



Our Gospel reading today is one of Jesus' best known parables, the parable of the talents. 3 slaves are given 5, 2 and 1 talent respectively, 2 of them use their talents wisely and both manage to double the amount, the slave with only the one talent aired on the side of caution, in fact, too much caution and gained the wrath of his master, branded lazy and wicked. There is so much to learn from this parable, Jesus is using it to illustrate so much about the way God works and it is still as relevant today as it was all those centuries ago.

Why did the master give different amounts to the slaves - does God recognise that we do not all start life with the same as each other but it is what we do with it that is important, the slave with the one talent missed the opportunity to increase the value of his talent, a word of warning from God that we should take the opportunities he gives us.

The master rewarded both slaves who doubled their money the same reward, it takes as much effort to double a reward, and whether you start with 5 or 2, effort is always rewarded.

Does the parable teach us success is the product of our own work – we only get out of life what we put into it.

The master gave the slaves the amount he thought they could individually handle –are we being told God gives us everything we need to do the tasks he wants us to do?

The parable appears to relate predominantly to finances but the word talent, the biblical term for money, very conveniently can be translated into an equally appropriate word for the 21st century. God has given us all

talents, each of us individual skills to use to do his works, over the last 8 months we have had those skills pushed to the limits and beyond, resulting in many of us learning new skills, especially where technology has been concerned, everyone starting from a different point but using new skills to reach a goal. Whether 19 or 90, whether we started at 5, 2 or 1, which of the masters slaves have we been. Over the last 8 months as a church we have drawn on and pooled the many talents God has given us, our worship today shows just how much everyone has contributed to ensure we can sing Gods praises Sunday by Sunday. It is good to know we are taking Pauls advice from his 1st letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging each other and building each other up, as indeed we are doing.

Many of you have contributed lovely autumn images to reflect on as we listen to the gentle words and melody of John Rutters, Look at the world, sung by The Cambridge Singers. Images that remind us of the many other gifts God has given us to. (words printed on the last sheet).

Collect for the day

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen



A reading from Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

² Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

³ You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

⁴ For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

⁵ You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning;

⁶ in the morning it flourishes and is renewed: in the evening it fades and withers. ⁷ For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are

overwhelmed. ⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

⁹ For all our days pass away under your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh.

¹⁰ The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

¹¹ Who considers the power of your anger?

Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.

¹² So teach us to count our day, that we may gain a wise heart.

A reading from the 1st letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

⁵ Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴ But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶ So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷ for those who sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.



A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

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,^[a] 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.'

Words from Fr Rodney

One of the themes that runs through the whole of the New Testament is that of Jesus' immanent return in glory. The words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, and reflected by the writers in the rest of the New Testament, give us a glimpse of the first generation of Christians very real expectations of Jesus coming again in glory, the end of the world, and of the establishment of His Kingdom in their day. We see this theme reflected in our first reading this morning from the Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians, and implicitly in the message of the Gospel that reminds Christians that they need to be prepared by living lives that reflect the way of Jesus if they are to hope to be a part of the Kingdom to come. Twenty centuries later we still await the fulfilment of Jesus promised Kingdom, but that does not mean that it's not going to happen ! The message of Advent for us is about being prepared. Jesus' promise to all those who put their faith and hope and trust in Him is that if we are faithful we will be with Him in his Kingdom, it doesn't matter if it happens with our own individual death, or if it comes at the end of the world, the promise Jesus makes to all faithful believers is that we will be with Him in His Kingdom. But what does matter is that we are faithful to Him in our lives if we are to hope to share in what is to come. That is the message of the readings for today. The traditional themes of Advent are 'death, judgement, heaven and hell', but at the heart of them is the message of God's love and eternal hope for all who put their faith and hope in Him.

Intercessions - Let us pray

Heavenly Father as we come together from the safety of our homes we thank you once again for the talents and skills that have made this possible. As we continue to worship remotely we ask for your blessings and guidance for all church leaders as they attempt to meet the needs of their communities in these difficult times. We particularly bring before you

all those who are missing the regular face-to-face support of their church families and we pray that we are able to come together to worship in person soon. Amen

Heavenly Father as we bring before you our world we pray for healing and compassion for all those areas of the world facing hatred, division, conflict, poverty and disease. We pray particularly for the people of America as they attempt to move forward from such a divisive election and for our own government as it continues to deal with the effects of the pandemic. We pray that those in authority are given the will to rule fairly, wisely and selflessly in these challenging times. Amen

Heavenly Father we pray for our families, friends and neighbours. We give you thanks for all the many acts of kindness and friendship we continue to receive, which are beacons of light in our lives at the moment. We ask you to bless those we are separated from and keep them safe until we can be reunited. We pray for all those in our communities who are lonely, isolated and fearful of their futures and ask that they are able to access the support they need. Amen

Heavenly Father we bring before you all those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit, especially those who are suffering in the pandemic and those who care for them as well as any we wish to pray for today...We thank you for the work of all those involved in developing the vaccines which have offered a glimmer of hope this week and ask for your blessings on their continued efforts to develop and deliver them effectively and safely. Today we also continue to pray for the welfare of the residents and staff in our care homes, including Joan Birnie, those working in our health and social services, our teachers and all the other key workers and their families and pray that they are given the strength and support they need to carry on safely. Amen

Finally Father we remember all those who have died, especially any known to us we that we wish to pray for today ... In particular we bring before you Ruby Lever who died peacefully last week, her family and those she loved especially, Louise, Catriona and Phoebe. We thank you for the love and friendship many of us shared with Ruby and all those who have gone before us and are sadly missed. Finally, on this week of

remembrance we continue to pray for all those who have died in conflict throughout the ages and ask that all the dearly departed rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen

In a moment of silence bring your own prayers

The Lords prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Look at the World – John Rutter

Look at the world: Everything all around us
Look at the world: and marvel everyday
Look at the world: So many joys and wonders
So many miracles along our way

Praise to thee O lord for all creation
Give us thankful hearts that we may see
All the gifts we share and every blessing
All things come of thee

Look at the earth: Bringing forth fruit and flower
Look at the sky: The sunshine and the rain
Look at the hills, look at the trees and mountains,
Valley and flowing river field and plain.

Chorus

Think of the spring, Think of the warmth of summer
Bringing the harvest before the winters cold
Everything grows, everything has a season
Til' it is gathered to the fathers fold

Chorus

Every good gift, all that we need and cherish
Comes from the lord in token of his love
We are his hands, stewards of all his bounty
His is the earth and his the heavens above

Praise to thee, O lord for all creation.
Give us thankful hearts that we may see
All the gifts we share, and every blessing,
All things come of thee
All things come of thee