

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)

Each person is given gifts and talents from the Lord God. Each person has the freedom to use the gifts and talents as they choose. Using gifts and talents in ways pleasing to the Lord increases their value.

Two of the servants in the current Gospel made wise of their talents and multiplied their worth. The servant of the five talents earned five more. The servant receiving two talents doubled its worth to four,

The servant with the single talent buried his talent. No additional worth was added. Each person determines in life if they will increase the value of talents given by God.

Gratitude to God is demonstrated by the way the gifts and talents of life are used. A person using gifts and talents of life to benefit their family, friends and community increases the values of talents received.

A person with the attitude of the servant with one talent in the Gospel will bury his or her talent. Failing to make good use of talents from God reflects a lack of honor and gratitude.

The Church proclaims this Gospel for believers to assess the personal use of talents and gifts. Believers are responsible for making wise and beneficial use of the gifts and talents of life.

In the old state penitentiary on North Side, Pittsburgh, the staff dining room was adorned with a beautiful mural of the city of Pittsburgh covering all four walls. My understanding was the mural was painted by an inmate.

I admired the mural and thought the inmate would have made a good iconographer capable of painting frescoes in churches. The inmate's talent was hidden from a much wider audience.

The inmate with artistic talent had his talent buried behind the penitentiary walls. Too many people bury their talents in the ground and limit the value they could provide to themselves and others.

God's gifts to each person when used wisely increase in value and multiply in benefit. Good cooks making use of their gifts and talents bring joy to many diners. Good teachers enrich the lives of their students.

Good mechanics make their customers happy. Nurses that take their work seriously enrich the lives of their patients. Believers recognizing their lives, skills and gifts come from God manage them in ways pleasing to God.

Parents grateful to God for having children love their children abundantly. The parental love will be reflected in the way the children grow and mature. God's Holy Church wants believers to take this Gospel message seriously.

God gives us the time and talents of life. Each person decides whether to invest the time and talents of life in the Kingdom of God. The way a person lives and uses his or her talents determines if the investment is in God's Kingdom.

Each person will face the Lord at the Great and Final Judgment. Each person will answer for the way he or she used the gifts and talents of life. At the final judgement, the Lord will determine if the person will enter the joy of the Kingdom.

Tomorrow God's Holy Church celebrates the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God. We learn from the life of the Mother of God the way to live in purity and to love and honor the Lord.

We learn from the Mother of God the joy of being obedient. Now is the time to use life's gifts and talents in ways pleasing to the Lord. May our talents be multiplied in gratitude to God and in benefit others.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Hieromartyr Gregory of Armenia. St. Michael, First Metropolitan of Kiev. September 30/October 13m 2024.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic