

Fourth Sunday in Lent  
March 26/27, 2026

Scripture calls us heirs of the promise. It is a little different than the way of this world, for it is in our death that we inherit the kingdom, for we have not yet received what the Lord has promised. Yet, it is already ours already.

Jesus declared that He is making all things new. If He is making things new, what does this mean for us? Look around and what do you see? The things we knew are seen in a different way through Him. The contrast between good and evil has been made more clear with each passing day. Or has it?

This age has been a battle of the will. Shall we do as we please, or live within constraints? The more I study of the varied cultures that have existed the more I see the commonality in humanity of this battle. The strong prey on the weak, by and large, many seem to want to do as little as possible, and there are those who like to have things always go their way. There are wars and rumors of wars. This is the way of the world, but our Lord has placed a call upon us to not live in the way that is a death of the self, but into the life for which He created us. But this is difficult too.

If you are in Christ, you are a new creation. What does this mean? Jesus answers the question in the parable of the Prodigal Son. There are several types of people described in this story. The story itself points us to the condition of this world. There is the father who loves his sons. There is the elder son who is dutiful, but resentful, the younger son who is selfish, and those who take advantage of others. The story points us to the human condition.

It is said that twenty percent support the other eighty percent in any organization. There are those who will be great friends as long as the party continues, but when there is no more to give to those who are in revelry, they move on. They are not friends, just those who are taking advantage. There are those who want to be important and will frivolously waste their resources for the sake of seeming important or popular, all in the name of having a good time. There are those who work hard, but they may be covetous, selfish (in their own way) and are even jealous of others who seem to always be having a good time. There is the father who has raised the two boys, each seeming opposite of the other, but he loves them as they are. But we ought to be cautious of taking too literal a view of this story. Jesus is making a point and the point is what we ought to pursue.

If we compare this life to eternity, what is it but a few moments and then gone. What is the goal of our faith? Through the eyes of the characters in this parable, the goal is going to be different for each kind of person. Those who hang on and party will hedge their bets. If a particular fellowship is doing well, they will join and ride the wave of what they consider fun. If the wave passes and the fellowship enters into difficulty, they are the first to move on to another place. There are those who serve themselves.

There is the second group who are seeking to be what they are not, at least in terms of this world. Taking what resources they have, they will waste them seeking to find that which will satisfy their longing. They will be lavish with so-called friends in order to believe they are important, popular, acceptable in a crowd. With this new found status, they believe they wield power. It is a life of wishful thinking.

The third group are the hard working folk who look down upon those they believe are wasting things in order to have a good time. Depriving themselves, their life is their work and they toil at it even though they are not enjoying what they are doing. There is no joy in their

lives. If another comes along and seems to be having too good a time, they will grumble and complain. We often see this with an attitude that weighs carefully whether or not another deserves to receive what is given. Superiority sets in and the comparisons of one against another are constant.

There are those who love others. Even amidst great dysfunction, they will accept people as they are, caring for them without any notion of correction. You see, in many ways, this story tells us of the condition of this age. No one is exempt, we each have our parts, but this does not mean that all is well. The party people may move on and out of the scene, as seems to have happened in our time where people no longer act with any idea that the fellowship of the church has any merit. The party animals have moved on.

That leaves us with the three types we do find amongst those who still participate in the life of the church. Those who go along to get along look at others constantly with hope. Those who work hard and resent the ones who do not seem to be working get things done. Those who are constantly looking for a good time, a sense of authority or power, and are willing to use the resources of others to accomplish this will always be in every crowd. This is a description of sinners.

But what about us? Has not Jesus been calling us to be a people who repent of these things? We may each have our particular sinful inclinations, but our Lord has called us into a new life. Every good gift spoiled by sin has underneath it the good gift God has given for His purpose. It is not a matter of us shedding the good gifts of the Lord, but coming into repentance and living according to the way of the Lord.

Jesus has come to rescue us from sin, death, and the devil. Each of the personalities which God has created are needed. Too often, we in the church debate over which is the best kind of person rather than looking at Jesus and realizing that it is He who calls together all fellowships. If we step back and see simply the pattern our Lord is showing us, we see that He is calling for us to work together as one. We need each of the types of people in order to become balanced in the Lord.

There is a time to rejoice, celebrate, and fellowship with one another. There is a time to work hard and get things done. There is a time to not be so concerned with the behaviors of others, but move forward in unity knowing that we are each different. It is not one of these things, but all of them. Is not the creation of our Lord diverse? So also, there can be unity in diversity, but that unity is our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Anything else will take us right back into the realm of the sin which has caused the mess of this world in the first place.

We hold all things in common through our Lord and Savior, Jesus. It is He who has called us. It is He who must lead us. It is He who will bring us to the Father. It is He who has declared that we are stewards of the mystery of the faith we have been given through the grace He gives. He who knew no sin became our sin in order that we who know sin may be made righteous. We are reminded that Jesus has come to save us from the way of this world in order that we may become like Jesus and be prepared to live in His eternal kingdom.

Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in and through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Know that He has begun a good work in You. Not only in you, but in us as He leads us forward together, each with our own gifts. One of the true interpretations of this story is that our Lord will bring families who are made up in diversity together for the Father's will to be done. Such are we. Let us move together in the unity of our faith in Christ knowing that He will complete what He has begun in each of us and in us together. Amen.