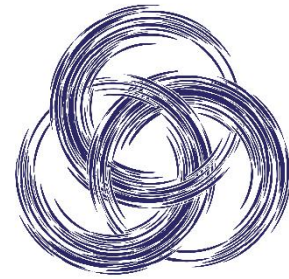


Parish of Central Exeter

Morning Worship and Spiritual Communion
2nd Sunday before Advent, 2nd in second lockdown.
15th November 2020



'Teach us to number our days'

Welcome everyone.

Our reflections this morning are by Sheila and the Intercessions provided by Betsy. Many thanks to you both.

Call to Worship

(based on Psalm 123)

Great and Glorious God, we gather to worship you.
We lift our eyes to you, in reverent awe before your majesty.
Great is the Lord our God, and greatly to be praised!

Generous and Merciful God, we come to worship you.
We lift our eyes to you, giving thanks for your compassion.
Gracious is the Lord our God, and greatly to be praised!

Welcoming and Empowering God, we worship you.
We lift our eyes to you, and we celebrate your faithfulness.
Holy is the Lord our God, and greatly to be praised!
We lift our eyes, seeking to worship and praise our God. Amen.

(© 2011 Joan Stott – "The Timeless Psalms" RCL Psalm Year A, used with permission.)

Gathering Hymn

'Thy Kingdom Come: On bended knee, the passing ages pray.' Sung by the Manchester Cathedral Choir. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFzbxnMnxZc>

Prayer

O Lord, be gracious to us.
Speak your word to us—
a word of peace to those who follow faithfully.
For we know, without doubt, that Your salvation is near;
your glory fills this place.

Let your unfailing love and truth come together among us;
let your righteousness and peace surround us.
Pour out your goodness upon us,
that we may worship and serve you all our days.
Amen.



Confession and Absolution

We have failed to love you with all our heart
and to be good stewards of your creation:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

We have failed to take up the cross of discipleship
and to be good stewards of your gospel:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

We have failed to be faithful members of your church
and to be good stewards of your spiritual gifts:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Declaration of Forgiveness

*God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners,
Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*

Confident in his free gift of forgiveness,
I declare to you Christ's word of grace:
Your sins are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

(posted on David Beswick's Worship and Preaching website)

A collect for this Sunday

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.

Worship song

'Let all mortal flesh keep silence'.

Sung for us here by the Benedictines of Mary Queen of Apostles. Part of the ancient liturgy of St James.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39aTUHEq9tA>

1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.
2. King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heav'nly food.
3. Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.
4. At His feet the six-winged seraph,
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry:
"Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Lord Most High!"



Reading Zephaniah 1 v7, 12-18

Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is at hand; the Lord has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do harm.' Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste.

Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there.

That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the Lord, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.



The Great Day of Wrath by John Martin, 1851, Tate Gallery, London

Psalm 90

- 1 Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the world were formed, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
- 3 You turn us back to dust and say: 'Turn back, O children of earth.'
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday, which passes like a watch in the night.
- 5 You sweep them away like a dream; they fade away suddenly like the grass.
- 6 In the morning it is green and flourishes; in the evening it is dried up and withered.
- 7 For we consume away in your displeasure; we are afraid at your wrathful indignation.
- 8 You have set our misdeeds before you and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
- 9 When you are angry, all our days are gone; our years come to an end like a sigh.
- 10 The days of our life are three score years and ten, or if our strength endures, even four score; yet the sum of them is but labour and sorrow, for they soon pass away and we are gone.
- 11 Who regards the power of your wrath and your indignation like those who fear you?
- 12 So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.
- 13 Turn again, O Lord; how long will you delay? Have compassion on your servants.
- 14 Satisfy us with your loving-kindness in the morning, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
- 15 Give us gladness for the days you have afflicted us, and for the years in which we have seen adversity.
- 16 Show your servants your works, and let your glory be over their children.
- 17 May the gracious favour of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper our handiwork; O prosper the work of our hands.

Reflection

Before turning to the psalm, I want to give some thought to the little book of Zephaniah as this passage only appears once in the lectionary. Here is a picture of the coming judgement of God 'the day of the Lord' which will affect both Israel and the surrounding nations (Zeph 2:4ff). The original historical setting was the same as Amos before the exile, but it has been edited in later centuries. The book also contains words of promise and the final verses of chapter 3:14-20 are included in the lectionary once for Advent 3, for the Easter Vigil and as an alternative reading for Easter 3. Though God is the one who brings judgement and offers salvation the people need to respond in faith. God is against the arrogant and is looking for those who are 'humble and lowly', who 'do no wrong and utter no lies' (Zeph 3:12f). The call to 'be silent before the Lord God' and to consider our daily lives is important and leads on to think about Psalm 90.

Phrases from this psalm have come into common English usage especially with Isaac Watts hymn 'O God our help in ages past' which we sang last week. The psalm begins by expressing trust in the eternal creator God before acknowledging the condition of humanity

– the fragility of life and our inability to think and do what is right/just/good – our sinfulness. From this position the psalmist turns to prayer in v12 asking God to help us to remember our mortality and to gain wisdom. The global pandemic has been a reminder for all of us who have lived in countries with functioning healthcare, state welfare, a lack of conflict and low risk of violent weather conditions that life is still precarious. We should not take it for granted. Then can we ‘apply our hearts to wisdom’ or ‘gain a heart of wisdom’ (NIV), remembering that in Hebrew thought the heart represents the will and intention. The Revised English Bible translates it ‘that our minds may learn wisdom.’

Now what is ‘wisdom’ you may ask; and we could spend a long time thinking about biblical wisdom. Indeed, I have just bought a book that is on that very subject. It begins with Proverbs 1:1-7 where we have the phrase ‘the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge’ (and of wisdom Prov 9:10). This is the foundation of wisdom and it requires an attitude of humility. I quote ‘only those who revere the Lord will become wise, skilful in living as the Lord measures it.’ (*Daniel Estes, The Message of Wisdom, 2020, p13*). The attitude of humility leads us back to the type of people God is looking for in Zephaniah and reminds us of the qualities described in the Beatitudes that we thought about on All Saints Day.

To conclude today’s reflection, I will turn to some phrases in a hymn by Timothy Dudley Smith which begins by acknowledging that God is the one who created everything, ‘Lord of all life and power’. (*I had hoped to include this in our service, but could not find an appropriate version on Youtube - Keith*) The second verse reminds us that we have ‘this fertile earth’ but it is only from God the source of all life that we can enjoy ‘the fruits of land and sea’. The verse continues:

‘Teach us to use aright and share the gifts you give,
to tend the earth as in your sight that all the world may live.’

If Covid 19 hadn’t arrived this Sunday would have been the midpoint in the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow and I had planned for us to join with our neighbouring city centre churches for a united service at Sidwell St Methodist church. The call expressed in these lines to learn how to use the earth’s resources and to share so that all – humanity and the rest of creation – may live is so vital.

The third verse is about the life, death and resurrection of Christ, which leads to the fourth verse beginning with a description of the coming of the Holy Spirit and concluding with these lines:

Help us in Christ to grow, from sin and self to cease,
and daily in our lives to show your love and joy and peace.’

Here we come to the routine of ordinary life, to the messiness of human relationships, to ‘the trivial round, the common task’ in John Keble’s hymn ‘New every morning is the love’. Starting each day with prayer can help us to attempt to do this and to put our trust in God as the final verse reminds us.

‘Lord of the passing years whose changeless purpose stands,
our lives and loves, our hopes and fear, we place within your hands;
we bring you but your own, forgiven, loved and free,
to follow Christ, and Christ alone, through all the days to be.’

Affirmation of Faith

I believe in a God
who created all things
and seeks for all to be in communion as God’s people.

I believe in Jesus Christ
who showed us how to share love,
and who commissioned us to go out into the highways and byways
inviting all to be a part of God’s work in the world.

I believe in the Holy Spirit
who leads and guides us into the world,
then touches the lives of those around us
in ways that make them receptive to love.

I believe in the harvest
and the call for labourers to receive and respond,
sharing light and life with the world. Amen.

(By Tim Tate, Lead Pastor, Warrenton UMC. Posted on www.warrentonumc.org)

Worship song

‘New every morning is the love’, sung for us here at St Judes’s United Church, Englefield Green, and to the tune Gonfalon Royal, which is not the usual one for this song. Words on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKuzS20T4PU>

Intercessions

These intercessions are adapted from the prayers for the Anglican Church ‘Call to prayer for the month’ (of November)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/call-prayer-nation>

We pray for:

family, friends and loved ones.

We lift to God those whom we hold in our hearts, praying for their wellbeing and for a sense of hope. We pray for those we know who are unable to be with their loved ones in these

troubled times, that they might gain some comfort and reassurance in their use of technology. We ask for God's help in our communicating, our connecting and our caring, and hold particularly

Lord in your kindness, hear our prayer

Schools, colleges and young people

We pray for those involved in the shaping of young lives and give thanks for the care, compassion and commitment of those involved in education and childcare. We pray that all might feel nurtured and resourced, as they care for and guide children and young people.

Lord in your kindness, hear our prayer

Elderly, isolated and vulnerable

We pray for protection and comfort for those most at risk from covid, particularly those who are vulnerable and isolated. We hold before God all who are carers, that they might find strength and resilience, day by day.

We particularly hold in our hearts

Lord in your kindness, hear our prayer

Businesses, the workplace and economic wellbeing

In this time of challenge, we pray for fairness and the economic wellbeing. We remember those who face great uncertainty in their work futures, and pray for a renewed commitment to our common life together.

Lord in your kindness, hear our prayer

The NHS and all keyworkers

Today we voice our gratitude and hold all keyworkers in the NHS, Social care and in the voluntary sector to you love and light. We thank you for their care, compassion, and sacrifice and pray that they in turn might find resilience and hope in their work

Lord in your kindness, hear our prayer

National and local government

We ask for wisdom, commitment and right judgement for those who are in positions of political authority. We pray that communications and decisions are made with integrity and seasoned with wisdom as well as knowledge

Lord in your kindness, hear our prayer

For those who are grieving and all those suffering with mental health problems

We bring to God all who suffer in body, mind or spirit. May we all know God's sustaining presence amidst our pain.

We pray for those who are stretched beyond their own capacity to cope and remain hopeful; that they might find a sense of coherence, comfort and strength.

We hold to you in our hearts (*Name....*)

Lord in your kindness, accept these prayers for the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us.

The Peace

If alone, smile and hug yourself (God does). If otherwise, share the Peace as appropriate.

A short Spiritual Communion

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing
can separate me from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

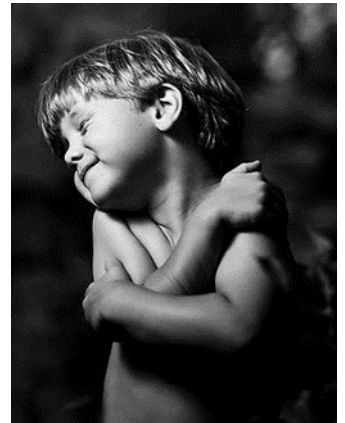
An offertory prayer

We may not be in church, but we can still offer ourselves and our talents to God.

Blessed are you, God and creator of the universe,
as we offer you our activities, thanksgivings and our life.
We present ourselves, and our world, as we are and as you can make us,
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours,
and of your own do we give you. Blessed be God for ever.

As we prepare for communion you might like to listen to 'The Table of the Lord', words by Richard, music by Nigel, sung by the Langford Singers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCZmrj81t8o&list=PLqBLixTy9an4ztrq2itYujGYknjVO2x-N>





Because there is no Breaking and Sharing we can have only Spiritual Communion with Christ. I'm sure you can find a way to use a few minutes of silence or conversation to enjoy this, and make it a sacramental moment.

Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Post Communion Collect

Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament
you give substance to our hope:
bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Commission & Benediction

Go to celebrate the God who is our home forever.

God's love goes with us!

Go to follow Christ's example in loving God, self, and neighbour.

God's love goes with us!

Go with the Holy Spirit to change the world with love.

God's love goes with us!

(written by Laura Jaquith Bartlett. Posted on the Worship Elements page of the Ministry Matters website.)

May the holy wisdom of God
Guard your ways and guide your paths
May the living truth of God
Enlighten your hearts and open your minds
And may the living Spirit of God
Give you life, and life to the full!
Amen!

(posted on Literature & Liturgy. <https://jesusscribbles.wordpress.com/>)

Closing Music

'All my hope on God is founded' sung at St Alban's Bristol. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew&t=3s>

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Scroll down for Coffee Break

Coffee Break

St Hugh of Lincoln Saint's Day: November 17

As a good Anglican or even a bad one, you may venerate St Hugh of Lincoln on November 17th. Hugh was French, and entered the chief Carthusian monastery, the Grande Chartreuse which is located north of Grenoble. We think of it more (well I do!) for the green Chartreuse liqueur, which requires a complicated multi-ingredient recipe developed during the seventeenth century.

The Carthusian order was founded in the eleventh century with extremely strict rules of silent solitary contemplation and prayer, which remain so today.

In 1181, the English King Henry II whom we associate especially with the murder of Thomas Becket, his Archbishop of Canterbury, established a Carthusian monastery or Charterhouse as they are known, as part of his penance for Thomas's death, at Witham, between Frome and Bruton in Somerset. It did not get off to an auspicious start and Hugh who had gained a reputation as an able administrator, was invited by the King to come here to serve as its Prior. Hugh completed the construction work and attracted many to the community. King Henry himself as a frequent visitor as he used to hunt frequently at nearby Selwood Chase.

Hugh was appointed Bishop of Lincoln in 1186 becoming regarded as an exemplary bishop, defending the rights of the church, extending education and also protecting the Jews – an important minority in Lincoln, from increasing persecution. He rebuilt and enlarged Lincoln Cathedral which had been damaged in an earthquake.

Hugh's emblem is a white swan. Apparently a swan had completely attached itself to him, following him about in Lincoln and even guarding him while he slept.

He died in 1200, was canonised in 1220 and is regarded as the patron saint of shoemakers, sick people, and swans.



St Hugh in Carthusian habit, with his swan! From an Altarpiece in the Charterhouse of Saint-Honoré, near Abbeville, France. (c 1500)

Scroll down for Night Prayer

Night Prayer

2nd Sunday before Advent
15th November 2020

Using what has been
entrusted to us

Preparation

Father God,
We rest in you.

Jesus the Son,
We rest in you.

Holy Spirit,
We rest in you.

Silence

Let us pray that we may respond
to God's trust in us

(pause)

God, our kind and loving Father,
you no longer call us servants but friends.
There is so much you have entrusted to us,
even the future of your kingdom of justice and love.

Give us the grace to work out with you
the growth of mercy and goodness in this world,
to be united with all Christians
and with all who seek you with a sincere heart
in bringing reconciliation and joy to everyone.

Let us go together the way to you,
our living and loving God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening hymn

'Lord for the Years' sung for us by the Choral Singers of St Martins in the Fields. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aluwWcqw4I>



*If you are able to do so, you might wish
to light a candle near a window.*

Prayer for Forgiveness

Holy One,
We long to be faithful stewards of your abundant grace.
To serve each other in love and humility.
To serve your world with wisdom and energy.

Forgive us when we stumble over pride,
when our words and actions are not guided by love.
Turn our hearts when we act in folly.
Restore our energy when it is gone.

Sometimes, many times, O God, our efforts fail.
But your abundant grace is strong and eternal,
And forgiveness is ours through Jesus Christ.
Thanks be to God.
Amen.

*(written by Joanna Harader, and posted on the Spacious Faith blog.
<http://spaciousfaith.com/>)*

The Lord's Prayer

Loving God, within and around us,
we revere you.

We seek to live life
as you would want us to do;
with love and respect
for all people and all things in the universe.

May we find each day sufficient for our needs,
and find forgiveness when we do wrong,
just as we forgive those who do wrong to us.
In times of trouble, may we centre our lives in you.

For your being is love,
which comes with strength and with beauty,
throughout eternity. Amen.

(Margaret Rolfe, on rainbowcathedral.wordpress.com)

Scroll down for reading

New Testament Reading Matthew 25: 1-13 (New Revised Standard Version)

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴ For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵ to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

¹⁶ The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸ But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

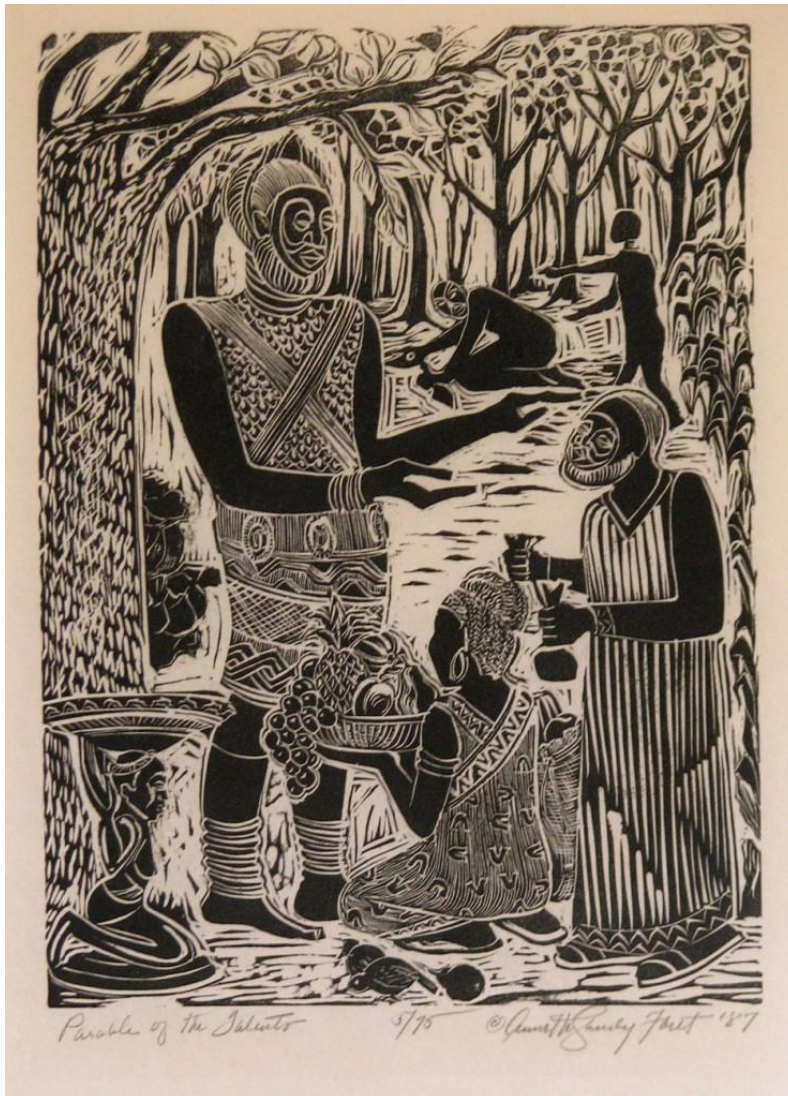
¹⁹ After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." ²¹ His master said to him, "Well done, 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."

²² 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." ²³ 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."

²⁴ 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; ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours."

²⁶ 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? ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents.

²⁹ 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. ³⁰ As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."



The Parable of the Talents

Modern woodcut by unknown artist, probably of African origin

The person who has received five talents is shown here as a woman, kneeling before her lord, depicted as a tribal chief. She is offering fruit – perhaps a first fruits image in thanks for the bountiful harvest. The chief is accepting these gifts and giving his blessing. In the background the third is digging up his talent but a man holds a pistol to him – about to take his ‘treasure’ away from him.

Reflection

(Talents and slaves: the talents here are large units of money, not personal skills, and the people to whom they have been entrusted whether called servants (as in many versions) or slaves are required to comply with their master’s instructions.)

So the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and this appears to have the master’s (God’s?) blessing. No wonder this parable is sometimes seen as a capitalist’s charter! How would people have reacted in Jesus’ time?

Then the popular belief was that all wealth had already been created and distributed. So to get significantly more wealth meant that you gained it at someone else’s expense. The rich man in our parable is someone who does just that. On his own admission, he reaps where he did not sow – his wealth has come from the work of others.

But our rich man does not want to appear greedy and rapacious to his fellow citizens, so he delegates this work to his slaves. There were no such moral expectations laid on slaves, who were considered to have no honour. This was a usual practice at the time.

We cannot escape the parable involves being given something that is not inherently ours and that there is a time of account for what we have done with it. At very least we have been given life itself, and most have far more than that by way of natural ability in whatever shape that takes within us. This could also include whatever faith we possess.

The parable does not give any clues about how these gifts are to be 'invested': that is up to us. Most of us will feel happy enough about where we are so far, but it's the next bit we find harder: the day of reckoning, and what happens to the slave who fearfully buried what he had been given and kept it unused.

John Milton pondered over this in his sonnet: When I consider how my light is spent.

*When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent, which is death to hide,
Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he, returning, chide
Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."*

We quite likely share the sentiment in that final line. But there is a problem here. The three recipients in the parable are not free men, for whom just keeping the money without lending it at interest (prohibited by the Law of Moses) would have been seen as an honourable action, but slaves whose duty was to act on their master's instructions. Following those instructions involved risk – things could have gone pear-shaped, but standing and waiting was not an option.

Jesus could have spent his life working as a carpenter in Nazareth, getting in no-one's way. But he didn't – he took the risky route. (Other parables of the Kingdom such as the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price show that engaging in risk is part of the process).

We are not expected to bury God in the ground or under the mattress. It does nothing for God, for us or for his world. Instead there is an expectation that we take a risk with whatever it is that God has given us, and be creative with it.

Prayer

I'm not really sure I want to admit it, God,
but I am a person with gifts.
Oh, I'm not one of those super-talented, can-do-it-all, people,

but there are things I'm good at,
things that might even be useful to You and others.

But, here's the problem – if I admit it, then I have to do something;
then there are no more excuses;
no more comfortable inadequacies to hide behind.
If I acknowledge the abilities and strengths You have placed in me
I'm going to have actually use them;
I'm going to have to serve, and be accountable,
and maybe even make commitments...
and stick to them.

But, if I pretend that I'm not gifted at all,
I lose something of myself,
I allow myself to be less than I really am,
to experience less, to learn less,
to be less alive.

So, thank you, God, for making me a gifted person,
and thank you that my gifts can make a difference,
can, in some small way, help
to make Your dream for my world a reality.

Amen.

We listen to a song

'Rejoice the Lord is King' sung here at St Alban's cathedral. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDFAv0eh-s8>

Prayer for Others

What we are and have belongs to God.
Let us pray that we may serve him fully in this world.
Lord, let all our actions praise you.

We pray that we may not be afraid to risk of declaring to all your message of hope and life,
Lord, let all our actions praise you.

We pray that all people may share in the earth's resources in justice, friendship and peace;
that the mighty of this earth may cooperate toward the human and economic development
of all nations and all social classes.

Lord, let all our actions praise you.

We pray for ourselves that we may be responsible under God for our own lives and each other's happiness; that we may progress in service and unity and enrich one another in love. Lord, let all our actions praise you.

Lord our God, you have generously given us our talents. Do not allow us to be misers but help us to give the best of ourselves, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

(inspired by Matthew 25: 14-20)

There are blessings
meant for you
to hold onto

clutched
like a lifeline

carried
like a candle
for a dark way

tucked into a pocket
like a smooth stone
reminding you
that you do not
go alone.

This blessing
is not those.

This blessing
will find its form
only as you
give it away

only as you
release it
into the keeping
of another

only as you
let it
leave you

bearing the shape



the imprint
the grace
it will take

only for having
passed through
your two
particular
hands.

(written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on The Painted Prayerbook. <http://paintedprayerbook.com/>)

Closing music

Now, admit it, you all know 'The Sound of Music' and some may even like it! So we are closing with an updated Covid-19 version of one of its songs. 'How do you solve a problem like corona?' Spiritual? Well it's sung by nuns! Enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4jR_9-YPK8



Thanks

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