

## Year C 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost DJK MVLC August 7

### Sermon - Luke 12:32-40

So you build a new church tower and you paint a clock face on it. It says 11.45 or a quarter to midnight.  
What is the message??

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We turn on the TV. A mass shooting in some school in the USA.  
The price of fuel is going up.  
A Russians bomb hits another civilian suburb – women and children are dead.  
A skinny cow tries to walk in pain with Foot and Mouth disease.  
Another politician is sacked – no sex scandal this time – only weeks into her new job and she's sacked – a bully.  
More Gold for the Aussies swimmers – no gas for our stoves – we've sold it all to the Chinese.  
Covid blah, blah, but now Monkey pox - the reporters rub their hands.  
Surely, it's a quarter to midnight.  
Surely, Jesus' return is just around the corner. Come Lord Jesus Come!

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My Great Grandfather, Pastor LE Kuss, and his Son Pastor Martin Kuss, formed this congregation at Book-Pernong (see picture). I wonder whose idea it was to paint the clock on the steeple?  
What was going on in their world in in September of 1924 when they painted the clock at 11:45pm?  
Was it the aftermath of WWI?  
Was it a strong anti-German/Lutheran sentiment?  
Was it the rumour of WWII?  
Some would say it was the creation of vegemite.  
Others would say it was the Spanish Flu – an actual pandemic killing 30 – 50 million people – sound like it was a bit hard to keep count.  
Maybe it was just plain old scripture that caused the Kuss's to paint the clock: From Luke "...*there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* (Luke 21:25-26)

Or from Matthew, "*I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak.* (Matthew 12:36)

Or maybe 1 Thessalonians: *...the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden*

*destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3)*

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Jesus speaks into the world of speculation and fear today: *Have no fear little flock, For the Father has chosen to give you the Kingdom. Have no fear, little flock!*

Have no fear, little flock! Jesus has quite a job to speak into hysteria, and rumour, and opinion about the last times. But it's his job to teach, and at the end of the day, he has to reveal unbelievers will go to hell. It's a fact – *the wages of sin is death*. And he also has to teach something quite strange to a teacher – he has to teach something which doesn't make sense: *"the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* God's gift is so undeserved it just doesn't make sense.

It's His job, the Holy Spirit's job, not mine: there is an end date, now one knows when it is, Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead – we confess it every week.

Jesus starts the lesson: *Have no fear little flock, For the Father has chosen to give you the Kingdom. Have no fear, little flock!*

It's had to teach peace and calm when there is fear.

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We had a cow once that was chased by town dogs until she was completely exhausted. In desperation she walked into the dam out of the dog's way. They stood there barking and barking. She stood in the dam bleeding and shaking uncontrollably.

I got rid of the dogs, "permanently", and called the cow and she came out of the dam and walked slowly to the dairy.

You can teach peace and calm into absolute fear if there is trust.

The Last day and the last hour are scary, death is scary – But Jesus words create trust.

They say that most people would rather die than speak in front of people?? They also say, *"Death is the wish of some, the relief of many, and the end of all. . ."*

Death might be scary, but now Jesus takes us beyond death.

Jesus is talking about the end of this world as we know it – and a judgement day as we don't know it.

For thousands of years, we have been taught to expect this great and terrible day as if it's only 15 minutes away – hence the clock face.

And for thousands of years each generation claims to know the right signs – "all the stars lined up" and they seem to know the day and the hour – the day and hour Jesus says no-one knows.

The precious words Jesus can not be heard too often. *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom - Have no fear, little flock!”*

These words are Good News.

We need the good words of Jesus to resist the rumours, and the voices of gloom and doom that surround us every day; **“it is God's good pleasure to give us the kingdom”**.

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What were the first words after Jesus was executed in agony on a cross? “I'm going to revenge my death look out? No, simply, “Do not fear”.

Jesus has called us from the dam – we trust him.

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The teaching goes up a level.

We have no need of “stuff”. Jesus says our “stuff” gets mouldy, It gets holes in it, our wallets wear out it says. We think we need stuff to be secure.

Did you know most of the people in the world live and have children and have absolutely no “stuff”.

We say “you can't take it with you” – a kind of pretence that we are generous.

I don't think he means get rid of everything – that we should not have enjoyment and comfort. I think he is talking about ‘stuff’ – the wealth we have that's not used, that does rot, that was expensive and has now become worthless, while someone is hungry or homeless.

Yes, get rid of your stuff – good lesson Jesus.

He calls us from the dam – **it gives me pleasure to give you the kingdom, a treasure that is imperishable, a treasure that does not fade or fail.**

**My son Died so you can have that treasure.**

Some would say that is a sick kind of gift. We would say that is amazing grace – that saved a wretch like me.

We enter the last day, we face the last hour, we head for the final judgment with what? – a gift: *“It gives God pleasure to give you the kingdom”*.

Please remember this the next time someone makes you doubt. Please share this with someone who is doubting, *“It Gives God pleasure to give you his kingdom”*.

What parent would give you a scorpion if you ask for an egg?

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Hey what about this: *“When Jesus comes it will be like a thief in the night”*? Super scary? Isn't it?

Have you ever been robbed? You have to live in Tennant Creek or Alice Springs – they come in and you don't even know.

God breaks into your heart, and you don't even know – clearly it requires nothing of you to be robbed – it happens to you.

If you look at things differently it's different – God breaks in and you don't even know – you don't even do anything – Amazing Grace – are we pushing it too far?

I think it's good news – God the robber – breaks in and enters while you sleep – “Amazing grace”.

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You know there is more grace here than we can poke a stick at. Further on after Jesus has broken in and entered your life he says: *Truly I tell you, I will dress myself to serve, I will have you recline at the table and I will come and wait on you.*

You know early on in life Jesus said, *“I have come to serve and not be served and give my life for many”*

This goes on to the afterlife: *Truly I tell you, I will dress myself to serve, I will have you recline at the table and I will come and wait on you.*

God himself serve your soul.

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Three things: It's a fact that some people portray Jesus return as a thing to be feared. It's pretty easy for powerful people, or people who delight in fearmongering or rumour spreading.

It's a fact that Jesus starting point on all this is: *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom - Have no fear, little flock!”*

Lastly the bottom line of this teaching is that unbelievers go to hell – let's not soften it in any way. But we don't want this. Jeremiah says God does not delight in the death of anyone - Hell is not an option for God and his creation.

Let people see how God delights in you – Tell them how God is near and his first words to you are, “fear not”.

Call them out of the dam – “fear not”.

Is it too much – “Fear not, God delights in you”. Surely that makes a happy face, a loving face, surely it makes a face I could trust.

*Have no fear little flock, have no fear, little flock,  
For the Father has chosen to give **you** the Kingdom.*

**Father, please break into the heart of every unbeliever – give them the gift of faith – save them and all people. Amen.**