

CRIBB<S>NOTE – November 16, 2008

What are you doing with your money? How are you living your life? Is there anything that may cause you to hold back and be afraid?

In this post 9/11 era, we are inundated with alerts and warnings about potential threats. While we are told to remain vigilant and on guard, for the most part those messages serve merely to increase our fears as they fail to provide comfort or security. Now, we face even greater concerns as the economy dips deeper into crisis. Money put away to provide for retirement is vanishing. Experts who explained the value of investments are back-peddling and admitting their advice was not necessarily accurate or helpful. These are amazing times when old paradigms are giving way to unprecedented opportunities...extravagant opportunities.

The parables in the Matthew Gospel remind us that Jesus' return will come like a "thief." This is not about a timetable as much as it is intended to prod people of faith to live in preparation. Isn't that what we are called to do in this special period of uncertainty and transitions?

The temptation to hoard money and hide our lives indoors can be enticing. Bad news permeating almost every aspect of society can push us away from the exciting centers of robust engagement and slip us into the false security of sheltered life. Along with the repetitive instruction for us not to be afraid, Jesus used stories to encourage his followers to embrace meaningful living. That means using our resources to enrich experiences and share our gifts and talents with others so they can enjoy life more fully.

Jesus does not allow life to be dictated by color-coded alerts that tell us how to move around with caution. Instead, he pushes us to enter the throes of daily engagement with confidence that God controls everything.

Are you willing to step outside without fretting about what might happen next; without becoming paralyzed by worry; without holding back and reserving your talents for a "more opportune time" that fits conveniently within a schedule forced by circumstances?

Within the core of Jesus' parables is a message that frees us to view the world more globally and invites us to place our lives where others strive and share their talents. This is a lesson about stewardship in which we discover the overwhelming joy of generosity and authentic presence. "Free we receive; freely give."