Deacon Dave - Full Homily Transcript

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

So I remember when I was first married and everything was brand new, and I felt like somebody who was literally just on top of the world. I was beginning a new life with someone that I loved, starting a new career at a major company, and going to college at the same time. Life was full, but before long it kind of started to feel a little bit too full. You see, I was progressing at work, our first child was on his way, and since I was in school, you know, classes started to get a little bit more difficult as time went along. And there never seemed to be any time left over to just have some fun and relax like when I was younger.

Between working at the office and preparing a nursery, attending classes and keeping up with all the reading and writing assignments, there were a few times where, I'll be honest with you, I just kind of wanted to call it quits with school and stop. But then I heard this song on the radio by a group called Wilson Phillips. I'm sure a few of you out there probably heard this. It was called "Hold On." And when I felt like giving up, those words kind of helped keep me going a little bit. And the refrain went something like this. It said, "Don't you know things can change? Things will go your way if you hold on just one more day."

Now, I know it sounds kind of silly, right? A song kind of giving me enough of a push to keep going. But those words really helped me when I was ready to kind of give up. Sometimes we need a reminder that the difficult moment we might be facing is not the whole story, and that we can keep going, you know, one day at a time.

Now, as we near the end of the liturgical year, our readings begin to turn our attention towards the coming of the Lord. They remind us not to give up ourselves, but to persevere in preparing to meet Him. Today's Gospel tells us the parable of ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom to arrive. Five are wise and five are foolish, and all ten have lamps and all ten are waiting. But only five of them bring enough oil to keep their lamps burning.

Now, the bridegroom is delayed. You know, back then, I think Jesus would have been considered kind of a difficult bridegroom because all of your wedding planners nowadays, they ask you certain things like, "Well, what day is the ceremony gonna be?" And Jesus is like, "I'm not sure." "How many people are gonna be at the wedding banquet?" He's like, "I don't know quite yet." So I think the wedding planners with Jesus would have had a little bit of a tough time, because it says in the Scripture, you know, the bridegroom was delayed and all the virgins, all the people, grew tired and they fell asleep.

But at midnight, a herald cries out, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!" And the wise virgins, they're ready to go out. But the foolish ones, they've run out of oil. And when they ask to borrow some, the wise virgins refuse, not because they're unkind, but because there wouldn't be enough oil for both them and the others. So the foolish virgins go into the town - you think about it, at midnight, I don't know who would be open then - but they go to buy more. And while they're away, the bridegroom does come and the door is closed.

Now, Jesus ends the parable with a very clear message. He says, "Stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Now, He's speaking about our need to be ready for His coming. You know, we don't know when the Lord will come again at the end of time, and we don't know when He's gonna come for us at the end of our own lives. We can't schedule that, but we can't put off our relationship with God until a more convenient time. It's important for us to be preparing now.

All ten virgins fell asleep. The difference between the wise and the foolish ones is not that some never got tired, because they did. They all waited and they all fell asleep. The difference is that the wise ones prepared for that delay of the bridegroom. Their lamps had enough oil to keep burning when he arrived. You know, that's an important reminder for us. Faithfulness does not mean that we're never going to get tired or ever discouraged or ever be distracted.

You know, life can be demanding. We all have responsibilities and worries and disappointments. I don't know about you guys, but to me it seems like everybody's making more and more demands on our time and things are moving faster and faster. My parents warned me about that when I was younger, and it seems like they're right. You know, there may be times in our lives when prayer feels difficult, or maybe when we're grieving, or when God seems a little far away.

The parable doesn't tell us to live in fear, you know, watching the clock and wondering when Christ is gonna come back. What it does, it invites us to be prepared and to keep turning our hearts towards Christ, even through the ordinary and difficult days of our daily life.

Now, the oil in the parable is not explained in detail, and Christians have kind of debated the meaning in different ways throughout the centuries. But St. John Paul II says that we can think of it as the life of faith that grows through our relationship with Christ. You know, a faith that's strengthened by prayer, nourished by the Eucharist, renewed through confession, and made visible in our daily lives, in our acts of love and charity for each other.

You know, these practices, they're just not simply going through the motions or checking off little checkboxes as a way of earning God's love, but they're ways to help us to receive that love and to live in friendship with God.

The oil and lamps show us another important point. They show us that we can't simply borrow someone else's relationship with God. You know, our parents and our friends, our community, encourage us and help us along the way of faith, but each one of us has to answer Christ's invitation for ourselves. Now, someone else's prayer can't take the place of our own. Someone else's acts of kindness can't replace the acts of love that we're called to show ourselves.

But you know what? We don't prepare alone. We come together - I mean, look around you today - we come together as the Church, Christ's very own body, supporting each other, praying for each other, and helping each other to kind of keep going when things get tough.

So how do we kind of prepare our lamps and keep our oil? How do we prepare ourselves to be ready when the Lord arrives in our own lifetimes? Well, we make room for Him in how we live our daily lives, in

the lives that we actually have today. We come to Mass, we receive the Eucharist, we seek forgiveness in confession, and we pray. Maybe the rosary, or maybe silently, or in the middle of the day when things are just going crazy.

We care for people who are lonely, people who are hungry, people who are in need. We forgive, especially when it's difficult. We ask for help from the Lord and from each other when our faith feels weak. You know, these items, like I said, they're not a checklist or a guarantee, you know, about getting into the wedding feast. They're ways of helping us stay close to the One who loves us and calls us by name.

This is where that song, "Hold On," kind of reminds me of today's Gospel. The Christian life is not just about enduring until things get better. It's about holding on to Christ every single day and allowing Him to hold on to us. We keep going not because we know exactly what tomorrow holds. We keep going because we know the One who holds tomorrow in His hands.

The warning in the parable is serious. You know, the door is not gonna stay open forever. There is a day when Jesus will return for us. But it's also an invitation. You know, He wants us to be ready to meet Him. If we look at the first reading today, it says wisdom seeks us out. She doesn't hide herself. God gives us everything we need to be in relationship with Him and with each other. He wants us to be ready to meet Him. He wants us to share in that wedding feast, and He wants us to live with Him forever.

That's why He came and gave His life for us, and that's why He's coming today, in just a few minutes, to share His very life with us again. You know, we prepare by living our faith today, not perfectly - I know I don't live mine perfectly - but honestly and with our whole heart.

So when life feels too full and when we're tired or when we feel like giving up, let's remember: let's hold on to Jesus, let's keep praying, let's keep loving each other, let's keep coming back to Him. And then when the bridegroom does come, may He find us like the five wise virgins, ready to meet Him and enter into the joy of His wedding feast. Amen.