

Lectionary Bible Study Our Savior Lutheran Church



Lectionary 33, 2020

Readings and Psalm

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18, Psalm 90:1-12

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30

[Click here](#) to join Pastor Mark for Live Zoom conversation each Wednesday at 10am.

Meeting ID: 868 8793 0554, Password: 654321

Or dial in for audio only: 1-301-715-8592

Matthew 25:14-30 (NRSV)

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 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.’ ”

This Bible Study Sheet will explore two alternate understandings of our parable for this week.

But first, some background information. A talent is a weight of measure, probably worth the equivalent of 15 years wages. In this parable we have a superabundance of riches - one receiving 1 talent (15 years worth), one receiving 2 talents (30 years worth, equivalent of a working career), and one receiving 5 talents worth (75 years worth, more than a lifetime!)

Option 1: Take risks for the Lord!

In our capitalistic Western society, it is very easy to read this parable as an affirmation of our economic system.

- God gives us differing gifts
 - It isn't our gift that matters, it is how we use it
 - We aren't equal in talents, but can be equal in effort
 - *How is this true?*
 - *How is this not true?*
 - *How does this fit the teaching of Jesus?*

- The reward for a job well done is more work to do
 - Those who "had done well" were then entrusted with more to do
 - *How is this true?*
 - *How is this not true?*
 - *How does this fit the teaching of Jesus?*

- The punished is the one who didn't try
 - The talent wasn't lost, it just didn't grow
 - What if he had lost the talent? Would that risk have been worth it?
 - *How is this true?*
 - *How is this not true?*
 - *How does this fit the teaching of Jesus?*

- To those who have, more will be given
 - Without use, talents will atrophy (use it or lose it!)
 - What we gain from using our talents allows us to grow more and more
 - *How is this true?*
 - *How is this not true?*
 - *How does this fit the teaching of Jesus?*

Option 2: These days are challenging - but trust

Burying money for preservation was an ancient practice. It is believed that most ancient coins unearthed were once buried for preservation. "Banks" did not come into Jewish consciousness until after the Babylonian exile, as Torah forbade charging interest to another (unless they were a gentile). Also, resources were limited in those days. There were only so many fish (etc)...

Yet – this parable includes a story of abundance. The third slave was afraid of the master, but was that fear founded? Was it a self-fulfilling prophecy? He was trusted by the master, but he himself didn't trust the relationship with the master.

- *Is this a parable about money?*
- *What could this parable be about if not money?*

We often acquaint the master in this parable with Jesus – the one who has left but will return.

- *What has Jesus entrusted us with until his return?*