

Abundance Matthew 25:14-30 Pentecost 24 Nov. 15, 2020

So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Matthew 25:28-29 Abundance

Brothers and sisters in Christ, would you say you are living in abundance? Not many of us would. We might quip that we have an abundance of sickness or an abundance of time alone, but not many of us would say they are living in abundance. Some have lost jobs or have reduced hours, we haven't seen some friends and family much. In fact it has been almost a year since we've seen my father in law and many of you with relatives in nursing homes are experiencing the same thing. We can look around the church and see the empty space of the people who are missing. Many of us know people experiencing sickness, and who have even lost lives, and some of those are close to us. We don't see much abundance as we look around the world today. We see loss and a hard world.

It may be the servants in the parable Jesus who were left with talents saw loss - their master had gone away. They were given talents they may not have known how to use, they faced a brave new world. Yet two use the talents, a term for money that we have taken to mean an ability largely from this parable. One earned 5 more, the other three. They did not doubt their masters love or ability or trust, they used what they had. And they entered into the joy of their master - they had an abundance, even though they had nothing of their own. It was all a gift entrusted by the master.

The other thought he lived in a hard world. HE thought he had a hard master. After all, the master gave him only one talent. He thought the master not only would hold him accountable for what he had, but would take what was not his. He buried his talent. And gave it back to the master when he returned. Even the talent that was entrusted to him was given to another. And this might sound hard, but he wasn't using it anyways, and he had had ample opportunity.

What is the difference between the servants? We might say the number of talents or the profit they made from them. But all were servants in the household of the master. All were given talents to use. I would suggest the difference lies in their trust of the master - is he a generous man sharing freely from his wealth, or is he a hard man taking what is not his. And the two who trusted and used what was given, who considered it an honor to serve in the household, used their talents effectively. The one who did not trust his master, who considered it a test that the master was itching to make him fail, who said I will get no profit from it anyways - because he did not consider the master's profit his own - he buried his talent unused.

What master do we have Do you have a generous master or a hard one. This year we are tempted to think a hard one, but that is the way of unbelief. Look at He has done. God loves us as family and gives us good things - not just clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife children and all that I have, but also gave his son to make us his own, calls us by the gospel, enlightens us with his gifts of word and sacrament, sanctifies and keeps us in the one true faith. All this he gives out of fatherly divine goodness or mercy without any merit or worthiness in me.

The world will teach us what we lack. Madison avenue will teach us what we lack. Politicians will teach us what we lack. It tells us to go for the gusto - to get what we want we crave we enjoy. We are tempted. And if we give in to temptation, to unbelief, we also fall away and worry only about what we can gain ourselves. And then we lose everything, and even the good gifts God gives do no good. And they will be taken away

But God has done better by us. God with his spirit gives us all that we have. We have abundantly. And what we hold onto with faith now will be had by sight when he returns. The master comes back and adds glory upon glory to those who have, to those who trust, to those who believe.

What talents has god given you - abilities surely, but also gifts of time and money. What riches has he added to his undeserved grace. It his but he has given it to us to use. Let us trust him and praise his name by using it. Even at this time, we have in abundance. Let us use what God gives in his service.