

Sermon Matthew 25 14 30 22<sup>nd</sup> S af Pent

Sermon: 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Matthew 25:14-30 (v. 14) - The Parable of the Talents

Theme: What do we do with what God has entrusted to us?

Goal: To stress the privilege we have as God's servants to work in His Kingdom.

Dear Friends,

**Introduction:** *This text is part of the Lord's response to the disciples' question, "When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming?" (Matt 24:3).* (LCMS A p. 136). Jesus answered with several teachings and some parables. This is one of them. Jesus was preparing His disciples for His departure. Let us identify the characters in this parable: Jesus Himself is the man who went out on a long journey, when He returned to heaven after His death and resurrection. We are the servants to whom He entrusted His property and His kingdom on earth. - This parable is very topical as we are coming to the end of the year once again. Talking and teaching about Jesus' second coming at this time of the year, preparing ourselves for the glorious meeting with our Savior and Lord has been a long-established tradition of the church..

### **I – He entrusted His talents to us**

God is so good to us that He not only purchased us from the devil's slavery by the blood of Jesus to be His own, but He also entrusts His riches to us. Five talents was a huge amount of money! Even one talent was a huge amount!

A) What does God entrust to us? In a general sense, we can say that whatever we have belongs to God and was entrusted to us. We came naked to this world and what we have belongs to God and is to be well used during our life time. The offering hymn that we sang during the Reformation Month says: *"We give you but your own / In any gifts we bring; / All that we have is yours alone, / A trust from you, our King."* (LW #405,1).

Luther liked to talk about our *“place in life: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker...”* In the 4<sup>th</sup> Petition of the Lord's Prayer he explains what God gives us: *“everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food and drink, clothing and shoes, house and home, fields and flocks, money and goods, a godly family, good workers, good government, honest leaders, good citizens, good weather, peace and order, health, a good name, loyal friends and good neighbors.”*

Every one of us has different skills, different responsibilities, different opportunities. The natural way for a child is to grow; for a student is to improve his knowledge; for a worker is to develop his office (his profession). Everyone looks up, and this is good when it has a good motivation. We shall not just be ambitious and work to have more and more; but we have to recognize that what we are and what we have is a blessing from our Lord; and He entrusts it to us to be well used for the good of our family, our society, and our church. Our ambitions must not be mastered by greed!

B) In a more strict sense, God entrusts to us Christians His Kingdom, His Gospel. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave a special task to His disciples: To go and to make disciples of all the nations! This is still valid. The church is there not just to serve us; but we are here to serve God's church as well. It's a way with two hands.

As we are planning to work a little more in outreach next year, trying to reach first our relatives and friends with the Gospel of Jesus, may God give us faithfulness to confess His name and His love boldly. If each of us, or if each family brings one more to the faith and to our St. Thomas family, we will multiply our talents, our figures. This is the challenge that God gives us in this parable as well! Sheep produce more sheep.

*Being the Lord's servant is indeed the highest position of any human being.* (LCMS). How are we managing God's property and goods? One day He will call us to settle accounts of what He entrusted to us.

## **II – He gives unexpected reward**

When the owner went on His journey, He didn't put a specific goal and didn't set any terms to His servants. He just entrusted that they would do their best. He didn't give the same amount to all, but to each of them He gave according to their abilities. He knows His servants and “*no servant is burdened with more than he can handle*” (Series A,p.238).

The first and the second servant had worked well with the money which was entrusted to them. They both presented back to the Master twice as much as they had received.. And then the surprise! The Master said: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!”

The servants didn't expect any reward. They had been faithful on doing their duties. But God is so good that He gives a reward to His faithful servants! *The Lord thinks of our joy and happiness. The greatest joy is being with Christ.* (LCMS).

We don't deserve rewards from God. We are not supposed to work for a reward, as if we were negotiating or bargaining with God. But God gives us all by His grace. He gives us His forgiveness and salvation by grace when we believe and trust in Jesus; and He gives us all the other blessings free as well. Some recognize it, give thanks to God and serve Him as faithful servants; while others don't do it.

## **III – He is severe with the lazy servant**

One servant in the parable was not faithful. He knew his Master, but he didn't trust Him and didn't use the opportunity he got. He recognized that what he got belonged to the Master. When he gave the one talent back to the Master, he said: “See, here is what belongs to you.” But he hadn't worked with it, he didn't use it. He was unfaithful and therefore he was condemned. And because he did not use the Talent he had

received, he lost it. There is a proverb that says: *“If you don't use it, you lose it.” To neglect the Lord's gift is to treat His grace shamefully.* (LCMS). The second coming will be a time of getting a reward for many, but a time of hard judgment to others.

We are just living *between the time Christ's ascension and His second coming. This is a time of opportunity, in which His followers are expected to put to profitable use the talents that the Master has given us* (ABC p 1163). Nearly two thousand years have passed since Jesus went back to the Father's house. When is He coming back? Nobody knows. Paul wrote about this to the Thessalonians, as we hear today (1 Thess 5). The Psalm and the Old Testament readings warned us about the Day of the Lord, that it would come unexpectedly. We shall work faithfully during our lives, knowing that we are working for the Lord, not for ourselves only.

**Conclusion:** When Luther explained the 2<sup>nd</sup> Article of the Creed, after explaining what Jesus did for us and how He purchased us to Himself, Luther concluded: *“That I may be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.”*

What a blessing it will be when the Lord says to us: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!”

Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:58), and we can finish this message with this word of comfort: “Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle  
Cape Town, 13 November 2011