

10. August 2025
Loving watchfulness

Lk 12:32-48

There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions and give to those in need. Get yourselves purses that do not wear out, treasure that will not fail you, in heaven where no thief can reach it and no moth destroy it. For wherever your treasure is, that is where your heart will be too. See that you have your belts done up and your lamps lit. Be like people waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. In truth I tell you, he will do up his belt, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch that he comes, or in the third, but blessed are those servants if he finds them ready. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Peter said, 'Lord, do you mean this parable for us, or for everyone?'

The Lord replied, 'Who, then, is the wise and trustworthy steward whom the master will place over his household to give them at the proper time their allowance of food? Blessed that servant if his master's arrival finds him doing exactly that. I tell you truly, he will put him in charge of everything that he owns. But if the servant says to himself, "My master is taking his time coming," and sets about beating the menservants and the servant-girls, and eating and drinking and getting drunk, his master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know. The master will cut him off and send him to the same fate as the unfaithful. The servant who knows what his master wants, but has got nothing ready and done nothing in accord with those wishes, will be given a great many strokes of the lash. The one who did not know, but has acted in such a way that he deserves a beating, will be given fewer strokes. When someone is given a great deal, a great deal will be demanded of that person; when someone is entrusted with a great deal, of that person even more will be expected.'

Jesus today speaks of a small flock that should not be afraid.

In the face of today's worldwide Catholic Church, this seems strange at first. But remember the words of Pope Benedict, who said that in the future the church will be smaller, a "small herd".

How is that possible when we think of the large number of Catholics? However, if we look more closely at the following text, it becomes clearer why it is a "small herd".

This little flock is very determined in following the Lord, it has distanced itself from earthly possessions, or even left it altogether, to give the money to the poor.

Do we Catholics live that way?

Who owns our heart? Does our heart belong undivided to our Lord?

With these hints of the Lord we notice, which criteria the "small herd" make. If we continue to follow the text, we will see it even clearer.

The small flock are determined believers who are among those who seek God primarily. Only this attitude enables us to really wait for the Lord and look for Him! It is an attitude of loving attention as a bride waits for her groom.

If we keep the last picture in mind, then we will notice very quickly that this inner tension with the Lord is not seldom lacking. At this point there is often a stronger Connection to this world, a lack of distance to it, too intense a preoccupation with the earthly events, which can easily take over one too easily!

Or take the picture that our hips should be girded and our lights should burn. That sounds like a war, or at least a willingness to go into it when the Lord calls us.

Or, if we suspect the approach of a thief who wants to rob us, we take the strained attention. Everything in us adjusts to a defense of the thief.

Jesus gives us all the pictures to show how we should live. The imitation of Christ is not content with a general positive attitude to the teachings of the gospel or the affirmation of a Christian culture. It calls us to earnest repentance, to abandon false securities, to devote ourselves fully to God and to serve others.

The Lord wants to find us active in the Kingdom of God and with endurance, for we do not know the hour of His return nor the hour of our death. The positive tension in the different pictures is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, which makes us attentive to God. He does teach not to lose the time. This is not a tense and fearful act, that we do something wrong, because this would not make our faith attractive! No, it is the loving attentiveness of the bride for the groom always looking for him and doing everything in view of him. If you asked her why she did that, then she would answer, "Because I love my groom."

It is exactly this attitude that the Lord desires in relation to Himself: the loving watchfulness to realize what His will is. To live that way, we cannot become unnecessarily entangled in this world. The earthly realities must not come first and cloud to look to God. Not the belief in the Lord is added to our life, but the faith is our life. Just as the bride not only loves her groom, but he is the center of her earthly love. So the Lord wants to be the center of our love.

When we are busy doing everything in His will the Lord will serve us. Then we may also hope to be among His "small flock", which He will always lead to good pasture.