

NOVEMBER 19, 2017

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

READING 1 [PRV 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31](#)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM [PS 128:1-2, 3, 4-5](#)

R. (cf. 1a) **Blessed are those who fear the Lord.**

READING 2 [1 THES 5:1-6](#)

GOSPEL [MT 25:14-30](#)

Jesus told his disciples this parable: "A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one--to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.' Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.'

His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.' Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.' His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'

HOMILY:

An old miser was famous in town for being the most ornery, uncharitable, and disagreeable character around. The person in charge of contributions for the community foundation called the old codger to persuade him to contribute: "Our research shows that you are worth millions, yet you give not a penny to charity. Wouldn't you like to give back to the community in some way?" The tightwad mulled this over for a moment and replied: "First, did your research also show that my mother is dying after a long illness, and has medical bills that are several times her annual income?" Embarrassed, the fundraiser muttered, "Um...no." The man continued: "Or did you know that my brother, a disabled veteran, is confined to a wheelchair?" The stricken fund rep began to stammer out an apology. The man interrupted her apology, saying: "Or did your looking into my background reveal that my sister's husband died in a traffic accident," raising his voice in indignation, "leaving her penniless with three children?!" The humiliated representative, completely beaten, said simply, "I had no idea..." On a roll, the miser cut her off once again: "...So, if I didn't give any money to them, why should I give any money to you?" He was ornery! This old miser held tight to his wealth—but why? The easy answer might be greed. But . . . I think there is much more, something much more basic at work than greed.

In a word, it is fear. Fear that he must hold on tight or he won't have enough. Fear that if he gives away too much of himself, he will be depleted. But as it turns out, his fear kept others from life—and kept him from the full life of a generous heart.

In today's complex gospel, Jesus teaches us that, as servants of our heavenly father, we have been entrusted with God's own wealth, gifts which are called talents in the parable. At first, it seems like the talents become personal possessions of the servants, but, when the Master returns, it becomes clear that they were entrusted to grow and bear fruit for the Master. While the first two servants, with talents given them according to their abilities, invest them, that is put them to work to grow, the third servant, by his own admission motivated by fear, squires his share of God's wealth away. But . . . anything we are given by God in life is never just for ourselves—it is always entrusted to us for the sake of others. It is only then, Jesus teaches, that we can have life returned to us, doubled and more, by the very act of investing our talents in others. As it would have been with the miser's dying mother, the disabled brother, and his widowed sister, whose lives could have been so much more if the miser had shared his treasure, so too it can be with others who come across the paths of our lives.

Like the servants in today's gospel, we have been given much and entrusted with much. What have we been given that others need for life? More important, what do we have that others need for eternal life? Today, let's consider this gospel from the perspective of the treasure we possess that is our faith, the source of that inestimable treasure that is peace, knowing in faith we rest in the arms of a loving Father.

By now, you know that our parish has taken on as its mission to be “an evangelizing community, *by faith, with love, in hope.*” In a nutshell, being followers and servants of God means that we're entrusted with talents from God, God's own wealth of love, meant not to be coveted, but invested in the lives of others. Inasmuch as we have been given faith, hope, and love in our hearts, we are expected to share these with others, that they too might have life, and have it to the full. This is what evangelizing means. Why then, when the stakes are so high, would we not tell others about Jesus? Why don't we all leave right now, head out on through the neighborhoods and knock on some doors, flag down some cars, and tell them about the treasure of faith that we have been given? Fear is the reason—let's be honest. Yet, we have a treasure that can allow others to live in peace, hope, and joy! And yet, we keep it to ourselves, fearful of rejection and our reputation. And when we do, even what we have dries up and disappears, the vitality of our faith, because it lives only when it is shared.

Only our fear is keeping others from sharing with others the truth that they are beloved children of God. Some of us might seem more suited and even gifted for this mission, but, as in today's gospel parable, each of us has been given some gift of God's rich life that others are waiting for. While we might not be able convert the world to the love of Christ, the world is not our responsibility: our neighbor is. ***Who in your life needs to hear about the love and mercy of God?*** May the Lord fill us with the love we need to love our neighbor enough to overcome our fear and propose the deepest treasure of our hearts—our faith that convinces us that God loves us, his beloved and loves each human being, created in His image in the same way.

The gospel warns us, as long as the treasure of our faith remains private, buried in the ground of our hearts, it cannot grow and will eventually be taken from us. Even more, until we do share our faith, others are dying—dying until they hear the Good News of Jesus, in our deeds and in our words. Lord show us the way, today, to share the treasure of our faith with our neighbor. May your Spirit of courage and love make our efforts fruitful for your kingdom, that no fear of ours would keep our neighbor from the life that comes from knowing through us that they are beloved children of God.