

24th Sunday after Pentecost

Nov. 15, 2020

Collect: BLESSED LORD, who caused all holy Scripture to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Lessons: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Psalm 90:1-12

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

Sermon: Today's Gospel is a follow on to last week's Gospel about the 10 maidens invited to a wedding banquet that occurred at night. Five were wise and brought additional oil for their lamps and five were foolish and did not bring additional oil. They had arrived at the father of the groom's house to wait for the arrival of the wedding party. Now, no one knew exactly when the party would arrive, so they turned their lamps down and waited. The party arrived later than expected and the five wise maidens were able to add more oil to their lamps. The five foolish maidens asked the wise maidens to give them some of their oil, but were told no. The wise maidens had just enough for themselves. The five foolish maidens now had to run to the oil store to buy more oil.

When they returned from the store, the doors were closed and the banquet had begun. They pleaded to be let in, but were told, we do not know you.

The message to them was, “Keep awake, you do not know when the Lord will come.”

The Epistle of 1 Thessalonians states the same message in different words: The day of the Lord will like a thief in the night. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

In the parable about the 10 maidens and the parable to follow, the message is also there for us: Be prepared because you don't know the day the Lord will call you home.

Jesus used these parables to show us what we would have to do to be in the Kingdom of heaven or at home with God.

The parable in today's Gospel is about a business man who is going on a long journey. He called three of his servants together and gave them talents/bags of gold to keep while he was gone. To one he gave five bags of gold, to one he gave two bags of gold and to the third he gave one bag of gold.

While the business man was gone, the servant who had gotten the five bags of gold and the servant who had gotten the two bags of gold invested the money, making more. The servant who had gotten one bag of gold, since there were no banks, dug a hole to bury the bag of gold for safe keeping.

When the business man came back and called on the servants to see what they had done with his money, the one he had given five bags of gold to now gave him back 10 and the one he had given two bags to now gave him four.

The business man praised them for being wise and trustworthy. He also said if he could trust them in little things, he could also trust them to be in charge of greater things.

When he called on the servant, he had given the one talent/bag of gold to, this servant only returned to him one talent, the same one he had been given. This servant then said, "I knew you were a harsh man, reaping what you didn't sow and gathering where you did not sow seed. I was afraid so I buried your bag of gold in the ground."

What this servant is saying is, "I was afraid to take a chance or risk your money so I did what I thought was the safest thing, so that I could give it back to you just like you had given it to me."

The business man called this servant wicked and lazy. He said, "You knew how I was. You knew that I expected to receive more from you than I had given you. Why didn't you invest it and present me with a profit?"

The one talent/bag of gold was taken and given to the one with five talents.

I think the meaning of this parable is that we are to take the talents/skills that we have and put them to work. The story also shows that if you are willing to take big risks, you may receive big rewards. If we do nothing, we will receive nothing and may even lose that we have.

The servant with the one talent didn't even try. He just played it safe, did not take any risks, and just did nothing.

In today's life we must do something. If we want to be in God's kingdom or make heaven our home, we must work for it. We must love and treat others as we want to be treated. We must help others wherever we can, it can be

physical help, emotional (smile, hug, a cry with) or spiritual (praying with or for others),

Know that Jesus said whenever we do something for someone, we are also doing it to him. Also know that ours are the hands of God at work in this world. This means we are at work for him!

Let us look for Jesus in the people that we meet and they will see him in us.

Amen

Rev, Lionel Starkes