

Truckers have important jobs. They deliver almost everything that we use and consume. Usually, they pull heavy rigs that can be dangerous to others on the road. Therefore, one of the things that truckers must do is pay attention to what is ahead of them. They can't stop on a dime. What seems far ahead will be right up on you before you know it. They must be prepared. If they would only pay attention to what was right in front of them, not also looking ahead, they would be unprepared.

There is a way of living our lives that's similar. We can focus too much on what is right in front of us without looking further ahead. It's easy only to think of how to make it through the day, or until the weekend. When, in fact, great things lie ahead of us. Our deaths will bring about great changes. Are we prepared for those changes? If we never look ahead, how can we be prepared?

Our readings today speak of things that lie in the future. Our first reading from Isaiah speaks about an extraordinary mountain. God is at that mountain. He will make a feast of rich food that is for all people. He will swallow up death on that mountain. A lot of people believe that death is invincible. Not for God. All things are possible with him. It says that God will wipe away tears from all faces. Those who have been troubled, those who have been depressed, those who have suffered tragedy are going to be comforted by none other than God himself. That's an impressive picture. It is well worth being aware of this for the future.

Our second reading urges us to do that. Paul tells us Christians that since we have been joined with Christ, since we have been raised with Christ, we should seek the things that are above instead of the things that are on earth. The things that are on earth can distract us so that we are not looking to God or to what is on the road ahead.

Finally, our Gospel reading from John chapter six tells us how we may get to that extraordinary mountain, how we may meet God in a good way instead of a bad way. The key is Jesus. Jesus is so clear about this. He says, "**This is the work of God, that you believe in Jesus, the Son, whom the Father has sent.**" Jesus is the King, the Savior, sent by God to save sinners.

Jesus says that he is the bread of life. Whoever comes to him shall not hunger, and whoever believes in him shall never thirst.

Finally, Jesus promises in our reading that he will lose nothing of those whom God has given to him. Jesus will take care of these people. Jesus will raise them from the dead on the last day. Listen to how clear Jesus is about this. He says, "**This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him or her up on the last day.**"

We probably do not talk or think about the glory of that last day often enough. It is when Christ will come with power and great glory together with his angels. The trumpet will sound and Jesus will raise our dead bodies from the graves. Those who are alive at his coming will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. All will be judged. That is when life will begin in earnest for those who have eternal life in Jesus. Paul says, "**No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the imagination of the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him.**" This is the adventure beyond all adventures.

Thus, as we have already heard, we should set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. The glory that lies ahead is much greater than anything that might be behind. If we were driving a truck, we should not be looking at our cell phone or only staring into the rearview mirrors. We must look ahead to what God has prepared otherwise we would be missing out on what lies ahead.

Richard was not different from us. I'm sure he struggled as much as we do to look ahead to what God has promised. In fact, nobody is completely prepared for that extraordinary mountain, for being raised up on the last day. But we do not save ourselves by our own preparations and works. God sent Jesus to be the Savior. Jesus makes himself known so that he may be believed in.

Jesus made himself known to Richard. Jesus baptized him. Jesus brought his teaching to Richard. Jesus made Richard into a disciple, a follower, of him. Richard might not have always remained as faithful to him as he could have. No disciples is always as faithful as we should be. Although we are not faithful to him, Jesus, however, was faithful to Richard. In one way and another Jesus continued to be with Richard until the end.

I'll share just one of those ways that Jesus served Richard because I had the privilege to be a part of. I visited Richard less than a week before he died. He was awake and conscious. I asked Richard if he confessed that he was a sinner. Yes, he was a sinner. I asked him if he believed that Jesus died for him and shed his blood for him on the cross for the forgiveness of his sins. Again, Richard confessed that he believed this.

Jesus gave Richard his Sacrament. Richard ate the body that was crucified for him. He drank the blood that was shed for him for the forgiveness of his sins. There was a small crucifix laying on the table beside his bed. I showed him this and told him that now, as death was drawing nearer, it was more important than ever to remember that Jesus was crucified for him.

I was privileged to speak these things from God's Word to Richard. They are not fancy or complex. Any Christian can speak these simple truths, and even the simplest can grasp them. We might sum them up with what Jesus said so clearly in our reading: **"Everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."**

Jesus does all things well. Because Jesus died on that old rugged cross, we may look forward to the day when we will receive a crown to Jesus's glory. Jesus makes it possible to look at death not as a gloomy, invincible power, but rather the door to eternal life. We may look ahead on the road of life not with fear and trembling of something like a fast-approaching accident, but with fear and trembling of the awesome and good things that God has prepared for us because he loves us.

Let us give glory to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. He has done all things well with Richard. He saved him. And let us also believe in Jesus. Then the road ahead will be good.