



66A - PENTECOST 24A - LITURGY

What are you doing

Abstract

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned, I would have received it back with interest.’ “ ‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.

Matthew 25:17-19

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66A - Pentecost 24A - Liturgy

What are you doing

Sunday, November 15, 2020 | Pentecost 24A | Proper 28 | Year A

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Judges 4:1–7

Psalm Psalm 123

orWhat are you doing

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Zephaniah 1:7, 12–18

Psalm Psalm 90:1–8 (9–11) 12

New Testament 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

Gospel Matthew 25:14–30ⁱ

Matthew 25.14-30

Jesus tells a parable of a man who, before going away, gives his slaves talents (money). When he returns, he holds his slaves accountable for what they have done with the talents. Two have used them wisely, but one has done nothing – and is strongly condemned.

This week's resources explore: expectations of God; taking risks; faithfulness.

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| <p>Pre-Service</p> <p>01 The Potter's Hand</p> |
| <p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p> |
| <p>We Gather</p> <p>God calls us to bring your life before him. we offer our hands to help others our gifts to encourage others our resources to share with others our time to listen to others our hearts in compassion for others?</p> <p>We entrust all that we are, and all that we long to be, to the good of others and to the glory of God</p> <p>As a church, we have been given many gifts, many talents, many opportunities, and so we pray:</p> <p>Loving God, help us – individually, and as your people together – to be your witnesses in the world today. Help us to take risks and not stay in our comfort zones. Bless us with the courage of your first disciples, that your kingdom may come and your will be done</p> |

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| <p>in this place and throughout the world. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.</p> |
| <p>Hymn/song Here I am to Worship</p> |
| <p>Welcome</p> <p>Matthew 25.14-30 tells a parable that Jesus tells of a man who, before going away, gives his slaves talents (money). Video:</p> <p>We are not told that the unprofitable servant was a murderer, or a thief, or even a waster of his Lord's money. But he did nothing, and this was his ruin. Let us beware of a do-nothing Christianity. Such Christianity does not come from the Spirit of God.</p> <p>The story of the talents calls on the Church to WORK</p> <p>Anything whereby we may glorify God is a talent.</p> <p>All that we have is a loan from God. We are God's stewards. We are God's debtors</p> <p><i>Let us pray:</i> We bring to you, gracious God, what is yours: our thanks, our praise, our hearts, our lives. As we sing, as we celebrate, as we listen and as we pray, bless each one of us with a sense of your presence and the reassurance of your love. In Jesus' name. Amen.</p> |
| <p>Readings <i>Matthew 25:14–30</i></p> <p>¹⁴ “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.</p> <p>¹⁹ “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’</p> <p>²¹ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’</p> <p>²² “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’</p> <p>²³ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’</p> |

²⁴ “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ ²⁶ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸ “ ‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹

respond

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn/song/video

05 Take My Life (And Let It Be)

We say Sorry

Forgive us, God of all:

when we bury your gifts in the ground of our fear;
when we bury our responsibilities in the ground of reluctance;
when we bury your hopes for us in the ground of our diffidence.

Forgive us, and free us to be your fruitful servants,
people on whom you can depend and rely.

We ask this in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

Hymn/Song

The Potter's Hand - Darlene Zschech

Response

What are you doing

Matthew 25:14-30

What is the tackiest you own,

A bloke purposely went out to buy his friend a tacky gift

so went down to the bargain basement store

and bought a yellow plastic dove with a silver beak hollowed to hold a small plant

He was happy because it looked really disgusting.

Surely this is the tackiest gift ever he thought.

Then, an amazing thing happened.

¹ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

Expecting to be embarrassed at the checkout counter,
 he was actually surrounded by some shoppers
 wanting to know where he had found such a beautiful object.

Obviously, there is a market for tacky.
 Everything has a price.
 Everything can be sold.
 Everything can be valuable to someone. ⁱⁱ

What we do with what we have been given says much about our understanding of faith.
 Think of it this way, God has given each of us a gold coin.
 It is our choice how we are going to spend it.

We could waste it on junk, or we could spend it on ourselves.
 We could bury it in the ground, or we could invest it in the kingdom of God.

Once there was a wealthy landowner who was about to go away on a trip.
 Since he was going away for such a long time
 he decided to put his loyal staff in charge of everything he owned.
 Before he left, he presented one of the servants with the unbelievable sum of five talents.
 To another servant he gave two talents and to the third servant he gave one talent.
 The servants weren't given any instructions on what to do with the talents
 or when exactly the landowner would return.

A talent was a tremendous sum of money.
 It represented the earnings of twenty or more years.
 Even the servant who was given only one talent had an enormous sum of money.

Immediately after the master left on his trip the first two servants went to work.
 The one with the five talents and the one with two talents
 soon doubled the money of their master.

The third servant who was given one talent, however,
 "went off at once and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money."
 He was frightened of what would happen if he failed and lost his masters money.

At an unexpected time, the master returned
 and called in his three servants
 to give an account of how each used the talents entrusted to him.

FIRST OF ALL, THAT EACH OF US HAS DIFFERENT GIFTS.

Jesus does not pretend in this parable that all of us are alike.

We all have differing gifts.
 Some of us are poets. Others have mechanical ability.
 Some of us are still searching for our gift.

I think one of my gifts is my ability to sing.
 Unfortunately Jaccy disagrees.
 I think one of my gifts is preaching, and maybe many of us agree.
 Like me, some of you are still searching for your gift,
 but all of us have different gifts.

WE ALL HAVE WHAT WE NEED TO SUCCEED.

The servant with one talent didn't have as much as the servant with five talents,
but he had all he needed.
If he had not buried his talent in the ground,
he could have done great things with it.

Here is a profound spiritual principle:

God has given us all we need!
The sad thing is that we do not always appreciate the gifts we have.

But everyone has a gift.

Some people are gifted as writers and poets.
Others have as accountants and scientists.
Some people as artists and architects.
Some are gifted as athletes and dancers.
Others are gifted interpersonally.
They know instinctively how to get along well with the people around them.

All of us are gifted.

All of us have what we need to succeed.
God has created us differently so that different tasks will get done in this world.
But all of us have a place where we fit in.
All of us have what we need to succeed.

IT IS NOT AS IMPORTANT WHAT OUR GIFT IS BUT WHAT WE DO WITH WHAT WE HAVE.

That is the obvious point of this parable.
The servant with one talent had the same opportunity as the one with five talents,
but he chose to bury his talent in the ground.
That is the worst thing we can do with any gift God has given us.

Nancy had a handicapping condition and was confined to a wheelchair,
she developed a unique ministry to people who are lonely and hurting.

She ran ads that said:

"If you are lonely or have a problem call me.
I am in a wheelchair and seldom get out.
We can share our problems with each other.
Just call. I'd love to talk."

Nancy said that she receives at least thirty calls each week
from people who need someone to talk to and listen to their pain.
Nancy spends most of her day comforting and counselling people.
She has become someone for hundreds of people with problems to lean on.

Someone asked her how she became handicapped.
Nancy's answer surprised, even shocked him.
"By trying to commit suicide," she said.ⁱⁱⁱ

Nancy doesn't have some of the opportunities you and I have.
But she is making maximum use of the opportunities she has.
She is among the blessed of this world.

It has been said, "hell begins on the day when God
 grants us a clear vision of all that we might have achieved,
 of all the gifts which we have wasted,
 of all that we might have done which we did not do....
 For me, the conception of hell lies in two words: `too late.'" Gino Menetti

What is your gift?
 What has God entrusted to you to share with the world?
 Are you sharing it?
 Are you burying it in the ground?
 Are you investing it in junk?
 Or are you using it to His glory?

Everyone has all they need to have a terrific life
 and to make a real contribution to God's kingdom.
 The question is,
 what are you doing with what you have?

Hymn/song

Take my life (and let it be) - Chris Tomlin

Prayers for all people

- *It is easy to wait expectantly on God and forget that he waits expectantly on us too.*
- *Reflect on what you have been entrusted with this week.*

O Lord, I am so bad at taking risks.
 I am cautious and careful, not daring and decisive.
 I am far more fearful than I am faithful.
 Help me to look to your strength, not my weaknesses,
 to your riches, not my poverty –
 that I may fulfil your hopes for me,
 to your glory and my joy.

We pray, loving God,
 for all those who take risks in our world today:
 for those who preach the gospel where it is dangerous to do so;
 for those who speak out for justice though it could cost them their lives;
 for those who denounce corruption though it costs them their livelihoods;
 for those who stand up to temptation and turn down offers of riches;
 for those called to be in the armed forces, the rescue services,
 the police force, and in any place of work
 where they risk their lives to save others.

Lord, bless their faithfulness, reward their courage,
 and receive our prayers.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
 Your kingdom come, your will be done

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| <p>on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN.</p> |
| <p>Hymn/song</p> <p>Power of your love</p> |
| <p>We are sent out</p> <p>May we flourish as you use our gifts. May we grow in faith and wisdom. And may 'Well done, good and faithful servant' be our joy to hear as we work, rest and pray, day by day.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p> |
| <p>Benediction</p> <p>Take my Gifts</p> |
| <p>Thank you</p> |
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ⁱ [*Revised Common Lectionary*](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱ "Treasured Relics." Martin E. Marty, *THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY*, April 21, 1993, p. 439.

ⁱⁱⁱ *SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE!* Cheryl Blythe and Susan Sackett. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing & Communications, 1989, p. 57.

WAKE UP AMERICA! Tony Campolo. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, pp. 87-88.