

Find Us Faithful

Luke 12:35-40

Introduction

Have you made your New Year's resolutions yet? Are you going to bother making any? I used to. But in the sixty-four years of my life, I've finally come to realize that they don't work. If I remember right, one year I was able to keep one until March. But most of them go by the boards within the first two weeks, and that's being generous. I guess the problem is I just don't have the self-discipline it takes to keep them. But no one else seems to be able to keep them, either. And, if it's the same for others, there must be another reason, something common to us all. And there is. Our fallen nature just won't let us keep resolutions. Resolutions are about breaking bad habits (sin) and replacing them with good works. Original sin makes us gravitate to the sin.

Find Us Faithful

Jesus tells us He expects more than a New Year's resolution. In our Gospel lesson, He wants us to be faithful when He returns, no matter when it is. But if we can't keep New Year's resolutions, how can we expect to be found faithful to Jesus when He returns?

Not Our Strength, His Name

If our being ready depended on us, we would never make it. We don't have the strength. That's when we remember the name. This is the **EVE OF THE CIRCUMCISION AND NAME OF JESUS**. His circumcision shows us that He lived under the Law. But without original sin He was perfect. As a human being, He lived under the Law, like we do. But He kept the Law, the way we cannot do. This made Him a suitable Sacrifice for our sins. He is the spotless *Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world* (**John 1:29**).

The Name Jesus

The name Mary and Joseph gave Him, as instructed by both Gabriel and the angel who visited Joseph in a dream, was Jesus (see **Luke 1:26-31; Matthew 1:20-21**), which means "the Lord saves." The thing about salvation is that there are three tenses to it—past, present, and future. We have been saved (past tense) since Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and give us His righteousness and He has worked faith in us through Holy Baptism. We are being saved (present tense), as He continues to forgive us and strengthen our faith through Holy Communion. And we will be saved (future tense), when He returns, and we are raised to an incorruptible body to live with Him eternally.

The Lord at Work

Notice, in all this, the Lord is the one doing all the work. He died on the cross; He works faith through Baptism; He strengthens our faith through Communion; and He will raise us up at the last day. All we can do is look to Jesus, the *Founder and Perfecter of our faith* (**Hebrews 12:2**). By continually looking to Him in Word and Sacrament, we will be ready when He returns. This year and always, let us *not neglect to meet together as we see the Day drawing near* (**Hebrews 12:2**).

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
