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-- It shouldn't be a surprise to most of you that the gospel reading (or at least its short form) is one of the choices for a funeral Mass. After all, death is a fact of life we cannot evade, and unlike a wedding, none of us can predict its precise timing.

-- So, for us who believe that we will meet Christ when we die, the Son of Man will come at a time we do not know. Our family chose this gospel for my dad's funeral. Though he had heart issues and diabetes, he had no warning that God would call him in the wee hours of October 28, 1994.

-- He didn't complain of shortness of breath the day before when he played golf. The evening before, my mom set their alarm clock for 6am so they would get an early start for their trip to Pennsylvania that Friday morning. He did not wake up to that alarm.

-- By the time Luke's gospel was written, some 50-60 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, the initial belief that Christ would come any day was starting to wear off among Christians. Along with that, some were beginning to get lax in their faith and practice of charity.

-- Last week we heard of the man who put his faith in riches rather than the things of God. Today we hear of the temptation to disregard God's law in the manner in which we live while his coming is delayed. The old saying *The cat's away, the mice will play* expresses this attitude.

-- But the central point of the gospel is not to keep us terrorized by a god who is waiting to catch us doing something bad so he can lower the boom on us. After all, he says *Do not be afraid any longer, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.*

-- God wants us to share eternal life with him. But we must be open to receiving God into our hearts. And how do we open our hearts?

-- The second reading gives us the prescription: we open ourselves to God's life through a living faith. We open ourselves to the Lord by trusting that God is true to his promises, though we don't see the fulfillment of those promises just yet.

- Faith is more than saying *I believe*. Like Abraham, we must live out that belief by striving to do God's will and trusting that God will make good on his promises to us even when there's the temptation to doubt.
- Living faith means acting as sons and daughters of God. It means treating those around us as sons and daughters of God and not just means for our own self-gratification.
- Those who attempt to live that way of life are the faithful servants who await their master's return in joy and hope.
- My dad had that living faith. He was far from perfect. Some of you who've seen my shadow side may want to know that I didn't get that from the wind. (e.g., impatience)
- Despite all that, he lived in faith and hope. He treated people with love and respect, even when he didn't agree with them. He had strong Catholic values but didn't roll over people with them. He set a good example for me and my brother and sisters.
- Those faithful servants like my dad are promised something extraordinary. In the kingdom, the roles will be reversed—the master will serve the servants.
- The Lord gives each of us the same promise. His desire is to serve us in his heavenly kingdom. May we look to Abraham and our ancestors in faith. They show us the path to living faith—a faith that leads us to the Kingdom of God.