

11/16/08

THE PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Lay Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Lay Minister: Let us pray.

People: (Unison) Almighty and ever living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious blessings and promises to your children. Lead us to trust you and to live our lives for our Savior Jesus Christ, that our lives may declare your love in word and action; we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Zephaniah 1:7-16 (*The day of the Lord is near.*)

Reader: Be silent before the Lord GOD!

People: For the day of the LORD is near;

Reader: the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated His guests. And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice---

People: I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

Reader: On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold,

People: and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud.

Reader: "On that day," declares the LORD,

Men: "a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate,

Women: a wail from the Second Quarter, a loud crash from the hills.

Reader: Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar! For all the traders are no more; all who weigh out silver are cut off.

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts,

People: 'The LORD will not do good, nor will He do ill.'

Reader: Their goods shall be plundered,

Men: and their houses laid waste.

Reader: Though they build houses

Women: they shall not inhabit them;

Reader: though they plant vineyards,

People: they shall not drink wine from them."

Reader: The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast;

Men: the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter;

Women: *the mighty man cries aloud there.*

Reader: A day of wrath is that day,
People: **a day of distress and anguish,**

Reader: a day of ruin and devastation,
People: **a day of darkness and gloom,**

Reader: a day of clouds and thick darkness,
People: **a day of trumpet blast and battle cry**

All: against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. (ESV)

Lay Reader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God.**

THE EPISTLE LESSON 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (*The day of the Lord will come suddenly.*)

1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Lay Reader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God.**

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 25:14-30 (*The Parable of the Talents*)

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts

with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 21 "His master replied, '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!' 22 "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' 23 "His master replied, '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!'

24 "Then the man who had received the one talent came. **'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'**

26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 {Wspër ga.r a;nqrwpoj avpodhmw/n evka,lesen tou.j ivdi,ouj dou,louj kai. pare,dwken auvtou/j ta. u`pa,rconta auvtou/(

avpodhmw/n **going away, leaving home**

For, just as a man leaving home called his servants and gave them his possessions

15 kai. w-| me.n e;dwken pe,nte ta,lanta(w-| de. du,o(w-| de. e[n(e`ka,stw| kata. th.n ivdi,an du,namin(kai. avpedh,mhsenÅ euvqe,wj

And to one he gave five talents, and to (one) two, and to one, one. To each according to his own ability and he went away immediately.

16 poreuqeij o` ta. pe,nte ta,lanta labw.n hvrga,sato evn auvtou/j kai. evke,rdhsen a;lla pe,nte\

hvrge,sato **accomplish, perform, earn by working**

And having gone, the one (with) taking five talent earned by working with them and gained another five.

17 w`sau,twj o` ta. du,o evke,rdhsen a;lla du,oÅ

Likewise the one with two, gained another two.

18 o` de. to. e]n labw.n avpelqw.n w;ruxen gh/n kai. e;kruyen to. avrgu,rion tou/ kuri,ou auvtou/Å

But the one with one, took it and went dug a hole in the earth hiding the money of his Lord.

19 meta. de. polu.n cro,non e;rceai o` ku,rioj tw/n dou,lwn evkei,nwn kai. sunai,rei lo,gon metV auvtw/nÅ

And after much time the lord of those servants came and took a word with them.

20 kai. proselqw.n o` ta. pe,nte ta,lanta labw.n prosh,negken a;lla pe,nte ta,lanta le,gwn\ ku,rie(pe,nte ta,lanta, moi pare,dwkaj\ i;de a;lla pe,nte ta,lanta evke,rdhsaÅ

And the one having five talents came to him bring the other five talents he had gained, saying, “Lord, the five talents handed over to me. Behold I have gained another five talents.

21 e;fh auvtw/| o` ku,rioj auvtou/\ eu=(dou/le avgage. kai. piste,(evpi. ovli,ga h=j pisto,j(evpi. pollw/n se katasth,sw\ ei;selqe eivj th.n cara.n tou/ kuri,ou souÅ

katasth,sw\ **put in charge**

And his Lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. Over a littler you were faithful. Over much I shall put you in charge. Inter into the joy of your Lord.

22 proselqw.n Îde.Ð kai. o` ta. du,o ta,lanta ei=pen\ ku,rie(du,o ta,lanta, moi pare,dwkaj\ i;de a;lla du,o ta,lanta evke,rdhsaÅ

And the one having two came, saying, Lord, two talents you gave me. Behold I have gained another two.

23 e;fh auvtw/| o` ku,rioj auvtou/\ eu=(dou/le avgage. kai. piste,(evpi. ovli,ga h=j pisto,j(evpi. pollw/n se katasth,sw\ ei;selqe eivj th.n cara.n tou/ kuri,ou souÅ

His Lord said, “Well done good and faithful servant. Over a little you were faithful. Over much I shall put you in charge. Enter into the joy of your Lord.”

24 proselqw.n de. kai. o` to. e]n ta,lanton eivlhw.j ei=pen\ ku,rie(e;gnwn se o[ti sklhro.j ei= a;nqrwpoj(qeri,zwn o[pou ouv k e;speiraj kai. suna,gwn o[qen ouv diesko,rpisaj(

And the one having one talent came bringing (it), and said, “Lord, I knew that you

are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter.

25 kai. fobhqeij avpelqw.n e;kruya to. ta,lanto,n sou evn th/| gh/|\ i;de e;ceij to. so,nÅ

And having feared I went and hid your talent in the ground. Behold you have what is yours.”

26 avpokriqeij de. o` ku,rioj auvtou/ ei=pen auvtw/|\ ponhre. dou/le kai. ovknhre,(h;|deij o[ti qeri,zw o[pou ouv k e;speira kai. suna,gw o[qen ouv diesko,rpisaË

And his Lord answered him saying, “Wicked and evil servant. You knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter.

27 e;dei se ou=n balei/n ta. avrgu,ria, mou toi/j trapezi,taij(kai. evlqw.n evgw. evkomisa,mhn a'n to. evmo.n su.n to,kw|Å

evkomisa,mhn **received back**

You should have known therefore, to place my money in the bank. And having come I would have received back what is mine with interest.

28 a;rate ou=n avpV auvtou/ to. ta,lanton kai. do,te tw/| e;conti ta. de,ka ta,lanta\

Therefore take his talent and give it to the one having the ten talents.

29 tw/| ga.r e;conti panti. doqh,setai kai. perisseuqh,setai(tou/ de. mh. e;contoj kai. o] e;cei avrqh,setai avpV auvtou/Å

For to the one having, much shall be given. And to the one not having what he has also shall be taken from him.

30 kai. to.n avcrei/on dou/lon evkba,lete eivj to. sko,toj to. evxw,teron\ evkei/ e;stai o` klauqmo.j kai. o` brugmo.j tw/n ovdo,ntwnÅ

avcrei/on unworthy

And the unworthy servant cast into the outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Parallel Passages

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

2 Corinthians 9:7 **Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

Matthew 6:11 **Give us today our daily bread.**

Psalms 23: 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; **my cup overflows.**

2 Corinthians 5: 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

INTRO - A lady named Susan Baker contributed a story to Readers' Digest. *After a beautiful purebred puppy wandered onto our back porch and made himself at home, my husband composed an ad for the "lost and found" column of the local newspaper. It read: "golden lab, male, approximately nine months old, no collar, very friendly, found on Rockbridge Road." I feared all the detail might encourage an unscrupulous person to claim the dog. As I methodically explained why each clue revealed too much, my husband dutifully crossed out the words. Finally, in frustration, he rewrote the ad, reducing it to a single sentence that I couldn't refute. It read: "guess what I found?"* You and I can understand the fear that Mrs. Baker might have had. However, the fear caused an ad that could have kept them from finding the owner of the dog.

I. Did you notice the fear in today's Gospel lesson.

A. The Lord and master gave possessions to 3 individuals before he went on a trip. When he came to collect, this is what the last man said.

1. **'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'**

2. The other men had put the money given them to work.

3. This man could have even put the money in a bank and drawn interest.

4. But, his fear kept him from using his master's money to help in his master's work.

B. I believe that when this verse is read, one of the reactions might be Fear.

1. Oh, Oh. I know that Bible reading, this might be a money sermon.

2. I can't afford giving anything, or more to God.

3. I wonder what will be asked from me today.

4. I don't believe this reaction happens in the majority of those here today. But there can be a fear of discussing money. And that fear can keep God's people from doing God's work, with all their gifts and possessions.

II. This month we are considering the Urgency of the Last Days.

A. In this parable Jesus tells us that it is urgent that we are good managers of the gifts God has given us.

1. There is an urgency because the work of God is to save people for eternal life.

2. There is an urgency to faithful use of God's gifts and talents, because, we are saved through faith and trust in God.
 3. Serving God requires and grows trust. Not serving God out of fear, can hurt our trust in God and can hurt and weaken our faith.
 4. Jesus says that using our gifts and talents for God is important, is urgent in these last times.
- B. I want you to know that this parable is not primarily about money.
1. The Greek word for this currency given to the servants is actually pronounced "talent." I have read that when the English language was developing, it was understood that the talent of this parable pointed to all that God gives us, possessions, life, and even abilities. That is where we get the word talent today.
 2. God does not want us to just give our money to him.
 3. God wants us to use our whole lives, our energy, or abilities or talents, our possessions, our commitment, to do His work and serve Him.
- C. God has given instructions about offerings and finances.
1. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, **Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**
 2. God does not want people who feel forced to use their resources to do His work.
 3. God wants cheerful givers, people who know His love, His blessings, and then respond cheerfully, proportionately, sacrificially, with first fruits.
- D. But, using our talents, the life that God has given us, to serve Him cannot be done when there is fear in our hearts.
1. It takes trust that God loves us.
 2. It takes trust that if we fail, God forgives.
 3. It takes faith that comes from knowing the love of God.
 4. But while we know we need faith, faith can be a difficult way to live.

III. The man with the fear in this parable had let that fear distort reality. God is *the giver, not the taker*. God had given him the talent.

- A. God is the one who gives to us.
1. We pray in the Lord's prayer, **"Give us this day our daily bread."** Is there anyone here who does not just have enough bread for today, but for many days?
 2. Psalm 23:5 says, **"My cup overflows."** Is that not true for us.
 3. Today we filled out a list of material blessings for which we are thankful. How did your list of material blessings look?
- B. But, God promises to provide for us. Have you ever seen Romans 8:32 **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?**
1. God has given us His own Son.
 2. God could give us punishment for our sin and rebellion, but in Jesus God gives forgiveness and eternal life as God GAVE His Son to die for us, and rose again.
 3. God says, "If I gave you my Son, won't I give you everything else you need too, even to do my work?"

CONCLUSION - Have you ever read Acts 16? You might know the story. Paul and Silas are teaching in Philippi, and they get thrown into prison for their preaching. Now, you might think they might give up their faith to get out of jail. After all, why did God allow them to land there?

But, in prison they were praying and singing hymns out loud. They trusted God who died and rose for them would take care of them. When the earthquake came and opened the prison doors the guard asked them, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas were able to witness even in danger, because they trusted God. They trusted Him because he had taken care of their eternity, surely he could take care of this life.

In the end times faithfully using the blessings of God to serve Him is urgent. We can serve God as we trust Him. God gave us His son. How can we not trust and serve Him???

THANKS -

GRIEVING Family of Bob Hartley
*Fawn Paul Copy's family - death of father in law (Dan's? Dad)

TROUBLES - Families affected by economic downturn

ILL *Lila LaPalm - Laurie Maxwell's mom
Darian Stengrim
Kristin Kopperud
Dee McNeese
Tim Koss
*Ruth Brownlee
Orion Karino
Pat Mills
Dave Miranda
Glen Price
Midge's friend - cancer

Military Eric and Katie Hermon
Peter Isaakson