

Roper 14, Year C, 2010
Luke 12:32-40
The Rev. Ronald N. Johnson

In the gospel reading today, Jesus told us not to live in anxiety about the state of our souls, because it is God's pleasure to "give us the Kingdom." These are comforting words and Jesus intended them to be comforting words, because he taught that God loves humanity. God's desire, arguably his greatest desire, is that humanity live in that perfect state of peace that we call heaven. But note that I said this is God's desire, not his divine decree. God gives us free will and therefore the ability and the propensity to do life our way and not God's way. When we do life our way, at the expense of God's, then that perfect peace escapes us.

Some years ago, in the early 1980's, a Christian psychiatrist, Scott Peck wrote a book titled *The Road Less Traveled*. It was quite popular at the time. I'm sure many of you read it. The opening sentence read, "Life is difficult." For anyone over the age of thirty, that is a classic "no-brainer." Life is difficult, but what takes us through life's rocky and perilous path with hope, if not confidence, is faith – faith that God loves us and will guide us along life's path. Jesus reassures us of this in this morning's Gospel reading.

But today's gospel also tells us that while God will guide us, we are the ones that have to make decisions in life and then take actions. We are accountable for our actions. And Jesus tells us that our day of reckoning will not necessarily come when we expect it. We need to be prepared. If we put all of this together, and consider that the classic Christian theology of salvation requires that we be in a state of "necessary grace," at the end of our days, then the message for today is clear. Grace comes when one's faith in God is reflected in the unselfish love of God and neighbor. Jesus said, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. When we have come to the point in life where we can let go of selfishness, in order to truly love God and our neighbor, then God has somebody he can work with and we can get on with the business of joyful living.

You see, Christianity is really very simple. You can put it all in a very small nutshell. God loves us. In fact, he loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to take away our sin and lead us in the path of righteousness, and when we follow, by loving God and one another as Christ loves us, by forgiving one another as we are forgiven, by serving one another as Christ has served us then we find ourselves dwelling in God's eternal peace. The kingdom is ours. *Amen.*