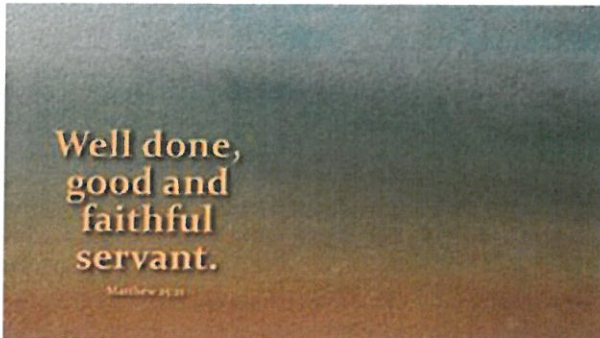


## The Parable of the Talents



This month we focus on one of Jesus' most significant parables – The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). In the parable, a rich man delegates the management of his wealth to his servants. He gives five talents (a large sum of money) to the first servant, two talents to the second, and one talent to the third. Two of the servants increase returns by putting the talents to work, but the third servant hides the money in the ground and earns nothing. When the rich man returns, he rewards the two who made money, but punishes the servant who did nothing with his given talent.

The meaning behind the parable is more than simply increasing your monetary investments – God has given each of us a variety of gifts, including skills, abilities, experiences, relationships and more. He calls us to use those gifts for the greater good. As good and faithful Stewards of God, we are expected to share them.

Similar to the three servants, we are given different gifts and talents. The return God expects from us is appropriately based on what we have been given. The servant who received one talent was not condemned for failing to increase his talent, but instead, he was punished because he did nothing with what he was given. The parable reminds us to use whatever we have been given for God's purposes.

Take a moment to examine your talents and gifts God so richly blessed you with – select one or two and consider how you might use it to serve Him and your neighbors.

If you aren't already sharing your selected gift, you might ask yourself, "What's preventing me from doing so?"

Some of us struggle to admit and own our talents – keep in mind, He blessed you with those gifts – they are definitely worth sharing! Consider these thoughts:

- ◇ *Am I good listener?* Serving on the Parish Council at St. Mark's requires good listeners and keen observers to help grow and develop our parish family – are you being called to serve in this type of capacity?
- ◇ *Am I a natural leader?* Administrative committees and ministries at St. Mark's require strong leadership, innovative ideas and a 'lead by example' attitude.
- ◇ *Am I warm and welcoming?* Perhaps you are called to welcome new parishioners – serve as a greeter, an usher or with the Welcome Ministry committee.
- ◇ *Do I enjoy cooking and baking?* Being a member of the funeral dinner committee is extremely rewarding and the families, who benefit, are beyond grateful. The St. Joseph's Table is another great ministry for those who enjoy time in the kitchen.
- ◇ *Do I have a passion to see young minds grow? Am I blessed with the patience to teach and guide our youth?* Helping in the nursery, teaching or volunteering with the Parish School of Religion (PSR), Middle School and High School Youth Groups or Confirmation classes all require a special love and appreciation for our young people.
- ◇ *Do you say to yourself "Boy I'd love to be more involved, but my schedule is packed?"* Consider using your gifts and talents during Mass – Eucharistic and Cup ministers, lectors, gift-bearers, ushers and altar servers are all needed! We can cultivate children's curiosity and interest in serving others by exposing them early to various activities and opportunities at Mass.

Remember, as we evolve and grow, through life experiences and the numerous blessings bestowed upon us, our gifts and talents will also grow and evolve. Don't be afraid to share your gifts of light and love with those whom God has put in your path.



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