

A Tundra cartoon in the newspaper last week showed a couple at a table with food, and a dog sitting on one side of the table, and a cat on the other side. The cat was tugging on the tablecloth trying to pull everything off the table. The caption read:

“A dog has a master, but a cat has staff.”

Now, I know that there are both good and bad cats and dogs, but anyone who has cared for both types of pets may see why the cartoonist found the idea amusing. Isaiah says something that we would not understand as easily as dogs and cats. It is about oxen and donkeys. Isaiah 1:3

“The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner’s manger,  
but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”

At the Bloomsburg fair we might see how true this is though we haven’t owned an ox or a donkey. This might hint at the single greatest question of the Bible: Do we have a master? Who gives direction to your life? Is Jesus only your Savior, or is he *your Lord also*? Today we shall be led and fed by our Master during this service.

This is my first sermon as a Global Methodist retired Elder. I have made this move for one important reason. I believe that my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, wanted me to make this move. That is the most important reason.

I did so in good order. I adhered to the directions of the United Methodist Church so long as I was under that discipline. Now I intend to do the same under the Global Methodist Church discipline. Good order is very important in church life.

Clergy are ordained to care for the word, sacrament, and order (or discipline of the church). I was ordained June 9, 1982, and the Global Methodist Church now recognizes that ordination as of September 1, 2023. Today I am able to attend to the word and administer the sacrament for you with good order. It is a matter of discipline. “The Lord disciplines the one he loves...” Hebrews 12:6 I want to continue to be loved by the Lord so I will give heed to discipline. It is not to be disregarded easily. We have a Master who is pleased by our good order in the Christian Church and life.

The goal was never just to get out of the UMC for me, and I hope that was not the goal of this church either. Rather, the goal was to be in a church where I could live my faith authentically and which fulfills the will of Jesus Christ in mission and ministry. Jesus is the Master and we seek to follow the discipline of his way, truth and life. The global concern for the kingdom of God is also heartwarming to me, as well as bearing fruit by following where he leads.

Churches too, need to follow the Master in their corporate life.

Pastor Charlie Dawes of Hill City Church in DC says:

It’s not that we fill the church but that Christ fills the church, and he fills us.

His light is in us and that city is set on a hill cannot be hidden. He is the Master for the church.

## [2] We Pass On What We Have Received

St. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

<sup>3</sup>For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance:  
that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,  
<sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day  
according to the Scriptures....

The Church has done the same since the days of St. Paul until now. I too, want to pass on what I received. What we have received is a precious faith and an assurance of salvation. What we have been given by those who have gone before us, we also want to give to those who will come after us. The Queen of Sheba was not just impressed with King Solomon's wealth, but his relationship with God. (1 Kings 10:1) Saint Paul wanted to share his relationship with the risen Lord Jesus. There is the link to these 2 passages. Today and in the future I believe this may be best accomplished in the Global Methodist Church.

The GMC is only forming. We cannot think in terms which we used to with the UMC. It isn't the same and it won't be the same in some regards. There is not even a provisional annual conference formed for us yet. This will require patience on our part for people who are undertaking a big challenge. Patience is a spiritual fruit to be applied presently. I never thought that it might take me from March to September to accomplish my move but I can understand just how much has been undertaken by so few to form a new denomination. They are approaching formation in a new way. I would encourage to use Facebook to receive information on what they are doing. Just this week I was part of a prayer zoom meeting for the Northeast region. They want to pray about what the Lord wants us to form before just setting something up on our own. They were inviting us to pray the Lord's Prayer each day at noon with concern for the GMC and the NE TCAT formation. [Transitional Conference Advisory Team]

## [3] Vast Wealth

In 1 Kings 10, the wealth of the Queen of Sheba is astounding. Just considering size and the quantity of the gift she gave to King Solomon, she must have been very wealthy herself. He also had amazing wealth. The Queen of Sheba offered a gift which included 120 talents of Gold. (4 1/2 tons) The Bible also tells us that Solomon sent ships to Ophir which would bring 420 talents of gold back (16 tons); King Solomon had so much gold that he made shields with it. So its not so much about the wealth but I would consider it amazing wealth.

However, it is in Esther 1:4 that the Bible refers to vast wealth. It says King Xerxes displayed his *vast wealth* for full 180 days. You may remember how Queen Vasti snubs King Xerxes when he is displaying his vast wealth? I can only think of Solomon's riches in the same terms, *vast wealth*.

We just had a lottery drawing worth 1 billion dollars this year. Had one of us won it, would we have had vast wealth? I didn't buy a ticket and I am not promoting it. But let me ask, what constitutes real wealth?

I feel that I am a wealthy person but it is not in my hip pocket. What I value is what I treasure. I don't have vast material wealth. But I have the wealth of knowing the Risen Lord. People from my past passed on to me the faith which guides my life today. Now, I want to do is pass on what I received.

The church continues to pass on what it has received in terms of the 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 relationship with the Lord. Knowing the risen Christ is possessing true riches. Sharing the bread and the cup is when we recognize Jesus in our midst. Christ is leading and feeding us today. We possess a treasure.

Let me use one story, which is worthy of passing on, to make my point. I'm only telling one story today, but it is a gem. I hope you take it with you and pass it on.

In a devotion I read (Daily Wisdom For Men) recently was this story. "Published in 1890, Acres of Diamonds by Russell Conwell, founder of Temple University, tells the tale of a prosperous Persian farmer who became discontent when he heard that diamonds could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams. Selling everything, he traveled the world only to die in poverty. The man who bought his farm later found a diamond mine on that very land! Untold wealth had been right under the old farmer's nose.

Like that ancient farmer, believers can miss the vast wealth they're already sitting on. Paul says that God "has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3 NIV)"

### [3] Remembering

Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me..." It is possible to forget God's redeeming love. What a glorious Savior. The author of that devotion wrote, "It's common to forget. God [has] offered Jesus as the great exchange: the perfection of His Son for the imperfection of mankind." We must remember and pass on what we have been given. It is worth all our effort to do so.

We are standing on fields of diamonds. We are a wealthy church in a manner of speaking. Well, to be more precise, we standing on precious promises. We have a Master who will lead and feed us, and this church has a vast wealth of treasure to share?