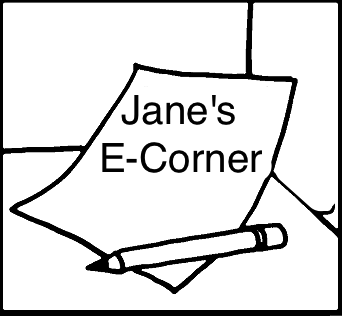
**Weekly Wednesday Devotion**



**8-7-13**

***I am reading this week in Luke 12:32-40***

*"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.  Sell your possessions and give alms.  Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.  For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.  Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks.  Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.  But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."*

Do you ever think you have your day or your week all planned out and something unexpected throws a kink in all your best laid plans?  I used to let that upset me.  Life is filled with unexpected events and surprises.  Sometimes the unexpected surprises bring great joy into an otherwise boring schedule.  Other times the unplanned intrusions are a disruption, an annoyance, or maybe even a source of pain or anxiety.  Unexpected things come --there is nothing we can do to avoid that.  Very often the difference between an unexpected event being one of joy or one of pain is our degree of readiness for what happens.  If we aren't prepared, we suffer--we might suffer embarrassment, failure, anxiety.  If we prepare for the unexpected, we can use this as an opportunity to grow.  This Scripture from Luke reminds us to be ready.

I have heard "expect the unexpected" but don't heed it as often as I could.  Life is so busy that so much of the time we can only think about what is right in front of us and what we know is going to come our way.  And we get flustered when our schedules get thrown off-- we say, "I don't have time for this.  I have things to do."  And we grow angry with people who interrupt us with a question, a request, or a problem.  We don't want to take the time.  We aren't ready for the unexpected; we want to deal with what we know, what we like, what we can predict.  We would rather avoid the unexpected at all cost.  When something unexpected comes my way, sometimes I am initially frustrated but then I usually deal with it, face it, and calm down and continue on with my plan.  Then the next one occurs.  And I realize that very often it is in the unexpected events-- a phone call, a visit, an interruption, that I can see God.

 My prayer is that those unexpected things that come our way might be opportunities, significant opportunities, for God to work in our lives.  Every challenge that comes our way has the potential to be a vehicle of learning and growing if we are open to that possibility.  If we refuse to deal with the things that come our way--good or bad-- we are the loser. Some possibilities pass us by and are lost forever. We cannot be awake every moment and it is impossible to prepare for every possibility or eventuality, but it is vitally important that we not toss aside what God may be telling us through the events that come our way.

Each event has the potential to be a vehicle of learning; each occurrence in life is a teaching moment.  But we can learn, gain insight and grow only to the extent that we are open to what is presented to us.  If we are closed off, whether it is because we are not ready, we are complacent, or we are just refusing to interact with people or problems that come our way, we are the losers.  Possibilities pass us by and can be lost forever. We can never go back and retrieve them.  Maybe we can be open and ready and watching for what God is going to do at a most unexpected time!

Please Pray For:

* Tony Woodall and his family (Judy Story's son-in-law) in hospital at Emory University, Atlanta.
* Martha Hauff, recent hospitalization
* Donna Wilkinson, continuing challenges with parents, loss of her aunt this week, and her husband's bad reaction to bee-stings last week.
* Children and teachers back in school.  College students soon to start back.
* Unspoken--God knows our needs.

Coming Up on the Calendar:

* Thursday August 8 at 8 am  FINANCE COMMITTEE
* Tuesday August 13 at 7 pm Pillar Chairs meet
* Sunday August 18 at 4:30 Acolyte, Crucifer, Bible carrier training
* Tuesday August 20 at 7 pm Leadership Pillar
* Wednesday August 21 5:30  FALL WEDNESDAY NITE KICKOFF at Powell Park
* Saturday August 24 10 am  Food Pantry Distribution

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."  St Francis of Assisi

**Blessings,**

**Jane Taylor, First United Methodist Church, Johnson City, TN**