

Proper 28 A/ 1

Trinity Bend

Judges 4:1—7

Ps. 123

1Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

We just heard the parable of the talents. In this story the word talent can be both literally and metaphorically.

The actual talent, probably when measuring its weight in gold, equaled what a laborer would earn in the span of 15 years in the first century, a huge amount for the severely underpaid people of those days; it was worth 3000 shekels in Palestine and 6000 drachmas in the Greek world. About \$1000 in today's world.

Because of its value and its possibilities, this same word, talent, has entered our language to denote a natural gift of abilities and aptitudes.

Jesus seems to acknowledge in this parable that all of us are born with different gifts and talents.

Our talents are not what we often think, natural endowments for achievement. They can be aptitudes or abilities that can be polished and developed by us.

Rather they are the grace filled gifts of God within us. And the single most important task of discipleship is to trust this grace filled Presence in our lives to bring forth the life of Jesus through us.

But the important thing is that each of us has gifts and talents. It is through the grace of God that we are each entrusted with different talents. We are called to put our talents into action.

God calls us to use those talents for the greater good. Now some of us might say, "I used some of my talents, but not all of them. I was afraid that if I risked using them I might lose all that I had." Just like the third servant in the story.

Fear often takes over and holds us back. Several years ago Dennis Quaid starred in *The Rookie*, a movie based upon a true story. His character was a baseball coach at a high school in a small West

Texas town. His boys were underachievers. They didn't believe that they could have success.

In short, the coach, whose career in professional baseball had never panned out, was leading a team that didn't believe they would amount to much. A spirit of fear dominated the psyches of both the coach and the boys on his team.

When the coach was pitching batting practice one day, something miraculous happened. Both the boys and the coach noticed that his pitching arm suddenly had more power than it had ever had.

The boys urged their coach to try out for a professional team, so he made a deal with them that he thought he would never have to honor.

He said that if the boys would win the district baseball title; he would try out. They did, and then they told the coach, "It's your turn."

The amazing story is that a man with a wife and three kids who thought that his dream had passed him by not only was picked up by a minor league team. He ended up pitching two seasons in the major leagues.

His fear of failure gave way to the joy of using his talents to the best of his abilities. He gave back more than he received.

That is what we are called to do. Each of us is like the servants in the story. We each have been given talents by God and it is up to us to make the most of those talents.

Then at the end of our lives we will be called to make an accounting of what we did with the talents given to us.

In our society when we use our talents we are usually rewarded monetarily for our work. If we have a faithful relationship with the Boss we will risk giving back to him what he has given us; just as the first two servants in today's story did.

When we give back to God, He says, "I do not want all of what you have earned. I just want a significant portion of what you have. I will trust you to develop the rest of what you have so you will have more to share for my work in the world."

It is as if God says you have done well with what I have given you I will trust you with more.

But often times we are tempted to be like the third servant, afraid to use the talents that God has given us. And then afraid to share what we have for fear of not having enough.

I believe that Jesus is also asking that we use our grace filled talents in the world and in this place. We all have things we do well. Trinity would not be the faith filled church that it is without the many volunteers who use their skills or talents for the good of others.

If you say I'm too old to volunteer, I've got too many physical limitations. That may be true, but you can always be part of the prayer team that supports those we know who volunteer.

Every day, there is someone here making this church run smoothly, there is someone offering a hand to another. People are caring for one another. This past week was a perfect example of people working together in this place to make the Red Door Market Place a success.

People are volunteering in the community at large. They all need your support. Your grace filled prayers will be helpful.

In *The Waiting Father* Helmut Theilicke wrote, “The third servant, if he were living today would probably say, ‘I personally can not have anything to do with the Lord, but there is no doubt that the Christian enterprise must continue... I can wrap religion in my handkerchief and conserve it.’ ”

It is worth noting the Jesus not only radically rejects this position but also the arguments by which he does so.

Theilicke continues, “Jesus says, ‘I will condemn you out of your own mouth, you rascal of a servant.’ ”

This obviously means I am now assuming your position and meeting you on your own level. You say that you feared the Lord, and therefore you took him seriously.

But this is just what you did not do... If you had taken me seriously you would have put it in the bank and made a little interest.”

“You said ‘no’ to me and yet you were not willing to burn your bridges. You went only half-way. You were only lukewarm.there are really only two ways to take a thing seriously. Either you renounce it or you

risk everything for it. ..Let God be the love of your life...but don't wrap God up in your handkerchief."

God calls each of us to take risks. What risk is he calling you to take?

If you have a loving relationship with God you will be willing to take risks for God. You will see the importance of spreading God's kingdom here on earth.

You will live into that relationship every day. Will you share what you know about God? Will you share what you have with Trinity so that God's work can continue in this place.

Then as a church we have to take a risk and continue to move out into the world. We have to use our resources to share what we know about the Spirit of God with those who have not met her yet. That is what the first two servants would have done.

The third servant was afraid of what the Master might do so he did nothing. Ours needs to be a relationship built on love not fear.

It is out of love that we give back to the Owner that which belongs to God.