

Daily Reading & Meditation

The Master Will Settle His Account with Them

SUNDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2020 GOSPEL READING: Matthew 25:14-30

14 "For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; 15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. 17 So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'

24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' 26 But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'

Meditation: What can economics and productivity teach us about the kingdom of heaven? Jesus' story about a businessman who leaves town and entrusts his money with his workers made perfect sense to his audience. Wealthy merchants and businessmen often had to travel abroad and leave the business to others to handle while they were gone.

Why did Jesus tell this story and what can it teach us? Most importantly it tells us something about how God deals with us, his disciples and servants. The parable speaks first of the Master's trust in his servants. While he goes away he leaves them with his money to use as they think best. While there were no strings attached, this was obviously a test to see if the Master's workers would be industrious and reliable in their use of the money entrusted to them. The master rewards those who are industrious and faithful and he punishes those who sit by idly and who do nothing with his money.

The essence of the parable seems to lie in the servants' conception of responsibility. Each servant entrusted with the master's money was faithful up to a certain point. The servant who buried the master's money was irresponsible. One can bury seeds in the ground and expect them to become productive

because they obey natural laws. Coins, however, do not obey natural laws. They obey economic laws and become productive in circulation. The master expected his servants to be productive in the use of his money.

God rewards those who use their gifts for serving him and the good of others

What do coins and the law of economics have to do with the kingdom of God? The Lord entrusts the subjects of his kingdom with gifts and graces and he gives his subjects the freedom to use them as they think best. With each gift and talent, God gives sufficient means (grace and wisdom) for using them in a fitting way. As the parable of the talents shows, God abhors indifference and an attitude that says it's not worth trying. God honours those who use their talents and gifts for doing good. Those who are faithful with even a little are entrusted with more! But those who neglect or squander what God has entrusted to them will lose what they have.

There is an important lesson here for us. No one can stand still for long in the Christian life. We either get more or we lose what we have. We either advance towards God or we slip back. Do you seek to serve God with the gifts, talents, and graces he has given to you?

Psalm 128:1-5

1 Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!

2 You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

4 Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.

5 The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *Eternal Joys*, by Gregory the Great (540-604 AD)

"All the good deeds of our present life, however many they may appear to be, are few in comparison with our eternal recompense. The faithful servant is put in charge of many things after overcoming all the troubles brought him by perishable things. He glories in the eternal joys of his heavenly dwelling. He is brought completely into the joy of his master when he is taken into his eternal home and joined to the company of angels. His inner joy at his gift is such that there is no longer any external perishable thing that can cause him sorrow." (excerpt from *FORTY GOSPEL HOMILIES 9.2*)

OPENING PRAYER :- Lord Jesus, be the ruler of my heart and thoughts, be the king of my home and relationships, and be the master of my work and service. Help me to make good use of the gifts, talents, time, and resources you give me for your glory and your kingdom. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER :-

O Good Shepherd, stay with Your sheep,

Secure them against the perils that beset them.

Stay, above all, with the suffering and dying.

Grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. Be our merciful Shepherd to the last,

that without fear we may appear before You as our Judge. **Amen.**