

Sunday 15th November 2020 WORSHIP AT HOME: RCL Proper 28 Year A
GOSPEL Matthew 25.14-30 – The Parable of the Talents
Welcome to our act of Worship

A moment of reflection as we prepare for this act of worship.

*"I trust the all-creating voice,
And faith desires no more"*

'Begin my tongue', final verse.

Call to worship

'Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.' *Psalm 33:22*

A Prayer of Approach

We bring to you, gracious God, what is yours:
our thanks, our praise, our hearts, our lives.
In this act of worship,
bless each one of us with a sense of your presence
and the reassurance of your love.
In Jesus' name.

Amen.

HYMN

T St Magnus

Begin, my tongue, some heavenly theme,

awake, my voice, and sing
the mighty works or mightier name
of our eternal King.

Tell of his wondrous faithfulness,
and sound his power abroad;
sing the sweet promise of his grace,
the quickening word of God.

His every word of grace is strong
as that which built the skies;
the voice that rolls the stars along
speaks all the promises.

Now shall my fainting heart rejoice
to know thy favour sure;
I trust the all-creating voice,
and faith desires no more.

HP2, MP, RS93, STF

(Some of the hymn books widely used in the
Wiltshire United Area)

Prayers of Praise

Lord God, our heavenly Father,
we praise and adore you;
we celebrate your mighty power and your love.
You have guided and preserved us in all our ways;
you are worthy of all praise and honour and love.

Your glory is beyond all thought; you are alpha and
omega, the first and the last; you are beyond all

letters and all words, beyond all that we can say or
think.

Accept our praise and adoration, we pray, through
the merits of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Forgive us, God of all:

when we bury your gifts in the ground of our fear;
when we bury our responsibilities in the ground of
reluctance;
when we bury your hopes for us in the ground of
our diffidence.

Forgive us, and free us to be your fruitful servants,
people on whom you can depend and rely.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

HYMN

T The right hand of God

The right hand of God

is writing in our land,
Writing with power and with love;
Our conflicts and our fears,
Our triumphs and our tears,
Are recorded by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God
is pointing in our land,
Pointing the way we must go;
So clouded is the way,
So easily we stray,
But we're guided by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God
is striking in our land,
Striking out at envy, hate and greed;
Our selfishness and lust,
Our pride and deeds unjust,
Are destroyed by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God
is lifting in our land,
Lifting the fallen one by one;
Each one is known by name,
And lifted now from shame,
By the lifting of the right hand of God.

The right hand of God
is healing in our land,
Healing broken bodies, minds and souls;
So wondrous is its touch,

With love that means so much,
When we're healed
by the right hand of God.

The right hand of God
is planting in our land,
Planting seeds of freedom, hope and love;
In these many-peopled lands,
Let his children all join hands,
And be one with the right hand of God.

HP408, MP-, RS91 , STF715

Ministry of the Word of God

RCL Proper 28 Year A

Zephaniah 1.7,12-18; Psalm 90.1-12; 1

Thessalonians 5.1-11; **Matthew 25.14-30**

The Parable of the Talents

14 'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." ²¹His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." ²³His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." ²⁶But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with

interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Reflection

One of the patients I visited this week is a retired member of the clergy who has undergone major surgery. With a beaming smile he said, "So many talents are being used to restore me to fullness of health..." As I journey round the hospital complex, there are so many people using their talents for the benefit of others.

You may recall the annual television series "Britain's Got Talent". However, let us appreciate each of us have talents. The Church relies on people using their talents: from treasurers to people cleaning, from organists/musicians, to those who welcome people on arrival, from those who use their artistic gifts to arrange flowers, to those who organise the shoebox appeal. Without people using their talents a church would simply fail to be.

In today's Gospel talents equate as money. It comes with a haunting climax of condemnation: "lazy" "wicked", "worthless". Let us make one thing clear, this is a story, and the master does not represent God, indeed the very reverse could be true. Ask yourself where in the Gospels is God depicted as avaricious and ruthless?

So a master entrusts his slaves "talents". Some theologians believe that in Jesus' day a talent was about 20 years of an average worker's pay! Current statistics state that the average working wage today is £569 per week, which works out at around £29,588 a year. Times that by twenty and it comes to nearly £600,000 By anyone's stance this is no "small change" parable!

What would you do if you were bequeathed such a sum – I always remember my grandparents keeping a tobacco-tin filled with money under the bed! But do not fall into the trap of thinking this is a financial based passage! For a very different way of looking at it reflect on Jesus, not as the master, rather the third slave who refuses to conform to the way of a greedy world and is prepared to stand

up to the greedy master. Jesus the “whistle-blower”. The slave who confronts the unjust master and tackles him about social, political, and economic injustices! And recall the master actually punishes him for speaking the truth, and not for failing to make a profit. **

Jesus the one who kept the treasure safely in a field and paid the price by being thrown out, as Jesus himself was thrown out and buried (Matt 27v59-60.) Recall Jesus words “*the Kingdom of heaven is like treasure someone finds and buries*” (Matt 13.44; 25v18), treasure that is discovered with joy by those who came to Jesus’ tomb: “*He is not here; for he has been raised* (28v6)

However we reflect on this passage there is mileage in thinking about the talents we have been given. . “*Each one has received a gift*” (1 **Peter 4:10**). We are challenged to **find out what our talent is** for we have received talents from God.

What is your talent? How can we best use it in this tired, weary, blood-stained world? Remember the words of the Irish statemen and philosopher Edmund Burke: “*All that is needed for evil to triumph is that good people do nothing*”

How will we use our talent(s), in our church, in our community, in standing up for justice and righteousness?

***The Upside down Bible by Symon Hill DLT*

Prayer of Response

God asks you to bring your life before him.
Will you offer your hands to help others?

We will.

Will you offer your gifts to encourage others?

We will.

Will you offer your resources to share with others?

We will.

Will you offer your time to listen to others?

We will.

Will you offer your hearts in compassion for others?

We will.

Will you entrust all that you are, and all that you long to be,

to the good of others and to the glory of God?
We will. Amen.

HYMN

T Blessed Assurance

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

O what a foretaste of glory divine!

Heir of salvation, purchase of God

Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

This is my story, this is my song

Praising my Saviour all the day long

Perfect submission, perfect delight

Visions of rapture now burst on my sight

Angels descending bring from above

Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,

I in my Saviour am happy and blest-

Watching and waiting, looking above

Filled with his goodness, lost in his love

HP668, MP59, RS, STF548

A Prayer of Intercession

Gracious God,

we pray for people who are afraid:

for those facing violence

in places of war, or in the home;

for those facing ill-health or disability;

for those facing the loss of their job, their home, or someone they love.

We pray for those who are afraid

because they have done great wrong

and fear the consequences,

and for those who have become paralysed

by their sense of failure or inadequacy.

For all these, and for ourselves in our own fear,
we seek your peace.

Banish the darkness of dread

with the light of your presence.

Give protection from evil and despair

with the armour of faith, love and hope,

and the assurance of your power to save
which is stronger even than death itself.

We pray, too, for those whose fearlessness

brings pain and anxiety to others:

those whose complacency leaves others in their
suffering;

those who behave recklessly, endangering

people's lives;

those who have no conscience, who stop at

nothing for their own gain.

For these, and for ourselves in our own
waywardness,
we seek your truth.

Pierce the darkness of self-delusion
with the light of your judgement.
Strip away all pretence
and challenge us all to take seriously
the responsibility you lay upon us.
So, may we all take our place in your kingdom,
where love casts out fear,
and we enter into your joy for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN *T Mount Zion (focus on v3)*

Give me the faith which can remove
And sink the mountain to a plain;
Give me the childlike praying love,
Which longs to build thy house again;
Thy love, let it my heart o'er-power,
And all my simple soul devour.

I would the precious time redeem,
And longer live for this along,
To spend and to be spent for them
Who have not yet my Saviour known;
Fully on these my mission prove,
And only breathe, to breathe thy love.

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
Into thy blessed hands receive;
And let me live to preach thy word,
And let me to thy glory live;
My every sacred moment spend
In publishing the sinner's Friend.
Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine,
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like thine,

And lead them to thy open side,
The sheep for whom the Shepherd died.

HP767 , MP168, RS, STF661

Blessing

Lord, take our minds and think through them;
Take our lips and speak through them;
Take our hearts and set them on fire with love for
Christ and his Kingdom. **Amen.**

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire
United Area
Bank Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not all be open, but the Church is
active and alive.***

*This service is offered to any and all, with love
and prayers.*

Mini Bible Story based on today's Gospel

Jesus said: 'Use the things that you have been
given. (*hold out hands*)
Don't just hide them. (*tuck fist under arm*)
Use them to make something wonderful'. (*grow
hands up in air*)

Prayer for All Ages

Dear God,
when we have a little and when we have a lot,
help us to: **use it not lose it.**
When we are entrusted with opportunities,
help us to: **cheer not fear.**
When you invite us to be your stewards,
help us to be: **workers not shirkers.**
And at the end of our efforts,
help us to make: **double not trouble.**
With thankful hearts and in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Thought for the Week

There is an old Christian tradition that God sends
each person into this world with a special message
to deliver, with a special song to sing for others,
with a special act of love to bestow. No one else
can speak my message, or sing my song, or offer
my act of love. These are entrusted only to me.
John Powell, Through Seasons of the Heart.

CCL LICENCE
Steeple Ashton Methodist CCL 291605
Warminster United CCL 1221052
Westbury Methodist CCL 781988
Westbury URC CCL 293641