

## 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 25:14-30

The master leaves talents with his servants to be invested wisely and profitably. We all know the story of the servants—how one did much, one a little less, and of course one who did nothing at all.

Perhaps this story pertains to the religious leaders of the time who had failed to communicate God's love to people starving for it, but what if we take "talent" (meaning money) and make it "talent" (meaning God-given ability) and apply the story to ourselves?

Before becoming consumed with the fate of the third servant, let's remember that our sins, even ones of omission, are covered by Jesus' blood; the grace of God. We cannot suffer the fate of the worthless servant. Jesus takes us as His own—just as we are.

Having said that, what have you and I done with the talents that God has given us? Though we have often heard, or perhaps spoken, the phrase "I have no gift to give," this is most certainly NOT true.

Some examples: people in their nineties, confined to nursing homes, daily offering intercessory prayer; children inviting their friends to mid-week events; Christians serving in hospice homes; teachers and office workers wearing crosses as silent witness of their love for Jesus when they cannot speak openly; gifted cooks preparing meals for church events; parents bringing their kids to Confirmation class; someone crying with a friend. We are all gifted in some way to make a difference in someone's life.

The difference in the servants of today's story seems to be one of attitude. The first "immediately" invested his talents. It is as though failure to do so never entered his mind. Failure to succeed never entered his mind. The third servant, however, seems to have had no faith in himself or his master—burying the talents seemed the least threatening thing to do and presented the least opportunity for failure.

Someone has said (probably about golf or basketball) that "You will miss every shot that you do not take." The first servant took those words to heart. Perhaps the third did also, but what a difference in how they responded.

God has gifted us with His grace. The Spirit has gifted us in amazing and unique ways. May we respond by taking every shot that God offers us, and never stand still with the mighty talent that He has given to us.

***Been to Bible study lately? It's never too late to start.***

(A message from your Iowa District West Christian Education Committee)

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1. Interpret Jesus' story. Who was the man on the journey? Who are the servants? What are the talents?
2. How had the servants with the five and two talents responded to their master's trust? What was the master's reply to them?
3. How had the servant with the one talent responded to his master's trust? What was the master's reply to him?
4. What are the stewardship implications and applications of this parable?

### **For Family Reflection**

5. What talents do the members of your family have? Where did those talents come from? How does God expect you to use them?
6. Who are some of the faithful servants God has placed in your life? How can you share your thanks and God's affirmation with them?