

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 journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other 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 Sunday after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Life-giving Cross

Mk.8:34-9:1

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. (KJV)

St. Mark's Gospel for today makes clear the soul is worth more than the whole world. Believers are charged with keeping the soul pure and clean throughout earthly life.

The world is full of perils, temptations and afflictions that jeopardize the soul. Vigilance and faithfulness to the Lord God are necessary at all times. Evil attacks the believer in weak moments.

God's Holy Church is where to find constant refuge against evil. The Church provides the nourishment and fortification to lead a God-pleasing life. The Church is where to learn to follow the narrow path to God's Kingdom and eternal life.

(Mt.7:13-14)

St. Matthew's Gospel for today instructs believers to be good stewards of the talents given by God. Just as in the current Gospel the servants were judged in their use of talents, everyone will face the final judgment at the Lord's Second Coming.

At the Last Judgment, believers will need to give an account of the use of talents given by God. Persons wasting their talents or burying them in the earth will not hear pleasing news. (Mt.25:31-46, Rom.14:10-12)

Good stewards of God's talents will be like the servants in the current Gospel who doubled the talents received. Talents received from God are to be used in ways pleasing to God.

Talents used in God pleasing ways multiply in value. Believers investing in the Kingdom of God reap lasting benefits to the soul. Wisdom to invest in God's Kingdom is found in the Holy Gospel and teachings of the Church.

The widow in the Gospel who gave two mites invested wisely. (Mk.12:42)
Martyrs losing their life for the Gospel are wise investors. Prudent investors for the Kingdom feed the hungry, visit the sick and imprisoned and welcome strangers. (Mt.25:31-46)

Attending the Church's Divine services, reading the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Holy Fathers and Mothers are sound investments in God's Kingdom. Faithfully praying to God is a secure investment.

Believers will experience failures that will take a toll on the soul. Repentance is necessary throughout life to redirect life toward God's Kingdom and eternal life. Holy Confession and Communion restore the healthy relationship with Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ went to the Cross and rose from the Tomb in order for believers to have the opportunity to begin again. When the soul is damaged through bad investing, repentance and confession leads to Christ purifying the soul.

Life is given by God to be lived for the glory of God and in God-pleasing ways. Investing the days of life in the Kingdom of God brings love, joy, and peace. Growth in life is possible throughout life.

God's reassuring presence is manifested when life is invested in the Kingdom of God. God is ever-present for the faithful believer seeking wisdom in making life's investments.

Prayer, the Divine services and teachings of the Church yield the guidance necessary for investing life daily. Love of neighbor and forgiveness in relationships facilitate life being pleasing to the Lord.

God is ever-present. Living the God-pleasing life entails reaching out to God with the desire to love and remain united with God. Barriers to living the God-pleasing life are successfully overcome with God's help.

The desire to love God exists in the believer's heart, mind and soul. The believer decides daily whether to nourish the love for God and to seek the God-pleasing life. Every day it is timely to love God and to please God.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The Sunday after the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross. Holy Martyrs, Trophimus Sabbatius and Dorymedon. September 19/October 2, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic