

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-10, 13-15 ~ Luke 16:19-31

God's Business

16th Sunday after Pentecost ~ September 25, 2022

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Introduction to Second Scripture Lesson

"Please mom, may I be excused from the table, now?" I remember my impatience when I was a kid and had finished every bite on my plate and was more than ready to go play or do *anything* but still sit there while the grownups kept on talking and talking and talking. I'm guessing that the Pharisees and scribes who had done that grumbling about Jesus welcoming sinners and eating with them, way back in Luke 15:2, were surely *more than ready* to bolt from this table. Jesus responded to their grumbling with not one or two, but five parables, to teach them and us why he chose to eat with "those people." The fifth parable does not end with a party, the like the first three did. Remember the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son? They ended with big celebrations and joy. This cautionary tale ends with a chilling, chiding warning.

I will remind you that at this point in Luke, as Jesus makes his way on his long and winding journey to Jerusalem, he can almost see that cross on the horizon. Time on earth for him, is running out. And we need to hear what he has to teach us. So please, stay at Jesus' table now, for just a little while longer. This is the last parable he will tell at this table, perhaps it could be titled, "Just desserts."

Sermon

Are we listening?

Are we convinced?

Are we doing God's business?

God's business is listening and noticing.

It's being convinced because someone certainly *did* rise from the dead.

And that certain someone rises from the dead again and again and again:

Every time, any time

Some-one, any-one, any-two-or-three decide to gather together to

Get down with

Get up to

Get into

Get around to:

The nitty-gritty business of the shalom-maker, bread-baker, high-risk taker God.

How many ways does he have to say it, play it, tell it, be it: I'm all about REDEMPTION.

We got the memo. But did we *get* it?

This redemption business is our business.

It is our bees wax because it is God's bee's knees.

God's high-risk investment in
 YOU and ME and US and this WHOLE WIDE WONDERFUL WOUNDED WORLD
 That God decided to create for us
 And for every other creature on this earth
 Interdependent, interwoven, everyone:
 Redemption of one is redemption for all.

Are we listening?

Are we convinced?

Are we doing God's business?

God showed us how. God gave us the plan, the business model, the spreadsheet which is Jesus:
 Rows and columns that add up to a cross.

Christ made his power point:

He told us, and showed us, in living-breathing-suffering-dying, rising-again color.
 Christ's way that is not our way, Christ's way that is Moses and the prophet's way,
 The super high-way,
 the infrastructure of Shalom.

That brings not just some, but all together again.

That binds and reminds the binary mind to become whole again.

That relentlessly searches for the lost coin, sheep, son:

Until all that is lost, is found; Until all that is broken, healed.

Reunir for far and near.

Are we listening?

Are we convinced?

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Like Jeremiah buying a piece of property
 For exactly seventeen shekels of silver: signed, sealed, weighed for posterity;
 Defying every rule of savvy investing
 Just check it out on Zillow: The field at Anathoth is worthless.

Even while Jerusalem was burning around him

The acrid smell of defeat: stinky, humid, humiliating;

Can't you see, Jeremiah? Game over. "Come on Jeremiah, give it up!"

We have your body chained to the ground. You can do nothing.

Your day is done. Gone the sun.

You're toast: tried, tested and foolishly failed.

But Jeremiah heard God say, "Buy, Jeremiah, buy!" He heard the call of Shalom:

Put your money on me and the future I promise you:
 High risk... High return: all the way from here to the highest heaven.

Are we listening?

Are we convinced?

Are we doing God's business?

Put your money on me: The turn-around God of the second chance
 The Only One, the Certain Some One
 Who can teach the things that make for shalom.
 The things that can heal and redeem the world.
 Salvation is the bottom line in God's business plan.

When we look at the "Lazarus" people, the poor people, at our gate,
 The hungry, the food insecure,
 The sick and undoctored,
 The displaced, unhoused, unhinged, upended
 "those people"

Do we see the face of Jesus calling out to us, pleading with us:
 "I am hungry, are you giving me food?"
 "I am sick, are you taking care of me?"
 "I am a stranger, are you welcoming me?"

Maybe, like the rich man, we don't even see them, we step around them.
 We live on different planes, different schedules, parallel universes,
 Not on our radar; not our business.
 The chasm fixed. Getting wide, wide, wider than the Grand Canyon.
 How did they get that way, anyway?

Are we listening?

Are we convinced?

Are we doing God's business?

Not *that* business plan again, God. We've heard you try to push it before.
 The very one that Moses, and the prophets and then Jesus
 let loose with in his home town synagogue in Nazareth.
 And he barely escaped with his life. Yup, that five-point plan:

- ✚ Bring good news to the poor.
- ✚ Release the captives.
- ✚ Recover sight to the blind.
- ✚ Free the oppressed.
- ✚ Proclaim the jubilee year of debt cancellation

I guess that means we have to actually see them to free them.

See them and listen to them, with eyes and hearts and hands wide open.
until we, feel their pain and our pain, like Jesus did and does.
And then do something about it.

Like what?

Take a page from Jeremiah's book:

When we hear God saying "buy" we make it our business to "buy in"
no matter what the risk may be.

Take a page from Jesus:

He told us, and showed us, in living-breathing-suffering-dying, rising-again color.
Christ's way that is not our way, Christ's way that is Moses and the prophet's way,
The super high-way,
the infrastructure of Shalom.

That brings not just some, but all together again.

That binds and reminds the binary mind to become whole again.

That relentlessly searches for the lost coin, sheep, son:

Until all that is lost, is found; Until all that is broken, healed.

Be listening!

Be convinced!

Let's get down to God's business!