



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Father Chris Comerford
November 19, 2017 Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

Psalm 128:1-5

Reading II 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8

Gospel Matthew 25:14-30

Homily

Jesus continues to teach us in parables about the Kingdom. Remember last week we heard about the wise and foolish virgins, we have heard a lot of wedding images. We have heard about land and vineyards and taking care of things and today we hear the same thing. The master is going to give money to his servants to take care of while he is gone on a journey. It looks like this is a test. He gives them talents, and we sometimes get mixed up in English because for us the word talent means our God-given abilities, our gifts — but in this case this is not what it means. A talent is a large amount of money, a large weight, it would have been of copper, or silver, or gold. This would probably be worth several thousand dollars in our day and age, maybe even tens or thousands of dollars.

So we see how he gives them the talents — according to their ability. It is important for us to know that. We are not all called and expected to do the same thing. In this story we see the master giving the talents according to their different abilities: one gets five, one gets two, the other gets one. It is not a judgment, it is just how the money is given to them. The master goes away and what do the servants do? The one who was given five talents went out and made another five. The one given two, makes another two. And the man given one talent buries it in the ground. You probably think, “There was something wrong here. His story is a little different than the others.”

So the master comes back and talks to the servant given five talents and finds out he doubled his amount. The master says, “Good job. I will give you greater responsibility.” For the one who was given two talents, the master says, “Good job. You will have greater responsibility.” Now the servant comes to him who was given one talent, and gives back the one that the master gave him. He didn’t lose anything. But it is more than that. It is clearly the lesson of the parable that we see that it is more than just keeping things the same when it comes to living as part of the Kingdom.

It is kind of interesting how the man makes an excuse. He even turns it around so it is the master’s fault. “Master, I know you are a tough man. You take what you plant, and you gather what you scatter, so I just buried the talent and here it is now.” We see that in our world today, don’t we? When someone gets into trouble, as we often see today

on a daily basis, especially someone in politics who puts the blame on somebody else. They turn it around, don't they? "It's not my fault. It is the fault of someone else ." It happens. So we see this is the case here in this story and the servant is trying to blame the master. Well, it doesn't work with God. So it is a challenge for us to look at our lives and say, "OK, God. You know, I go to Mass on Sunday. But don't ask me to do anything else. I pray, but that is all I am going to do."

No. God has given us more and he wants us to share what we received and he is clearly saying, "If you don't use what you have — you are going to lose it. But if you reach out and share your gift with others, then it will multiply." Sometimes this is more difficult to do than we often think. But the challenge is what? To take a risk. To not be afraid to reach out in love. That is really what we are called to do. Then we realize the importance of what was read in the Scriptures a couple of weeks ago. What is the greatest commandment? "To love God with all our mind, all our soul, all our strength, all our mind — and, love our neighbor as our self." That means being positive and reaching out. It doesn't mean, "I am going to avoid doing that." There is more to the Christian life than just avoiding bad things.

That is the lesson we hear today — that we are called to use what God has given us for his glory in a greater way. Using the talents, the gifts and the abilities God has given us is really like playing with house money. You probably have heard about that, where when you gamble you use your winnings and that is called the house money. It is similar because it all comes from God and we do not need to be afraid. We need to be open to share his love with others and to live the life he is calling us to.

There are consequences if you do not. You are left out. You are cast out into the darkness. There will be wailing and grinding of teeth. You know, it isn't an option. It is what we are called to do. We heard St. Paul tell us today, "Be ready. The Kingdom is going to come like a thief in the night, or like a pregnant woman going into labor pains. Be ready. Be sober and alert. Do not get caught up in all these things of the world but to be open, to be prepared in a way God is calling us to live." We hear of the woman who has all of these things and does so well, but the important thing is to have that awe, that reverence and respect, and to put the fear of the Lord before us. That is the challenge for us.

We are coming to the end of the church year. The days are shorter. It's getting colder. All these things remind us that it is a time for beginning new again. Hopefully our hearts will be open. Let's take that message to heart. Let's look at the talents that God has given us. What are the things God has given us we are called us to share, and what talents has God given us to live out in the community of the church and the world? Let's reflect on that. Let's not be afraid. Let's seek to multiply the great gifts that God has given us so we can live as full, active members of his Kingdom.

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