

The Gospel

Matthew 25: 14-30 - The Parable of the Talents

For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 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." 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." 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." 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." 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; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." 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? 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. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 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. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Picture: courtesy of Bertram Poole Art

Rev. Mark's Gospel Reflection

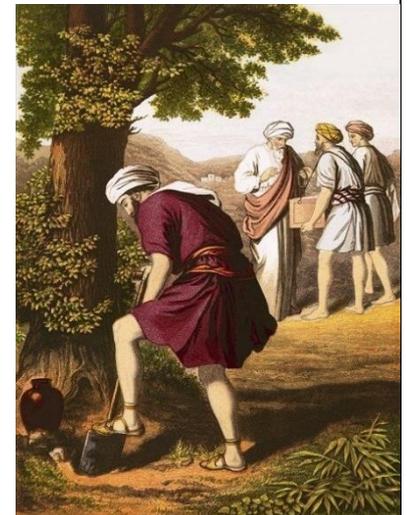


I don't know about you, but it seems a little over the top. Called worthless, being cast out, and all this weeping and gnashing of teeth. Why? Because he hid his talent (a lot of money) in the ground. OK, he didn't make any money, but neither did he lose any. For years this parable grated with me, mostly to do with when I was at school and a headmaster who told us to buy British and drove a VW.

One of the other problems with parables is we can over analyse, and every part, person and event of the parable gains a meaning. This all too often hampers our understanding of the parables of Jesus - for instance, the Good Samaritan, is a parable given in answer to a question - 'who is my neighbour?' It is not about donkeys and innkeepers, priest and pharisee, Samaritan and Jew. It's simply - who is my neighbour?

Answer: everyone!

The same is applicable to the parable that is set for today's gospel reading. Use what you have been given. So why all the other paraphernalia to the story if it's that simple? Perhaps it is there to help highlight the importance of the 'talent' or 'message'. If it were as easy as



forgetting to get some milk on the way home from work, we could all get past this. If we 'up' the importance, what would you think if it were someone forgot to say there is an answer, cure or vaccine for C19? That would a different matter.

God's love is for everyone and not to be left in a hole in the ground. God's grace is sufficient for all - not to be buried and ignored. God's forgiveness is open to all - not to be discarded. God's love, grace and forgiveness is for us all and meant to be lived by us for others.

Mark

Benefice online

Rev'd Mark has created the following videos. Please click on the links below to view them on your device.



[A service for the Second Sunday before Advent with Revds. Mark Hurley and Maureen Young. Filmed at Bishops Lydeard and Lydeard St. Lawrence](#)



[Remembrance: to help those who were unable to attend a Sunday remembrance.](#)



These videos are hosted on the brand-new Bishops Lydeard Benefice YouTube channel, to which you can subscribe.

Up to date information about what is happening in the benefice can be found on our website bishopslydeardbenefice.org

Intercessions for the 2nd Sunday before Advent Year A

Loving God, we offer our prayers now for all people and their situations; for lives that are going through upheaval or distress; for circumstances which only you can change.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, remembering those Christians in countries where their beliefs make them vulnerable and in danger. Uphold and strengthen all who are persecuted for their faith. We pray for hostages and their families and loved ones from whom they are separated.

We give thanks for this church and the Chaplaincy of the Costa Blanca. May we point the way to God's Kingdom in our community and welcome all who are seeking through our doors.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Creator God, we pray for peace in the world, for understanding between nations, religions and factions and for an end to old scores which remain unsettled. We pray for the peoples of the Middle East and for Christian, Muslim and Jew, that they may live alongside one another in mutual respect and harmony. We pray too for fair shares and fair trade and that the talents of the workers of the world are fairly rewarded.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for the United States of America and we ask that you would give the New President-Elect wisdom beyond his own understanding and the courage to choose the right path no matter how narrow the gate especially at this difficult time of the ongoing Pandemic.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Father God, we thank you for the gifts, talents and abilities you have given each of us praying that a deeper understanding of those talents can be used and shared within our church, benefice and the community. Set us free from the fear that makes us inward looking. Give us a renewed generosity with our time, our talents and our treasure. Give us a renewed concern for those who are struggling in our congregations and our communities. Give us a renewed vision of what it is for us to be your church, in this place, at this time.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Forgiving God, send your healing forgiveness to all who are suffering feelings of guilt, shame or regret. Help to mend broken relationships. Be with all who feel that, through advancing years or failing health, they cannot enjoy life as they once did. May those who are learning to live a new pattern of life feel that you are walking beside them. We especially pray for the sick and suffering in our benefice and give you thanks for those who are on the road to recovery.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Merciful God, we remember those who have died and for those who are bereaved. May the light of Christ which eternally shines bring hope to their dark places. We especially pray for those whose anniversary falls at this time.

Gracious God, forgive us when we only turn to you when things trouble us and when we forget to thank you for your blessings and bounty. Help us to recognise all the wonderful things in your world for which we should be grateful and send us out into the coming week ready to show our gratitude in all that we do and say.

Merciful Father: **Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

Collect for the Day

Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Churches open for private prayer

Due to Covid 19 Regulations church services are no longer permitted, however churches in the benefice are open for private prayer as shown below. This is permitted under the new restrictions.

ST. MARY'S, BISHOPS LYDEARD: Sundays and Wednesdays 9.30am to 11.30am.

ST. PANCRAS, WEST BAGBOROUGH: every day during daylight hours.

ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, COTHELSTONE: every day during daylight hours.

ST LAWRENCE, LYDEARD ST. LAWRENCE: Thursdays and Sundays 11.00am to 12 noon

ST PETER AND ST. PAUL, COMBE FLOREY: by arrangement with the Churchwarden