Small Group Notes for the Week of Oct. 17, 2021

# Matthew 25:13-30

# 13Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

**14**“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; **15**to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. **16**The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. **17**In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. **18**But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. **19**After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. **20**Then 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.’ **21**His 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.’ **22**And 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.’ **23**His 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.’ **24**Then 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; **25**so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ **26**But 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? **27**Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. **28**So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. **29**For 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. **30**As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

**General Questions:**

1. What stood out to you in the sermon?

2. What is something new you didn’t know before?

3. Is there a question that the sermon prompted for/in you?

4. How do you feel called to respond to the sermon?

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Read the passage above. What questions come to your mind? Which servant do you resonate with the most? Why? Look at verses 25-26. What was the driving force for the third servant? What is the driving force for you in doing what you do?
2. When have you felt like you were a failure? How does this sermon help you to not feel like a failure?
3. Pastor Nate says in his sermon that “everyone should find a ministry of their own.” What do you consider to be YOUR ministry?
4. Here’s an excerpt from the Christian Century that talks about this passage:

Viewed from a different perspective, the parable exposes the challenges of faithfulness in a world dominated by power and wealth. The rich man has achieved his wealth at the expense of others—by “reaping where [he] did not sow, and scattering where [he] did not scatter seed.” The first two servants multiply his dishonesty. The third refuses to participate in this system of oppression, and for this refusal he is abandoned and condemned to a place of suffering.

The parable offers a clear-eyed analysis of the real world, perhaps leading the followers of Jesus to recall his earlier words about the cost of discipleship: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. . . . For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?” (Matt. 16:24–26).

Jesus tells this parable a couple of days before his arrest and crucifixion, events that will testify to the world’s penchant for punishing those who speak truth to power. Like the third servant in the story, Jesus will be condemned to suffering. Abandoned by most of his friends, he will cry out to God, “Why have you forsaken me?” Then he will be buried in a rock-hewn tomb, just as the talent is buried deep in the ground.

This is not the end of the story, however, even if it marks the ending of that parable. As Matthew’s Gospel makes clear, a hole in the ground—even a tomb—cannot contain Jesus. He is the Messiah, raised from the dead. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, and the day will come when the Messiah will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.

 How and what do you think of this parable now? How does this apply to church and our lives?

1. Read this: “No parable has given more aid to the idolatry of work than the parable of the talents. We have even adopted this denomination of currency into English as a word that connotes one’s special skills. It is easy for us to believe that our best value to the kingdom is to earn as much return as we can. As one wealthy Christian business man once told me, “my job is to make as much money as I can to support the church.” Stringfellow, following Jesus, wants to free us from such a view so that we can instead view our work in the proper context of God’s manna economy and the attendant freedom of that economy. We don’t need the rich to maximize their returns so that our church can survive. Instead, we need to turn our attention to the abundance of creation.”

What is your relationship with work? How can you make it healthier? What is the relationship between you and money (share ONLY if you feel like it!). <https://radicaldiscipleship.net/2017/11/16/wild-lectionary-look-to-the-acorns/>

1. Share your prayer requests and pray for each other this week.