



The Workers – The Vineyard is the Kingdom of Heaven

Keep Your fork

There was a woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things “in order,” she contacted her pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in. The woman also requested to be buried with her favorite Bible. Everything was in order and the pastor was preparing to leave when the woman suddenly remembered something very important to her. “There’s one more thing,” she said excitedly. “What’s that?” came the pastor’s reply. “This is very important,” the woman continued. “I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.” The pastor stood looking at the woman, not knowing quite what to say. “That surprises you, doesn’t it?” the woman asked. “Well, to be honest, I’m puzzled by the request,” said the pastor. The woman explained. “In all my years of attending church socials and potluck dinners I always remember that when the dishes were cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, ‘Keep your fork.’ It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming... like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful and of substance! So I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder, ‘What’s with the fork?’ Then I want you to tell them: ‘Keep your fork... the best is yet to come.’ The pastor’s eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the woman goodbye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see her before her death. But he also knew that the woman had a better grasp of Heaven than he did. She knew that something better was coming.

At the funeral people were walking by the woman’s casket and they saw the pretty dress she was wearing and her favorite Bible and the fork placed in her right hand. Over and over, the pastor heard the question, “What’s with the fork?” And over and over he smiled. During his message, the pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the woman shortly before she died. He also told them about the fork and what it symbolized to her. The pastor told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either. He was right. So the next time you reach down for your fork, let it remind you oh so gently, that the best is yet to come.

Scripture

Read Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:4-10

Discovery Questions

1. Ephesians 1:3-5 states that we have been chosen, predestined and adopted. What does this mean to me?
2. Ephesians 2:4-5 tells us two reasons why we have been saved. Write them down below and take a moment to reflect.
3. In “The Workers” parable, the vineyard symbolizes the kingdom of Heaven. It didn’t matter how long each worker had worked in the vineyard; at the end of the day they were all paid the same amount. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. These verses speak of a gift that can’t be earned. What reminders or new insights have I gained in regards to my salvation?
4. It is by grace that we have been saved, not by works. However, as followers of Christ we should not remain idle. Read Ephesians 2:10 and write down what God created me to do. In what ways am I doing this?

Journaling

Which verse spoke most powerfully to me? Why?

Prayer: Spend some time in prayer conversing with your God. Use the following ideas as a potential guide to your prayer time.

- Lord, thank you for Your love and mercy and for Your most precious gift, Jesus, the rock of my salvation.
- Father, I stand in awe before You as Your chosen and adopted child. It is by Your grace alone, and nothing I could ever do, that I will inherit Your incomparable riches and share eternal life with You. Let my heart and mind soak this in.
- Dear God, please stir in me a desire and passion to do Your good works with a pure heart and clean hands.

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