

“Developing the Talents”

Matthew 25:14-30

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¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then 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.’ ²¹His 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.’ ²²And 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.’ ²³His 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.’ ²⁴Then 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; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But 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? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Prayer.

Who are we,
dear members of the human race?
Are we a primordial
collection of random cells
combined out of
prehistoric goo?
Are we one genetic mistake
away from the lovable,
adorable chimpanzee?

Are we descendants of Eve and Adam,
children of Abraham and the Covenant
led from Egyptian slavery
bound by the Decalogue
guided through the desert
to Jordan's beautiful shore
to a land flowing
with milk and honey?

Are we simply the product of
our parents lust for one another-
a moment of romantic fling
which resulted in cells combining

and dividing
until we were birthed
into the world's order
and asked to adapt
and conform to
the expectations
of society
of everyone
except ourselves?

Are we merely hyper cognitive beings
thinking creatures
alone in our kingdom, phylum, class, order,
genus, and species;
self-aware of body, mind, and soul;
given a desire to create
purpose
direction
and destiny?
Do we reward thoughtfulness
the hard work of
obtaining knowledge
retention of both the large and the small
making sense and association
recalling what has been
and what one day may become
verbalizing
or acting with a response?

Are we the play toy of the Divine?
The product of characterless
automated molding;
God's process of creating
a diorama of the world's stage
at the mercy of the Almighty's whim
manipulating those who He sees fit
with the precision of a marionette?
Do we live a predestined life?
Placated with lofty concepts of
freedom and self-determination
all-the-while living as slaves
of a jealous Master?

Are we people who look to the heavens
peering skyward
through the night's dome
covered with lights

from infinite galaxies
suns blazing in glorious splendor
instilled with something
more than faith-
the assurance of some
larger meaning,
perhaps
a connection with God himself?

Are we people
of limited biology
destined to die
only to return our worn out body
to the same dust of stars
that marked our beginning?
Are we people
of soul,
the inside looking out
peering through our eye sockets
from an inner world
knowing that we are connected
with the Divine
in a more fundamental way?

Who are we,
dear members of the human race?

Our Gospel for this day
suggests that we are all this
and still more.

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suggests that we are all this
and still more.

We are people of talents
God given talents.
Not money, though including money.
More so,
the raw material of human potential
Natural inquisitiveness and curiosity

longing to learn more
grow more
become more.
We are people known as stewards
imparted with the Savior's investment.

We are
propensity and inkling
of art and music
mathematics and science
athletics and healing.
We are
suggestions and signs
of leadership and vision
common sense and mechanical aptitude
planters and harvesters.

We are
entrusted with human potential
a gift from God
that must not be squandered.

On this day
what will you do with
the talents the Master has given you?

Those entrusted with much
much is expected.
Those entrusted with little
little is expected.
“Use it or lose it!”
Jesus says.
What will you use
or risk losing?
What is your next stewardship goal?
What is your next milestone
of faithful development
in your spiritual quest
as a disciple of Christ?

Our Gospel for this day
suggests that we are all this
and still more.
We are people of choice.
We don't have to do a thing.
We can let our talents rot
never return to school
never take part in the ongoing process
of lifelong improvement.
But for the serious disciple of Christ
burying the talent
is never an option.
For the serious disciple of Christ
status quo
is death.

Our Gospel for this day
suggests that we are all this
and still more.
We are people duly warned.
The Biblical literalist
finds themselves in hot water
with our Gospel
suggesting that the Master
is harsh,
approving of gambling,
and greedy;
that the Master
finds delight in humiliation
and damnation.
The literalist
obscures the Savior's path
blows a smokescreen of pointless babble
missing the message
Jesus longs to impart.
It is the literalist
who buries the talent
who will take responsibility

for the life lived
without the Spirit's imagination,
outside
where darkness and teeth
gnash.

To God be the glory! Amen.

Our Gospel for this day
suggests that we are still more.
We are people
called to become
the fullness that is
God's kingdom.
We are people
called to become
the creative hands of the potter
the productive hands of the quilter.
We are people
called to become
the insightful mind of
the researchers and scientists
the healing hands of the doctors and nurses
even the tasteful recipe of the master Chef.
We are people
called to become
the compassionate heart
of the giving and the generous
the endurance of the marathon runner
committed to running another race.

People responding to the call
are those who take their talents
and strive to increase them
solely
for the benefit of the Master.

On this day
what will you do with
the talents the He has given you?