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What are you waiting for?

My college roommate waited forever to ask his long time girlfriend to marry him. She was perfect for him and he was scared. We kept asking him, "What are you waiting for?"

What are you waiting for?

It seems to me there are two different kinds of waiting

There is a passive kind of waiting.

Like a little boy waiting for the bus to get to school on time.

Then there is an active kind of waiting.

Like a little girl waiting for a parade to come down the street.

Perhaps a fisherman is waiting for spring to arrive.

Or he has his hook baited and is waiting for a fish to bite.

Or what about the football fan waiting for last seconds to elapse like last night?

It is one thing waiting knowing you are going to win.

It is another thing to have to wait for a miracle Hail Mary pass.

We know what we are waiting for.

We know who is coming.

We know Christ will be born in a stable.

We know our future is safe in God's hands.

We know that God loves us so much that God became human.

We know the promise that awaits us.

The Gospel this morning is often interpreted as frightening.

It was just Peter, Andrew, James and John there listening to Jesus. They knew he was going to be leaving them. Talk about anxieties!

And he was still preaching the Good News.

After all of the suffering, the end will come.

And the pain will be no longer.

The fears will be vanquished.

All you have to do is keep awake.

Stay busy. Do something. Prepare.

We have fear and anxiety all around us as always seems to be the case in this world of ours. Our skies are darkened by this current economic crisis. It's something I've been afraid to address in a sermon yet, but we cannot ignore its ramifications of us all. Whether we are in dire straits depends on our age and our jobs and many factors. It is all around us though.

The environmental crisis is also among us. We see and hear are you doing, soon to be the last priest standing? What's going to happen next? When do we get an interim and then a new rector? What is the vestry's plan?

Many people seem to be overcome by these or some other crisis in their lives. It is easy to be overwhelmed.

But we know what we are waiting for. There is no surprise. It is comforting to me to think the sun will be darkened and the moon won't give any light and the stars will stop doing their job. Because then I know that Jesus will be coming really soon. Angels will start flying and it will be the greatest day ever, literally.

But in the mean time there is more waiting.
Those early Christians thought it was really imminent.

You remember the focus on the apocalypse on the eve of the year 2000. We could spend all day and all our lives analyzing the signs of the times, but where would that get us? Nowhere. It's like running in place. You don't accomplish anything but burning a few calories and raising your blood pressure.

So what do you do in the time we are waiting?

One person who had converted to Judaism and wanted to be strictly observant went to his rabbi and asked him what to do. The rabbi told him about all 300 and something laws he was supposed to follow. "Good grief," the man said, "how can I ever do that in the few short years I have left on earth?"
"It's quite simple," the rabbi said. "Just choose one and start."

Just choose something and start.

Stop waiting on the perfect moment. The perfect moment to change jobs or ask your beloved to marry you may never come.

But just do it. Do **something** for God's sake.

If the anxiety about the economy is consuming your thoughts and making you a grouch, just do something. Start saving and stop buying that double caramel latté every day. Take advantage of the great deals and make an investment.

If you worry every minute of the day about global warming, walk to work or change your light bulbs or start growing your own tomatoes. Write a letter to the car makers and urge them to make greener automobiles or call the governor and encourage him to work on more sustainable forms of public transportation.

Stop fretting about the transition here at St. Margaret's and volunteer for another ministry you've always wanted to be involved in. Join the altar guild or take coffee hour for a month or cook a meal for the light house shelter or increase your pledge. Trust me there is plenty of work to go around. Don't ask permission, you can always ask for forgiveness. Just do something.

What are you waiting for?

The gospel from this morning is not a threat or a scare tactic. The Good News from the gospel of Mark is a promise. We are waiting for God's complete deliverance, and it will come. God is not finished working among us. In fact, God is still working through us because the world is not all that it can be quite yet.

Yes we are stretched in between the times. Some of us are very happy and content. Some of us are complacent and in active. We can be more than that.

Some of us are experiencing pain and tragedy now. Those of us are especially grateful for a word of promise and hope this morning.

Our future and our comfort has a name and a face. And that is Jesus Christ, soon to be born of a virgin in a dirty stable. He is coming and he will make all things new. But we have to be able to imagine what that is and do something to accomplish it here and now.

Martin Luther King Jr. said in a sermon shortly before his death, "I fear no one. Because I my eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

That is a world changing vision that frees us to act here and now. For Jesus is coming. You just wait.