

ASCENDING LIFE-CANADA

Nov 2017/Spiritual Resource Journal

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

“Be Prepared”, Be always ready, because you never know what might come your way! St. Paul reminds there is never perfect peace or absolute security in this world. To be proactive, be prepared for whatever good deed you can do in taking care of the people around you.

Let us partner with the Lord, praying to make a difference!

Let us join Jesus in bringing his Peace and Security to everyone!

Our contributions of intercession, of mercy, of generosity, and love can make a difference. We can do great things for God, as we use our talents, pray for the suffering, for the end to war and poverty.

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

“For to everyone who has talents, more will be given and he will have abundance but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

What is a talent?

What is a talent in the Gospel? Refers to a sum of money, to the slaves, their money?

1 talent = 75-96 pounds of silver- 20 years of work; 1 denaries = 1 talent

THOUGHT

We are given talents through God's great mercy and favor. We are in God's favor!

Our talents, abilities are God's very generous gift to each of us.

Are we then stewards of what belongs to God?

In this reading, the owner gives control of his property to his slaves and as the story goes on, we notice that the owner did not keep the money the 3rd slave gave back to the owner, but gave it to the 1st slave. Why to the First slave?

Consider in the Parable, the graciousness of the Master, our response to the idea that even the one who received a “little”, still received a lot of money.

Each of us receives according to our abilities, and as a starting point on our road to salvation, we all receive equally.

The reading is about different gifts-different abilities and how we use or do not use them.

Let us compare the first 2 slaves with the 3rd

Contrast: Work with Laziness

Slave 1 and 2- They worked-used their talents (something they should have done anyway)

Works of good fruits from a good tree!

We are workers or laborers in God's plentiful harvest- let others see our good works. (5:16)
We are urged to get up and do something, to "Pray Boldly" to receive God's graces,
even more profoundly!

Perhaps slaves 1 & 2 risked their gifts, once or more than once- they are forgiven!

Slave 3- did nothing-buried the talents, avoided work, was perhaps lazy or lacking in ambition.
He was passively waiting or in strict obedience.
He lost no money, was not in debt.

Could God, like the Master in this reading be asking for active responsibility that takes initiative?
In what area of our lives, could we become more proactive, exercising our God given talents?

Contrast 2- Good and Evil

Slave 1 & 2—Good; Slave 3-Bad?

Both were given good trees (Talents).to harvest good, healthy fruits. This reading tells that producing the good wasn't about doubling the money that made the slaves good, but there was good quality about them before they were even given the talents, just as there was perhaps an evil quality about the 3rd slave resulting in him being called evil.

Contrast 3: Generous & Harsh Master

The 1st and 2nd slaves hint at the generosity of their Master, while the 3rd is centered on the harshness of the Master and the fear that perception produced in him.

Question

Could God become for us what we believe God to be?

To those who believe God to be gracious, giving and loving, God is that?

To those who believe God is harsh, demanding judgmental, unforgiving, God is that?

Do our inadequate beliefs about God create blinders that we are unable to see the whole picture of God that Jesus has revealed to us? The good quality of the slaves sees their Master as the giver of good gifts, while the 3rd rationalizes his inactivity by blaming the Master, "I was afraid of you"

Contrast 4: Acting on Beliefs or not acting on Beliefs

The 3rd slave inappropriately buried the money. What could he have done?
The Master does not disagree with him, if he was afraid... Why?

How many people have good (even faulty) beliefs about God, but fail to allow those beliefs to influence their actions? Their lives may be controlled not by God, but by fear, or playing it safe for self-interests.

Contrast 5: How each used his ability

The 3rd slave received little and didn't use his ability as he should have and lost it. The 1st slave who received most used his ability properly and was given more. The slaves used their talents given according to their abilities. Possibly the 3rd slave had the same ability as the others. Why did the 3rd slave not use his abilities? Was he lazy or lacked the ambition or didn't want to take responsibility for his own actions, blaming the Master? He didn't let what he knew about his Master to govern his actions.

Does just offering back to God what he has given seem to be contrary to God's intentions from this Parable? What message do you personally receive from this parable?

Do we need to grow in our abilities? Do we need to study the Word of God more to grow in our beliefs? What others activities could we consider in sharing our talents with others?

Contrast 6: Joy and Darkness

1st and 2nd slaves enter into the joy of the Master, while the 3rd casts into outer darkness. Perhaps he should have been in more fear and acted more appropriately to that fear.
or...

1st and 2nd slave concentrating on the generosity of their Master, rushed joyfully on, trusting in that generosity, experiencing, perhaps the great joy in trusting, in using and increasing their talent

"If we are ever to enter fully into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, we are going to have to spend more time thinking about freedom than we do." Robert Capon "Between Noon and Three"

Do we play our songs, but not really hear them because our main concern is not to make a mistake but to avoid a flub that will get us in trouble?

Could the talents referred to be "The Gospels"? Are they the greatest gift given to the Church? By trying to protect it, or save it only for ourselves, do we risk losing it?

Joy comes from a result of what God has done, sending Jesus, speaking the Word, the coming of the Kingdom, saving the lost and the Resurrection

"The Good News" of what God has done in Jesus Christ.

Who is Jesus in the Parable?

The man who goes away and comes back?

Perhaps Jesus is the 3rd servant?

*-the honorable one, who has everything taken from him,
who is cast out,*

or is Jesus the treasure hidden in the ground?

A SEASON OF GRACE

Embracing God's gifts in the Autumn of Our Lives

Carolyn Bassett , Author

(A review by Lorene Duguin)

What is "autumn of life" really about? Simply a time of enduring greater physical limitations, aching for family members far away or struggling with a sense of idleness? Caroline Bassett says "NO" in her book she paints a more proactive picture of aging.

A Season of grace presents both struggles and the joys of aging with accompanying prayer illustrating how fruitful a person's later year can bring. She shares stories that bring new meaning to the challenges such as grieving, being grandparents, forgiving long standing hurts as well as sharing our faith. She helps us to look back on ways God has worked in our lives and prepared us for our current lives. A truly time of Grace!

She provides us with a Reason of Hope in how we can grow closer to God in our later years. Grieving and loss, sharing wisdom and faith, are two sides of life that we encounter as we get older, but our Catholic faith and the promise of Jesus that he will always be with us is our great reason of Hope.

We have much to be grateful for at this stage of our life, as we accumulate memories, cherish our treasures: our family, our friends, our triumphs, and the satisfaction of a life well lived.

The book is available from the Word Among Us 1-800-775-9673 or www.wau.org. \$13.95 US\$

PRAYER ~ GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

God of love, of life, let us take the time to look deep within ourselves
and discover the gifts you have blessed us with.

May we take the time to direct ourselves in a way that best uses our own combination of gifts!

May our prayers help us discover where our strengths and interests lie!

May our faith guide us in realizing our gifts!

May we always be open to the direction of the Spirit
and never forget the love you have for each of us!

Give us, O Lord, the perception we need to look within ourselves
and discover the beauty and gifts we possess.

Give us the courage to show others the talents they have!

Help us to serve others in the community and in so doing build up your Kingdom!.

We ask this through Jesus, our Lord!

Amen

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