

Hom 33 A 2017

What message is Jesus trying to get across to us with this parable?

Three men in today's Gospel receive talents or gifts from God. God goes away and after a spell returns.

The first person received five talents or five gifts or five blessings from God. This person does something with those gifts or blessings. He goes out into the world and used those gifts, invested them in the lives of other people. Something changes for the person who uses their blessings in the world. The blessings double.

The second man was given two gifts, two blessings. This second person does something with the two gifts. He goes into the world and uses his gifts and like the first person finds himself doubly blessed.

The third person is given one gift and decides to bury it. No one ever learns he has a gift. It is hidden.

God returns and asks each person what they did with their lives, what did they do with the blessings they had received. Two used them in the world and found themselves doubly blessed.

The third man keeps the one talent to himself. He does nothing in the world with the gift God had blessed him with. He finds himself stripped even of the original blessing. What is the message here? Love is the only thing you can give away and give away and give away and finally when you think you have reached the end you find out that you have more of it than when you began. Whatever blessings we have received in life we

are to share them, invest them in the lives of other people.

God has an investment in you. God obviously has great hopes for us by sharing with us His blessings. God believes in us. Everything we are and everything we have---our opportunities, our energy, our intelligence, our relationships, everything in life that is meaningful to us, including our financial resources---is a gift, a blessing from God. Life is not to be squandered. Life is to be lived. (“Risky Business” Dynamic Preaching p. 37)

Some people feel like they don’t have any gifts, any blessings. So logically if one has no blessings there is no expectation that one will use them in the world to touch the lives of other people. If someone feels like they have not been blessed they conclude they are exempt from any demands of this parable. Listen to this story. St. Francis of Assisi once met a man who admitted he had no love for God for God had not blessed him in the way that others had been blessed. As St. Francis walked along with this man they met a third man who was both blind and paralyzed. St. Francis asked the sightless man: “Tell me, if I were to restore your eyesight and the use of your limbs, would you love me?”

“Ah,” replied the beggar, “I would not only love you but I would be your slave for the rest of my life.”

“See,” said St. Francis to the man who maintained he could not love God for he had no blessings. “This man would love me if I gave him his sight and his health.

The God who created you blessed you with both eyes and limbs and you feel no gratitude. Everyone is blessed in many ways.

God has blessed each of us a thousand times over. We can see. We can walk. We can smell and taste and read and write. Even your smile can be shared with the world bringing others a light in the darkness.

The first and most important lesson from our Gospel today is that we best show our gratitude to God by making use of the blessings with which God has showered us. We are going to be held accountable for the “stewardship” of our lives.

What happened to the third man who did nothing with his blessings? What he had was taken away. In other words **if you don't use it, you lose it.**

The third man didn't use his gift because of fear. Are you afraid of getting hurt? Is that why you never get involved? Is that why you keep to yourself and have no friends?

There is a poem that goes like this:
There was a very cautious man/Who never laughed or played
He never risked,, he never tried/ He never sang or prayed
And when one day he passed away/ His insurance was denied

For since he never really lived/ They claimed he never died. Denis Waitley

**Are you ruled by your fears or by your faith?
“Our lives are a gift to us. What we make of our life is our gift to God.”**

Jesus is trying to encourage us to see that we are valued in his plan. We each have a place, however small, that place is significant to God. Well Father if I use my gifts and get involved someone is going to do something, I just know it, something to hurt me. Every time I come out of my shell I get hurt. That’s why I stay away from all church and community functions.

To those who think this way I have a message: “It is possible to evade a multitude of sorrows by the cultivation of an insignificant life.” And that is true. You can escape much pain and trouble if you never take a risk, never give of yourself freely, never step out in faith. But you will be missing so much of the abundant life that Jesus promises to his followers. Are you cultivating an insignificant life? The best way to answer that question is to examine your motives.

Are you working at your job to bring glory to God, or to get a paycheck? Are you using your paycheck in a wise and generous manner—taking care of your family and contributing to the Lord’s work? Or are you using your money to indulge in more stuff or more status symbols to impress your neighbors?

How do you use your time? Do you submit your time to God first, before you ever fill out your Day timer?

What about your relationships? Do you work to build others up, or tear others down? Must your needs always come first? What do you do with the gift of forgiveness? Do you spread it around by forgiving your neighbor's the hurts they inflict on you?

I chose a few sentences from my sermon today as a way of summarizing some of the lessons I found in our Gospel parable today.

Make your life count for something.

Use it or lose it.

However small it might be we are all part of God's plan. God uses us to build his Kingdom. No good deed goes unnoticed.

What we choose to do here on earth will have eternal consequences.

Are you ruled by your fear or by your faith?

Our lives are a gift to us. What we make of our life is our gift to God.

Amen.

This homily is only for the private use of St. John Vianney Parishioners. Several professional homiletic sources quoted here were used in putting this together.