



# Resources & Reflections

Week of October 4<sup>th</sup>

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## THE JOURNEY – A PARABLE

Once upon a time there was a man living in a certain kingdom who received an invitation from his king to come to dinner. Something inside him was excited as never before by the invitation. Something was afraid as well. Would he have the right clothes to wear? Would his manners be good enough for his lord's table? What would they talk about when they were not eating? Above all, the man was frightened by the long journey to the king's castle.

So what did the man do? Well, he spent one month deciding what to wear and buying the clothes he did not already have. He spent two months learning the rules of etiquette and practicing them as he ate. He spent three months reading up on all the latest issues faced by the kingdom so he would have something to say.

Finally he faced the journey itself. By trade the man was a carpenter. He built small houses and extra outhouses and garages better than anyone else. After he had packed the clothing and food he thought he would need for the journey, he had room for only a little more. So he decided to pack a few tools, enough to permit him to build adequate overnight shelter on the journey. Then he started out.

The first day he traveled through the morning and early afternoon, stopping only to eat some lunch. Then he set about constructing a rough shelter to spend the night in. After a few hours labor he had a small, safe, dry place to sleep. The next morning as he was about to start out again, he looked at the shelter he had built. He began to notice places where it could be improved. So instead of resuming the journey right away, he began to make improvements on his little dwelling. Well, one thing led to another, garage to kitchen to indoor plumbing, and so on. Soon, he had pretty much forgotten about the invitation and the journey.

Meanwhile the king was beginning to wonder about the man. And so, as kings are able to do, he arranged for another person who was also traveling to the dinner to stop by and see how the man was coming along.

When the king's friend found him, the carpenter was living in his second house. He had sold the first one to someone, remembered the invitation, and moved on for a day or so. However, he had soon settled in and built a even bigger and better house on the profits he had made from the sale of his first one. The carpenter was only too happy to invite the visitor in for lunch; but while he was content to accept the offer of food, the visitor said he preferred to eat out in the yard under a tree.

"Is there a reason you don't want to come inside?" asked the carpenter, immediately wondering if his house wasn't quite right in some way. "Why yes," replied the visitor. "You see, I am on a journey to have dinner with the king of our land. It is important for me to stay on the journey. Perhaps after lunch you would like to come with me?"

"What you say sounds familiar to me," said the carpenter. "I think I too received an invitation to have dinner with the king, but I have been a little bit uncertain of the way."

"I know," responded the stranger. "I was once uncertain as well. As a matter of fact, once I was a carpenter just like you. I too wanted to build safe places along the way to stay in. One day, another person on the journey helped me learn how to unbuild instead of to build. He helped me leave the house I was living in and trust the journey itself. I was worried about following the right path. He told me that there were a number of paths that would lead to the dinner. The king had set it up that way, and the king had also set up warnings along the wrong paths. The important thing was simply to put one foot in front of the other with love and trust. I was also worried about what I had left behind. To this he said that the king had seen to it that everything worth saving would be at the castle waiting for me."

"What you say is certainly of comfort. It helps to know that you have been just like me," said the carpenter.

"Well then, why don't we let go of this house and get on with the journey?"

"I don't know. Maybe. Can I sleep on it?"

"I suppose."

"May I fix a bed for you?"

"No," countered the visitor. "I will just stay out here under the tree. It is easier to notice the wonderful things the king has put along the way when you aren't looking out from inside something you have put up to protect yourself."

The unbuilder waited outside all night. The next morning the carpenter indeed had decided to resume the journey. Together they prepared to set out.

"Well," asked the carpenter. "Which way shall we go?"

"Which way seems right to you?" replied the unbuilder.

"I'm not sure."

"I'll tell you what. Let's just sit here a few minutes and think hard about the king. Remember the stories you have been told about him. Remember how much you love him. Remember how much he loves you. When you have remembered as clearly as you think you can, consider the paths that lie before you and see which one seems to satisfy your longing for, and remembrance of, the king. Let your desire to be with the king become more powerful in you than your uncertainty and fear about choosing the right or wrong path."

Silently they sat through the morning in the carpenter's front yard. Slowly it began to seem as though they were already on the journey. As that feeling grew and grew, it suddenly didn't seem like any decision needed to be made; it just happened. With a deep sense of freedom they were off.

Many of the days went just like that, new steps out of silent beginnings and pure desires. They simply waited until the sense of journeying wrapped itself around even their waiting, and then they were off without worrying whether they were on the "right" path or not. In the stillness of their hearts they made room for the path and the path seemed to come to them.

Of course the carpenter still felt the need to build a home from time to time. The unbuilder made sure he understood what he was doing and then let him do it if he really wanted to. While the carpenter labored, the unbuilder, his guide and friend, would continue the silent waiting in the yard under a tree, and soon they would unbuild yet another house and begin the journey again.

In the meantime the king kept the food warm, which he was very good at doing.

# A WEEK OF SCRIPTURE READING

## **Sunday - 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost October 4<sup>th</sup>**

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 19  
The Epistle Reading: Philippians 4:1-9  
The Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:33-46

## **Monday - October 5**

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 5  
The Gospel Reading: Luke 6:39-49

## **Tuesday - October 6**

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 146  
The Gospel Reading: Luke 7:1-17

## **Wednesday - October 7**

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 89:1-18  
The Gospel Reading: Luke 7:18-35

## **Thursday - October 8**

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 147:12-20  
The Gospel Reading: Luke 7:36-50

## **Friday - October 9**

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 148  
The Gospel Reading: Luke 8:1-15

## **Saturday - October 10**

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 149  
The Gospel Reading: Luke 8:16-25

## **Sunday - 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost October 11<sup>th</sup>**

Psalm for the Day: Psalm 106:1-5, 47-48  
Old Testament: Isaiah 25:1-9  
The Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:1-14



*If mail is slow in reaching you,  
We provide a Sunday start  
for the coming week.*

# THE HOPE OF TOMORROW



After Martin Niemöller, a leader in the German Church, had been in a concentration camp for eight years as the personal prisoner of Adolf Hitler, he penned these words:

“First they came for the Socialists,  
and I did not speak out -  
because I was not a Socialist.  
Then they came for the Trade Unionist,  
and I did not speak out -  
because I was not a Trade Unionist.  
Then they came for the Jews,  
and I did not speak out -  
because I was not a Jew.  
And then they came for me -  
and there was no one left to speak for me.”

## ST. AUGUSTINE'S FAMOUS PASSAGE:

“What do I love when I love my God,”

“It is not physical beauty nor temporal glory nor the brightness of light dear to earthly eyes, nor the sweet melodies of all kinds of songs, nor the gentle odor of flowers, and ointments and perfumes, nor manna or honey, nor limbs welcoming the embraces of the flesh; it is not these I love when I love my God.

“Yet there is a light I love, and a food, and a kind of embrace when I love my God — a light, voice, odor, food, embrace of my innerness, where my soul is floodlit by light which space cannot contain, where there is sound that time cannot seize, where there is a perfume which no breeze disperses, where there is a taste for food no amount of eating can lessen, and where there is a bond of union that no satiety can part. That is what I love when I love my God.”