

“Let’s Just Ignore the Good Stuff”

24 Pentecost A....Nov. 15, 2020

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Matthew 25:14-30 *The Parable of the Talents*

14 “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. 17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. 19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ 21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ 23 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 24 Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ 26 But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return, I would have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 29 For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The readings appointed for the Sundays in November deal with the end: the conclusion of the liturgical year, one’s own death, the end of the earth as we know it, and even the “dying” of vegetation around those of us who live in the northern hemisphere. At the end of everything is God, and in the readings, we encounter this God

In this second-to-the-last parable in Matthew, despite his anticipation of the coming of the parousia, the evangelist still urges the faithful to realize the importance of their tasks and to meet these responsibilities with care & creativity. A talent was equal to fifteen years of a laborer's wages; thus five talents would exceed the wages of a lifetime. The hope that God will bless those who do their tasks well echoes one strand of Jewish spirituality, seen for example throughout Proverbs.

The English word "talent" meaning a person's natural ability arose in the fifteenth century as preachers allegorized this parable, applying the Roman coins to individual capabilities. A common use of this parable is to stress what Lutherans call "law": we are obligated to use our talents to the best of our ability, or the punishment of hell awaits us. The parable also proclaims what Lutherans call "gospel": all good comes from God, who provides us far more than we need, God's grace given in abundance for our use. With input from SundaysandSeasons.com

- I. Do you mainly focus on the Dot or the Whole Page? Do you only want to hear the Bad news or the Good News or do you want to hear all the News?

- II. Were you taught or did you grow up with a "Scarcity" or "Abundance" mentality in your Family or Origin?

- III. Do you unconsciously gravitate to focusing on the pathology?

- IV. This parable teaches some things about God's extravagance:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

- V. In many areas of life prudence, conserving, frugality is important. The opposite is true when it comes to your faith. God wants us to enjoy the blessings of life, God desires and urges us to invest ourselves in the treasures of this life and to be able to daringly share them. God wants us to share in the “Joy of the Master”that is the wonder, awareness and adventure (frightening, thrilling, death-defying, exhausting, passionate, etc) that is life and to help others experience all that that means as well. Rather than beat yourself up for not doing a good enough job with what God has given you (not being as generous, willing to share, protective, saving only for your rainy days, etc) isn't it time to spend some time focusing on how many blessings keep coming to you? How many blessings have come over your lifetime? And How many blessings are still promised even after you've crossed over from this life? How does that change you for today? Do you know how to share in that, “Joy of the Master!”