

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time: November 15, 2020

St. Vincent De Paul Church, Baltimore

A Gospel Reflection

Why was I drawn to write about Mathew's Gospel concerning the parable of the talents? It reflected a childhood memory of my Dad, our bakery, the innate gifts given and the price exacted if we sat idle.

Daddy toiled hard all night, every night except for Xmas Eve to feed his 12 children and support our Gardenville Community. The Woodlea was all about hard labor both in the shop, the sweet factory, and the front-line store. He would drag us out of a warm bed at 5:30 to wait on hungry, sometimes irritable customers or prep the products. If you hesitated or moaned, you were subject to his preacher voice, "you wicked and lazy servant, you will be thrown out with weeping and gnashing of teeth..." and cannot go to the Friday night CYO dance.

Being young I felt that I hadn't much to offer our enterprise. My older brothers and sisters had more talents to support our small busy business. At 12 years, all I really had to do was to show up. Be polite. Smile. Add up numbers in my head – and be careful with the gooey goods. And not be afraid.

Your talent is God's gift and what you do with it is your gift to God – and us.

I am sometimes afraid. I do not trust the gifts that God has given me. I hide. I seclude myself. I bury in the ground the innate Joy, my compassion for others. I hide the best that God handed to me, His sometimes good and faithful servant. When I hide from others what God has given me, those talents to soothe the broken and the weary and to bring them balm, I banish myself from His Kingdom and from our earthly connectivity. Invest yourself in other people so that they know intimately a Beautiful God.

WICKED, LAZY AND WORTHLESS. I HAVE SPENT MANY YEARS IN THERAPY TO NOT CHOOSE THOSE ACCUSATIONS.

I take joy in knowing a loving God who calls me her beloved daughter. A He/She non-gendered being who is not brutal or angry.

We know the story of the talents by heart and how the resourceful servants bet well and reaped rewards for the master. And we are aware of how they were richly rewarded for their pecuniary acumen. We know about the punished, non-industrious, yet careful, non-risk-taking slave. And how he was banished to hell. And you probably guessed my bias about the harsh overlord.

Mathew, on closer examination, wants us to be prepared for His second coming. Use your gifts and be ready. Time is of the essence. Maximize your gifts, even if given only one. True, during Covid times of uncertainty.

“Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities.”
“Come share your Master’s Joy.”

The third servant was not a victim of an unjust Master, but of his own distorted thinking (CBT – cognitive behavioral therapy – applied here). He thought he was worthless. He was afraid. He did nothing. He was stuck in the rut of indecision and paralyzed by fear of the Master. He assumed he would be punished. He hid his bounty, and he hid himself. He cast himself into his own misery.

Be ready. Be prepared. Do something. Be full of Joy.
I wrote this on my Dad’s birthday!

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