

## **“Sleepy Christians...wake uuuup!” (Luke 12:32-40)**

**“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

**“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”**

If we had to describe what the Church in the West is like these days, we could probably say that – she has fallen asleep. That is, we have sleepy Christianity and sleepy Christians.

Why so? Because there are so many who claim that they are Christians, or at least identify themselves as Christians, however there are so few who actually practice what they claim to believe and be.

The words of Jesus from today’s Gospel reading address this exact problem. He reminds us what He expects from us as His disciples and what will happen when He comes back in His divine glory. It is worth knowing.

Jesus uses this analogy with what we would call, a regular Roman household. Analogy that would make perfect sense to His listeners. We live in very different world, and we could use a different analogy. Something from our times.

How about a business owner and his employees? You know that it is not easy to find a good boss, someone who cares for his people as a father cares for his family. But this owner was unusual.

He had gathered His employees from different backgrounds, some of them came with really bad previous experiences. He wasn’t looking for perfect people, he gave work to everyone in need, even to those who didn’t deserve it.

He took good care of his people. Even more, he had promised that when he comes back from this longer business trip, he will actually make them shareholders in his company. They will become co-owners with him. What was his, will become theirs as well.

Then he left. No one knows for how long. The only thing they know is that he will come back. Now, his employees are left on their own. What would the expectations of the owner be?

It is quite obvious. That they will continue to perform their duties faithfully, each according to their responsibilities. Why would he expect that? Because this is how things work, everyone does their part, it's just a common sense.

But what will happen if they don't perform their duties? What is they come up with different excuses, like, 'he is away and we don't know when he will be back'.

'Why worry and spend our efforts, for there are other things that we need to do'. Or, 'we will be made shareholders anyway, we have our rights', – ignoring the fact that they were lazy and unfaithful.

What happens if someone doesn't do their work? What happens with the company? The whole company gets paralyzed, or at least slowed down. The bad example of the few has an impact to others. Why should we continue to be faithful?

Job is not done. Those who remain faithful, they suddenly need to do much more, to cover for the others. What happens with the company's image outside? It is discredited. Good name is lost in the eyes of the world.

What will happen when the owner comes back and finds this? What will he do?

In this analogy Jesus talks about His Church, about us... we are His servants. Even more, we actually belong to Him. He has rescued us from under the power of Satan, and has brought us into His Church. It was not done by paying "with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." (1Pe 1:18-19)

What does Jesus expect from us as His people? Isn't that obvious? That we will be faithful to our promises, to our responsibilities. As He does His part, He expects us to do ours. Besides, what He expects from us, – these are joyful responsibilities.

What are they? They are actually more about receiving than doing. We are to listen to our Lord, when and where He speaks to us, we are to be blessed by His Spirit, we are to receive His blessings in the Divine Service.

We are to learn His wisdom, and to lead our lives accordingly. We are to love and be loved by His family members, by our brothers and sisters in Christ, in His Church, and we are to tell others what Jesus Christ has done for them.

It isn't exactly hard toiling. I can think of many jobs which are much, much harder. And when you think about our rewards, about what Jesus has promised to His faithful disciples. They are mind blowing.

We'll dwell with Him in New Heavens and New Earth. We will see Him face-to-face. We'll be co-heirs with Jesus when it comes to God's Kingdom. All of this is already promised to everyone who is baptized.

However, so many are asleep, so many totally ignore God's generous gifts and their own responsibilities. What happens as a result? They fail their Lord, they don't keep their promises, they don't perform their duties.

They discredit the Church, they give bad example to those inside and outside, and you know how easy people are influenced by bad example. They slow down the whole mission of the Church by not helping.

What do they expect from their Lord, when He comes back? Do they fear what they Lord will say? Or do they assume that they have their rights and no one will dare to judge them. This is how the world often thinks.

Jesus Christ, the same to whom all authority is given, in heaven and on earth, the same to whom the Father has given all judgment, He tells what will happen, and these are scary words:

"The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful." (Luke 12:46)

This is what Jesus said. It makes perfect sense. He, the Son of God, offered His life, He suffered and died, so that He could save everyone. He called us by the Gospel, He sends His Spirit into our hearts, He invites everyone to His heavenly feast. He is ready to welcome everyone. Without any conditions.

Whatever you are, whatever you have done. His forgiveness covers every sin, till the last one. He gives life to you, true life, eternal life. And He does it motivated by His grace and love, without any merit or worthiness of ours.

He has done and does all of this. All of this is His generous gift to us. If after all of this, someone is that arrogant as to reject it, then they have made their own choice. They have chosen death over life, then have chosen eternal separation from God, instead of eternal blessedness in His presence.

As famous Christian writer C. S. Lewis put it: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "your will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "your will be done." All that are in Hell, choose it. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek, find."

Then Jesus goes on describing wonderful joys of the faithful: "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will

dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes... and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!"

Our God is giving God, generous God, serving God, self-sacrificial in His love. We can see it everywhere. In how He abundantly provides for our daily bread. In how He came to save us in Jesus.

In Jesus earthly ministry, where He showed to His disciples, what it means to be the greatest, that is, to be the servant of all. He took care of His disciples, even on the last night He washed their feet and fed them with His Holy Meal.

He still does it, every time when we come together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, it is Him, who invites us and serves us. Sure, He does it through a pastor who stands in His place, but it is Jesus who provides for us His life-giving Sacrament.

And this is only a beginning, this is only a foretaste. When our Lord comes back, – we don't know when it will happen, but we know it will happen, – then all His faithful children, all who are awake will be served by Him.

As John the apostle wrote, from Him, from Jesus Christ we receive grace upon grace. He blesses us abundantly already here. He fills us with His joy in the middle of this life's sorrows.

He fills us with His peace, in the midst of this world's troubles and tribulations. He comforts us with His presence as He dwells with us, and He allows us to experience a glimpse of the Kingdom to come, through love and support of our brothers and sisters around us.

And when He comes in His glory we will live with Him in eternal joy and blessedness. It is worth staying awake, it is worth being faithful servants. For your reward will be great.

And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Jesus Christ.

Amen.