

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 25:14-30

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (KJV)

The Church proclaims the Holy Gospel in each Divine Liturgy. Believers hear the Gospel as an integral part of the Divine Liturgy. The Gospel nourishes and transforms attentive believers.

The life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ are integral to the Gospel. Believers are enriched and guided by each proclamation of the Gospel. The current Gospel reading and each reading is relevant to contemporary life.

Believers are expected to incorporate the Gospel reading into daily life. Personal change, improvement and growth in Christ are expected when the Gospel is proclaimed.

Aspects of personal life not consistent with the Gospel are to be rejected and expelled due to the power of the Gospel reading. The current Gospel reading addresses the use of each person's talents and gifts from God.

Each person is blessed by God with certain talents and gifts. These talents and gifts are to be used in God-pleasing ways. When used wisely and in accord with the Lord's teachings, the results are multiplied.

The recipients of the five talents and two talents invested well and doubled their values. They were rewarded accordingly. The recipient of the one talent did not even bother to earn simple interest. In the end, he lost what he had received.

Christians are blessed by God and expected to take initiative. Believers are to be productive with their talents. Talents are to be put to good use for the glory of God and in accord with God's teachings.

God's Holy Church offers the teachings, ethics and moral standards for the use of talents. God's Holy Church describes the relationships that are to be undertaken and maintained in earthly life in the use of talents.

Christians are to grow in life and to make a difference in life. Jesus Christ is to shine through believers' lives in the use of their talents. Studying the Holy Gospel enables believers to make wise use of personal gifts and talents.

Failure to make use of talents leads to stagnancy and personal loss. While the mind functions well, growth in Jesus Christ is expected from the time of baptism until departure from this life.

Jesus Christ nourishes believers through the life in the Church. Jesus Christ guides believers through prayer and worship. Daily occurrences in life reveal God's teachings for believers to follow the path to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Believers have a responsibility to be attentive to the Gospel and Christ's teachings. Being alert in daily life leads to good use of personal talents and gifts. Wise believers protect and care for the talents and gifts from God.

When talents are multiplied, gratitude to God is in order and is appropriate. All good gifts are from the Lord God. The Epistle of St. James is very clear about the origin of gifts. The origin is expressed in the Divine Liturgy.

The Epistle of St. James states: "**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.**" (James 1:17)

The Divine Liturgy is a growth experience and nourishing experience for believers. Active participation in the Divine Liturgy is expected. The heart, mind and soul are nourished in the Divine Liturgy.

Believers receive the Divine Liturgy from the Lord. The responsibility to actively participate in the Divine Liturgy rests with the believer. Wise and sincere participation in the Divine Liturgy multiplies the benefits to the believer.

When the Gospel messages are taken to heart and put into action, the believer's personal life changes proportionately. God is aware of the seriousness and degree of participation of each believer.

Thank God for each Gospel proclamation. Thank God for each talent and gift received and put to God-pleasing use. God is good, loving and due unending gratitude and glory.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Martyr Callistratus. September 27/October 10, 2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic