

Welcome to the High Plains Preacher! Stories about the Bible, high wind, fast horses, lack of moisture and other elements of life in the Texas Panhandle

Christ the Thief

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

Welcome to the High Plains Preacher, stories about the Bible, high wind, fast horses, lack of moisture and other elements of life in the Texas Panhandle. I'm Fr. Jim. Thanks for tuning in!

Some gospel passages make me feel good. Others make me feel nervous. Like the one in the Gospel of St. Luke that seems to suggest that followers of Christ install a good alarm system in their houses. Why? Because, on a day you do not expect, God himself might just break down your door and barge in unannounced and unexpected.

What happened to Christ the Good Shepherd? What happened to Christ the Good Friend? According to this passage Jesus is some thug just waiting for a chance to siphon the gas out of my truck, jimmy the back porch window or smash the lock on the shed in the back yard!

This passage makes me think of something Martin Luther once said: "If I had known what hard work preaching would entail," said Luther, "I would not have allowed 24 horses to drag me into a pulpit!"

But the Word of God *is* the Word of God. So there must be a valuable lesson in this passage. If so, what might we gain by envisioning God as a thief? Before we go too far with this line of thinking, however, keep in mind that God is the author of life and the giver of love. This means God is not going to repossess what God has freely given.

But what about those other items in our house? The ones we collect and hoard to ourselves? Like the pile of insults we drag home and stack in the corner of the kitchen. Or that year's worth of rejections we organize into boxes and shove beneath the bed. And all those portraits of unkind people we hang on our wall. Not to mention the display case that contains every knife that ever stabbed us in the back. The curio cabinet of purple hearts from all the wounds inflicted by people we thought were our friends.

Isn't it time we throw out the trash that's cluttering up our life?

Sadly, when we start hoarding negative treasures, it gets hard to give them up. So we make a career out of hating someone. We fashion a vocation out of despising a certain race or class of people.

When we get to this point, what can we do? We start praying...praying for a thief! A thief named Christ to break down the door, clear out the trash and sweep the place the place clean.

Turns out that Christ the Good Shepherd can also be a mighty good thief.

This is Fr. Jim, the High Plains Preacher.