

PREPARING AT HOME

November 13-19, 2017

Focus reading: Matthew 25:14–30 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=375947548>).

Other lectionary readings: Judges 4:1–7; Psalm 123; I Thessalonians 5:1–11

Theme: Investing What Is Offered

The people who gathered to hear Jesus teach thought that they were living in the last days, and Jesus' teachings about the coming Kingdom of God reflect that expectation. This reading is a parable Jesus told about the coming Kingdom of God and his own return. It tells of a wealthy landowner who goes away for an unspecified amount of time. Before he goes, he puts three servants in charge of the property and gives each servant a significant amount of money but does not leave them with specific instructions. The measurement of money described here is a talent; hence the story is often referred to as the Parable of the Talents. The use of this word has naturally led to interpretations about God-given skills or talents, but we must remember that the story is actually about money – and a good bit of it! A talent was worth about 15 years of wages, so even the servant who receives one talent has been treated generously and trusted with much. Both the servant who receives five talents and the servant who receives three talents invest the money and are able to return more to the master upon his return. For this they are rewarded. Out of fear, the servant with one talent hides it in the ground and is punished/cut off as a result. Matthew's readers were surprised that the end of time had not yet come! Some were getting complacent. Some wondered if the end would come at all! In this story, Jesus tells them what to do while they are waiting. Live as though time is short and an accounting required. Make the risky choices that welcome the reign of God in its fullness.

GENEROUS GOD

Like the landowner in the story, God gives generously. What has God given you? Create a mural of the gifts God has given to you. Say a prayer of thanks that God trusts you to be wise with such amazing gifts!

USING OUR GIFTS

Look at the gifts you drew on your mural. How can you use those gifts in ways that are wise and pleasing to God?

PRAYER

Generous God,
thank you for the gifts you have given to us.
May we use those gifts wisely
in ways that serve you and others
so that the world is a
more just and loving place.
Amen.

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