

...YOU HAVE BEEN A FAITHFUL SERVANT OVER FEW THINGS....I WILL BLESS YOU (Mathew 25:14-30)

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!
Mathew 25:23

Today we look at a man who was entrusted with an amount of money. He kept the money as it was given to him, he did not use it and replace it later, he did not even change it into smaller denominations or even change the envelope in which it had been given to him and yet Jesus called him wicked, lazy and therefore unfaithful!

Note that, Mathew 25:14 - 30 is a continuation of Jesus is teaching on the Kingdom of God from verse 1 of Chapter 25. Jesus entrusts talents to his servants (14-18). Verse 14. "Again, it (*the kingdom of God*) will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them."

The key word here is "entrusted." The master essentially promoted his servants to be stewards with a trust. He gave them the freedom to manage his property as their own. Verse 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."

The master had a principle in the initial entrusting of his property. He entrusted it according to ability. Not everyone is the same in terms of ability. Some people can do five things at one time and do them all well. Others must concentrate on one thing at a time.

Ability comes from God (Deut 8:18) therefore, able people should not be proud; they should work hard. And less able people should not give up; but work hard as well. The master was not a people pleaser who made everyone feel good. He wanted each person to use all of his ability. And each person received according to ability.

The servants' response

- The first one went at once and put his money to work and gained five more (16). This man "went at once." He was quick to begin his work without hesitation. He was focused and diligent. He understood that delayed obedience is disobedience, His immediate action was by faith. He took his master at his word. He trusted his master without a second thought. He sensed his great privilege and undeserved opportunity (GRACE). So he devoted himself fully and joyfully to the task. Verse 16 calls it "his money." He was prudent, regarding his master's money like his own. He did not have any relational distance from his master; he and his master were one. His chief desire was to please his master. With this attitude, he did more than keep up with the market interest rate; he doubled his original capital from five to ten.
- The second servant did the same. Though less able, he had the same faithfulness and doubled his talents from two to four (verse 17). He also trusted his master fully. He did not waste time complaining for receiving fewer talents than the first man. He did his best with what he was given. Serving the Lord is not a competition. It is a matter of being faithful with what you have however little. **According to L. Mason, Complaining about what you don't have is wasting what you have.** In God's economy, success comes through faithfulness more than ability.
- The third servant makes a great contrast with the first two. He went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money (verse 18). As we will see later, he had a relationship

problem with his master. He was full of groundless complaints and fear. So he buried his talent in the ground as though he could forget about it.

There are many people like this (Even here at the Cathedral) who have buried their talents in the ground. They live as though they have nothing to do for God and nothing to give account for.

In this parable, Jesus is the man going on a journey. Jesus would soon be arrested, tried and condemned. Jesus would suffer at the hands of evil men and be crucified. It was to save us from our sins. But God raised Jesus from the dead. The Risen Christ appeared to his disciples and convinced them that he was alive. The Risen Christ revealed the Scriptures to them. Then he ascended into heaven to the right hand of God. This same Jesus will come again in power and great glory.

The servants are those in the church. Everyone in the church has an ability and God has entrusted you with something at such a time as this. We should use our different abilities to multiply what God has given us. Some of us are business men and women, others are lawyers etc. Even, the building of a new cathedral is entrusted to us here because of our ability.

The good and faithful servant (19-23).

While the master is away, we have the grace to work. But when he returns, it will be time to settle accounts. We owe the master his original investment and an accounting for how we used it.

It is like the report card pick-up day for students.

Verse 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.'" The servant showed his master the money. Perhaps he carried two huge bags, five talents in each. He piled the overflowing money before his master with a sense of accomplishment. He was not scared to stand before his master, but he was joyful and confident. He believed his master would be happy with his 100% profit.

THE MASTER DID NOT DISAPPOINT Look at verse 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.'"

This verse tells us about Jesus' reward for his faithful servants. There are essentially three elements.

First of all, there is the master's recognition. The master's, "Well done," was a good evaluation of his work. It was like getting an A+ in science, reading and math. Then the master commended his character, calling him, "good and faithful servant." This is how God will recognize his faithful servants. It is everlasting appreciation and praise from the chief Judge. God's recognition is the best reward, which satisfies our souls.

The master also said, "I will put you in charge of many things." The master had a bright future hope for his servant. The master promised to promote him to greater responsibility. His future employment was guaranteed permanently. Many people suffer from anxiety about their job security. Just this week, Tim Fitch watched fellow employees being suddenly dismissed. But God rewards his faithful servants with a guarantee of everlasting job security in his kingdom.

Secondly sharing with the master, (The Holy Communion illustration of sharing a cup with a big short) Look at verse 23c “Come and share your master’s happiness.” The master did not treat his servants like employees. He welcomed them into fellowship with him. He treated them like his friends and his family members. Then he shared his joy and happiness with them. What all people really want is to be happy. When we pursue happiness itself we always miss the mark. But when we live for the glory of God and do our best to be faithful to him, we will share in God’s happiness. This is real happiness that fills our souls with deep delight. It is paradise restored.

Thirdly, I will bless you/ Prosperity. Look at verse 23 b, “You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.” This is the key to being a faithful servant and making a great profit. It is to be faithful with a few things. A few things may not look like much. But when we are faithful with them, God entrusts more and more to us. **Testimony of St. Peters carrying speakers.** Those who are faithful with a few things can be entrusted with many things. This is God’s principle.

The man with the two talents also came to settle accounts with the master. The master’s reward for him was exactly the same as it was for the first man. This shows us that God rewards based on faithfulness, not ability. When a person is faithful with what has been given, he receives the full measure of God’s reward and blessing.

The third man = wicked and lazy servant (24-30).

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. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you” (24, 25). This man thought critically of his master. He thought his master let others work hard and then came along and took all the benefits of their labour. Because of his crooked thinking, he became wicked and lazy. He did nothing but bring the original capital.

How did the master respond? Look at verses 26-28. “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? 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. Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’” This man was wicked because he thought evil of his master. Those who harbour evil thoughts in their hearts all become wicked and lazy. They don’t add any value to what God gives them, not any value at all. (Some people think God is hard, reaping where he has not sown because he asks for tithes and offerings yet he owns all the silver and Gold)They are worthless. Look at verse 30. “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Look at verse 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.” God gives us talents so we may add value to them through faithful and diligent labour. God rewards our faithfulness in this life and the next. Faithful people can prosper endlessly. But the wicked and lazy will lose everything.

Conclusion

- Challenge to - Clergy, choir, congregation, machine boys, wardens, security guards. Are you being faithful where God has planted you?
- Before God = 1=2=5/ gate keeper, provost, usher, bank governor = same. The difference will be in the level of faithfulness.

- Your destiny was decided by God, its fulfilment is decided by you every day as you are faithful
- The apple seed has in it an apple tree with apples on it. The future of the apple fruit lies in that black seed. God has placed your future right inside of you, nobody can mess with it apart from you being unfaithful
- The principle remains, faithfulness. When God gives you a pen, faithfulness is not keeping it untouched and intact but how many books you present to him written by the pen he gave you.
- Your relationship with Jesus will determine your response

Jesus is coming again in power and great glory as King of kings. When he comes, he will reward his faithful servants richly. But he will punish lazy servants severely. How can we be faithful servants? That's a very important question. In today's parable Jesus tells us how. Let's learn to be faithful servants whom Jesus rewards.