

November 3, 2024 – All Saints Sunday

“Servants of the Messiah” by Pastor Julio Romero

Gospel: John 11:32-45

A Persian legend tells us that a certain king needed a faithful servant and had to choose between two candidates for the office. He hired both at fixed wages and told them to fill a basket with water from a nearby well, saying that he would come in the evening to inspect their work. After dumping one or two buckets of water into the basket, one of the men said, "What is the good of doing this useless work? As soon as we pour the water in, it runs out the sides."

The other answered, "But we have our wages, haven't we? The use is the master's business, not ours."

"I'm not going to do such fool's work," replied the complainer. Throwing down his bucket, he went away.

The other man continued until he had drained the well. Looking down into it, he saw something shining at the bottom that proved to be a diamond ring. "Now I see the use of pouring water into the basket!" he exclaimed. "If the bucket had brought up the ring before the well was dry, it would have been found in the basket. Our work was not useless."

The message in this story is that when God's blessing does not fully coincide with your expectations, remember to wait until the well is dry. There may be something precious at the bottom.

There is one line in our Gospel for this All-Saints Sunday that I can easily connect to the story I just told you.

“Expectations” is the word I want to focus on. When the Lord Jesus was told to go to Lazarus’ tomb, the Bible says that he “wept” and that some of the people who had come to support Lazarus’ sisters and accompany them in their grief said this about Jesus: “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Obviously, the people who said that had knowledge of Jesus’ miracles. Restoring the sight to a blind person is not a miracle you hear about every day. Surely, the news of that miracle spread like fire so that everyone knew or heard.

Now, those Jews, who at least for that moment came to believe in Jesus as a healer and miracle worker, expected that Jesus could have kept Lazarus alive, could have healed him and prevented his death. But the story had not finished yet, and very soon they would see what the Prophet Isaiah had written about Him.

Do you remember Jesus' first message at his hometown of Nazareth after his baptism? The day he opened the Book of Isaiah and read the text where it says "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor*".

This is what the Prophet Isaiah expected the Messiah to do, and that is what the Lord was doing, He was restoring sight to the blind, He was proclaiming the Good News of God, liberating people from all sorts of demons and illnesses, and announcing the beginning of a new era for the entire humankind.

He was fulfilling the expectations that the Prophet Isaiah had of the Messiah, the Anointed One. But there was more, and the people who had come to comfort Mary and Martha for the loss of their brother were about to witness an even greater miracle, the Resurrection of Lazarus.

The Prophet Isaiah was not the only one who had expectations about the Messiah. The rest of the Jewish people in general had a clear description, a clear picture of what the Messiah was going to be and do. He was going to liberate them from all their oppressors, make their nation a powerful and prosperous nation again, and then rule over them with justice.

People have always had expectations about the Messiah, and most of them are about what the Messiah can do for us but nothing about what we can do for the Messiah.

For us Christians, the Messiah and Saviour is our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was born of the Virgin Mary, taught us the Word of God, died on the cross and on the third day was resurrected. Like most people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Messiah, and Saviour, we too have expectations about Him and like people before us, those expectations are always about what the Messiah can do for us and not so much about what we can do for the Messiah.

We expect our Lord Jesus Christ to bless us, to heal our illnesses, to keep us safe, to solve our problems but sometimes when things don't come or happen the way we pray and want, we lose faith, we lose trust in Him.

Remember the story I told you at the beginning, one of the two workers gave up on the job that was given to him by his king. He saw no use in taking water with a bucket out of a well to fill a basket. That is nonsense he said, the basket would never hold the water, would never be filled, but the other worker continued one bucket of water at a time until he dried the well. It was then that he found the diamond ring.

One bucket at a time, he was doing his job for the king without knowing what the King had prepared for him, without knowing the big reward at the end.

Well, it is not much different for us. The King has told us to love our neighbours, to be servants, to be kind, humble and generous, to be messengers and witnesses of His Gospel. Parents of Jack and Elliot, today you are doing your service to the Messiah, King and Saviour our Lord Jesus Christ. By bringing your children to the baptismal font you are serving Him, and I can tell, you serve Him in many other ways too. All this and much more are the things that we can do for the Messiah.

As we do these things, it may all seem to us like one bucket of water out the well of life, but let me tell you as we serve the King, the Messiah, we find little diamonds we call blessings, and the biggest diamond is the blessing of eternal life. Those who have gone ahead of us, and whose lives we remember today, have found that diamond and all because of what the Messiah did for them, and for their faithfulness and service to our King and Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let's continue being servants of the Messiah and King Jesus Christ and let's open our eyes to the little diamonds we find as we serve Him, until we are rewarded with the biggest diamond ever, the gift of eternal life. *Amen.*