting yourself on the line, trespassing into the unknown in fear and trembling but oddly enough with the assurance of a sleepwalker? Search your memory, when was the gift of faith most alive and kicking, most rewarding? When you were asked to do something great and with God's guidance and support you did your best to do your part. It wasn't all fun and games, sometimes you found yourself at your wits end, but through it all it was exciting.

Last Monday evening there was a small gathering in my study, of Babcock members and a few of our neighbors wondering what God wants people of faith and good will living in Loch Raven Village to accomplish that will enhance the community's quality of life.

I was so pleased when our people shared with the group our weekly charge to the congregation at the end of worship and how it has informed their discipleship. Let's all be ready to throw ourselves into God's arms by throwing ourselves into living completely in the world God gave us as we wait for something exciting to happen and then join in.