

Happy Thanksgiving!
Lisa & Pastor Ben Motz
Steven, Sara, & Ethan



Sunday, November 19, 2023

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:14-30

If the kingdom of God is not first, it doesn't matter what is second.

—Neal A. Maxwell

Picture this scenario: You work for an investment firm on Wall Street. Your boss calls you and two of your colleagues into her office, and invites all of you to take a seat. She explains: “Tomorrow, I will be visiting our global partners in Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. While I am gone, I’m giving you financial assets which I expect you to invest wisely. I’m not sure when I will be back, but when I do come again, I expect results.” You are then given assets worth \$10 million, and your junior colleagues \$5 million and \$1 million.

This, in brief, is the parable in today’s gospel reading. Let’s focus on just one aspect of this story: *How the third guy felt about his boss.* He says, “[Boss], I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours” (Matthew 25:24-25).

Is this how you feel about Jesus? That he is harsh and difficult, making money off the backs of others? This third guy makes Jesus sound like he’s the head of the Cosa Nostra. A bad dude.

So what does this lazy and sad little person do with his \$1 million? He puts the cash in his safe and when the boss comes back, gives back \$1 million. No more, no less. It’s all there.

You know how that went over. Not so good.

This is not the Jesus we know, is it? The parable teaches us in a practical way what Jesus meant when he said to the lawyer, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). The “talents” stand for all that God has given us, all that we are — our abilities, our time, our money, our energy, our resources, our affections.

The third servant never invested in the kingdom of God.

Jesus is simply reminding us that we are never too old to keep investing in the kingdom of God. Each of us will do that in different ways. It may be a check to the church, a smile to a nurse, a compliment to a neighbor, some volunteer time or a note of encouragement. The investment possibilities, frankly, are infinite.

If we work with what Jesus has given us, someday we will be thrilled to hear him say, as he did to servants 1 and 2: “Well done, good and faithful servant! ... Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matthew 25:21).

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may I be unafraid to invest in the kingdom of God. Amen.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- Sunday:** Hebrews 1-4
- Monday:** Hebrews 5-7
- Tuesday:** Hebrews 8-10
- Wednesday:** Hebrews 11-13
- Thursday:** Philemon; 1 Peter 1-2
- Friday:** 1 Peter 3-5
- Saturday:** Psalms 133-135

A POEM BY ANY OTHER NAME

Directions: The first letter of each line must begin with the letters of your name. Thus, if your name has only five letters, you will then have five lines in your poem. Here is an example: SUSAN =

- S eventy years old —
- U nique
- S uper
- A lways fun
- N ice

Now write your poem using your name!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A	J	S
B	K	T
C	L	U
D	M	V
E	N	W
F	O	X
G	P	Y
H	Q	Z
I	R	

Directions: Can you think of a name that begins with each letter of the alphabet? Write your answers in the spaces provided.

FIVE & FOUR

Directions: Each line contains a five-letter word and a four-letter word whose letters have been mixed, *but the left-to-right order has not been changed*. Unmix the two words on each line and write them in the spaces provided. When you're done, unscramble the boxed and circled letters to reveal the mystery word. A clue is provided. We've also given you a head start.

S H A D E L T E D = **S H A** □ **T** + **D E E** ○

P A T G A X I A N = — — — □ — — — ○

V I P A S E T A W = — — — □ — — — ○

N O V A L U N I D = — — — □ — — — ○

Clue: A pilot's friend — □ □ □ □ ○ ○ ○ ○

ANSWER TO: Five & Four: shait/ deed; pagan/ taxi; pasta/ view; valid/ noun. A pilot's friend: TAIL WIND

