

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Rev. Gerry Gallant

God's Economy  
Proper 28  
MATTHEW 25:14-30

## Welcome

## Announcements

## Call to Worship

This is the day the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**Again today we come together to worship—  
the God of creation, of salvation,  
of time and eternity;  
the God of all peoples, of all nations,  
of all conditions of people everywhere.**

Praise the Lord.

All that is within me,

**Praise God's holy name.**

**Praise the Lord and remember all his kindnesses:**

**in forgiving our sins;**

**in curing our diseases;**

**in saving us from destruction;**

**in surrounding us with love.**

The Lord is full of mercy and compassion.

The Lord is slow to anger

and willing to give us gifts of love.

**Praise the Lord!**

**Oh, all that is within me, praise the Lord.**

## Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Holy and loving God,

we come to you,

with hopes and fears,

with convictions and doubts,

with pain and joy.  
 By your Spirit,  
 help us to see all things  
 in the light of your Word,  
 our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 By your Spirit,  
 help us to pray honestly,  
 to listen attentively,  
 to encourage one another warmly.  
 By your Spirit,  
 help us grow in the grace and knowledge  
 of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,  
 who with you and the Holy Spirit  
 lives and reigns forever.  
 All glory to you, both now and forever! **Amen.**

**Opening Hymn: "Sweet By and By"**

There's a land that is fairer than day,  
 And by faith we can see it afar,  
 For the Father waits over the way  
 To prepare us a dwelling place there.

Refrain:

In the sweet by and by,  
 We shall meet on that beautiful shore;  
 In the sweet by and by,  
 We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

We shall sing on that beautiful shore  
 The melodious songs of the blest;  
 And our spirits shall sorrow no more-  
 Not a sigh for the blessing of rest. [Refrain]

To our bountiful Father above  
 We will offer our tribute of praise  
 For the glorious gift of His love  
 And the blessings that hallow our days. [Refrain]

**Call to Confession**

Prepare the way of the Lord!  
 Let us make our confession to God.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Merciful God,  
 in your gracious presence  
 we confess our sin and the sin of this world.  
 Although Christ is among us as our peace,  
 we are a people divided against ourselves  
 as we cling to the values of a broken world.  
 The profit and pleasures we pursue  
 lay waste the land and pollute the seas.  
 The fears and jealousies that we harbor  
 set neighbor against neighbor  
 and nation against nation.  
 We abuse your good gifts of imagination and freedom,  
 of intellect and reason,  
 and turn them into bonds of oppression.  
 Lord, have mercy upon us;  
 heal and forgive us.  
 Set us free to serve you in the world  
 as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

#### **Assurance of Pardon**

Through Jesus Christ forgiveness of sins  
 is proclaimed to you.  
 In Christ we have redemption through his blood,  
 the forgiveness of our trespasses,  
 according to the riches of his grace

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
 Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day our daily bread.  
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.  
 For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
 Forever and ever. Amen.**

#### **Music Ministry: "We Are Yours Lord" Choir**

#### **Responsive Reading**

##### **Zephaniah 12:12-18**

12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,  
 and I will punish the men  
 who are complacent,  
 those who say in their hearts,

'The LORD will not do good,  
nor will he do ill.'

**13 Their goods 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."**

14 The great day of the LORD is near,  
near and hastening fast;  
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter;  
the mighty man cries aloud there.

**15 A day of wrath is that day,  
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,  
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry  
against the fortified cities  
and against the lofty battlements.**

17 I will bring distress on mankind,  
so 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.

**18 Neither their silver nor their gold  
shall be able to deliver them  
on the day of the wrath of the LORD.  
In the fire of his jealousy,  
all the earth shall be consumed;  
for a full and sudden end  
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.**

**Children's Hymn #344: "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" (V 1,2,4)**

He's got the whole world in his hands.  
He's got the whole world in his hands.  
He's got the whole world in his hands.  
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got the wind and the rain in his hands.

(Sing three times)  
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got you and me, brother, in his hands  
(Sing three times)  
He's got the whole world in his hands.

### Children's Lesson

#### Prayer for illumination (Congregant Prepared)

#### Scripture

##### Matthew 25:14-30

<sup>14</sup> "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup> He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup> So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup> But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup> And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup> He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup> But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

#### Sermon

The parable of the talents is a popular parable it is part of a long discourse by Jesus Christ in response to a question by the disciples about the end of the age and His coming. Leading up to the parable of the talents Jesus speaks of the judgement that will fall upon the world, how the Messiah will return and how no one will know when this will happen except God himself. Finally, he teaches them the parable of the talents.

In its most basic form, it seems to tell us that we are to take those talents that God has given us and do something with them. It speaks about being accountable to God for the talents we have, and how we are called to use them within the economy of God's kingdom.

**Matthew 25:14-18**

**<sup>14</sup>“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup>So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup>But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.**

Knowing that Jesus is speaking about the events that are described in the Book of Revelation gives us an advantage in understanding the parable of the talent. When Jesus speaks of a master who goes on a journey, entrusting his property to his servants he is speaking of himself ascending into heaven after the resurrection and leaving the responsibility of the great commission on his servants, the disciples, and His other followers here on Earth.

Luke 24:49-51 describes this event.

**Luke 24:49-51**

**<sup>49</sup>And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” <sup>50</sup>And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. <sup>51</sup>While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.**

Jesus as he was preparing to ascend promised his disciples that He would send to them the 'promise of my Father', the promise which was the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them. The book of John explains why Jesus needed to leave for the Holy Spirit to come.

**John 16:7-8**

**<sup>7</sup>Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup>And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:**

The master left and bestowed his properties upon his servants, Jesus left and bestowed his Holy Spirit upon his servants. It is the Holy Spirit that gave the disciples the ability to witness to the people of their time, it is the Holy Spirit that allowed them to be more effective in convincing

the people they evangelized, convicting them of the truth about sin, convicting them of their need for salvation. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers God's Children to carry out his ministry and to bring others into relationship with God.

The truth is that the Holy Spirit is active in every person that knows Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour because all believers are his disciples, his servants. The Holy Spirit is what enables Christians to share their knowledge of Jesus Christ with others, and it is the Holy Spirit alone that brings people to God. Christians need to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is a gift from God, one that we all receive when we become true believers. Understanding this truth helps us to understand what is happening when the master distributes his servants' different amounts of talents.

A talent was a measurement of weight, when it was used in reference to money it usually means roughly 6000 denarii, or 6000 days of work for the common laborer. That is roughly 16.5 years of income, or anywhere between 500,000 and multiple millions of dollars depending on the job you work. And this fits within the parable because that measurement for a talent, that eight could be in bronze, silver or gold, and based on the value of the metal would have every different value.

So, we can get a rough understanding of the immense amount of wealth that the master is bestowing upon his servants, but what does this equate to in the kingdom of heaven? Simply that we all receive an abundant amount of grace, mercy, and love from God. Every person who comes to Christ and accepts him as master receives, His grace and mercy, He pays the debt of their sins with His blood, He invites them to be Children of the Father and he bestows upon them His Holy Spirit which begins its work in them, allowing them to grow in their relationship with God.

In the parable we see some of the servants receiving more talent than others. How are we to understand this as Christians? We receive the Holy Spirit, which begins its work within each of us, and the gifts of the Spirit are, **'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control'**. Gifts that God gives to each of us, at different levels, which we are called to put to use in his kingdom's economy here on earth.

Then there are also the gifts that are described in 1 Corinthians:

**1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

**<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of**

**tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.**

The Holy Spirit bestows a wide variety of gifts upon God's children, each one given with the purpose of it being invested into the kingdom of God. This is much more than just the idea of an 'earthly talent' that is often used when we look at this verse, the gifts of the Holy Spirit allow us to be directly active in the economy of the Kingdom of heaven in this world. The Holy spirit bestows different gifts at different levels to all of God's children, it allots them based upon the person, not in the same pattern or in the same amount, the same way that God's grace. Love and mercy have fallen upon each of us at different levels. The sinner who comes to Christ cannot fathom the amount of grace, mercy, and love that they received from God, they simply understand that it is a gift beyond measurement.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are the same, they are gifted to us by the Holy Spirit and we do not need to be concerned with how much or how little we are gifted, we should be satisfied with the gift alone, and learn to put the gift that we have received to work in God's economy on this planet, because a time will come when the master will return to check on his investments.

**Matthew 25:19-23**

**<sup>19</sup> Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup> And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'**

One servant received five talents, and another received two talents and while the master was away each of these servants managed to somehow double their talents. They had taken what they had received, what they had been gifted by the master and invested it, made use of it in some way, and through their work they had managed to earn more for their master.

The same is true of the talents that the Holy Spirit has gifted every Christian, we are to put them to use, to invest them in other people and by doing so we will gain interested and eventually be rewarded for our investment.

We also need to understand that there is some risk associated to our investments in God's economy. There will be times when we risk worldly reputation or wealth to invest in God's economy, in order to do the things that God has called for us to do in this world. These critical points of our investment often take the form of secular temptation, moral decisions, and times when we must choose between God and the things which draw us away from God.



We need to take the time, talents, and treasure that God has gifted us and invest those things in others, allowing ourselves to be used by God in his economy. When we do this, we are gaining interest on our investments, we are taking part in the kingdom of heaven and the spreading of the gospel, and for this we will be called 'good and faithful servant' when we join God in his eternal kingdom.'

Each of these servants were rewarded for their investment into God's economy, even though they had been given a different amount of talents, they had both used them to build upon God's economy. They had invested their time, talents and treasure into God's kingdom, and they were both rewarded.

Did you notice that there is not a single syllable of difference in the words spoken to the servant who had doubled the five talents and the one who had doubled the two talents. They were exactly equal in their servitude to the master. They were both rewarded in the same manner by their master, they were both called 'good and faithful' and both told that they would be 'set over much' because they had been faithful with little and most importantly, they were both invited into take part in the joy of the master in his kingdom.

As Christians this means as long as we obey God, we invest ourselves in his great commission, in his economy we can expect that on the day of judgement we will be called 'good and faithful servants, we can expect him to reward us for our time on earth and we will be invited into God's eternal kingdom, to take part in the wedding feast of Christ our Lord.

Finally, we have the servant who was given a single talent.

**Matthew 25:24-30**

**<sup>24</sup> He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup> But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'**

He did not invest the money, or use it to do anything, instead he took the wealth that was bestowed upon him and buried it in the ground. In Jesus's day people would often hide valuables in the ground. Because of the uncertainty of the times, the threat of thieves and invasion, most people hid their valuables outside of their homes in the ground, making it more difficult for people to find. When they needed money or decided to sell one of their valuables,

they would sneak out in the night and remove the item from their secret treasure trove and rebury the rest.

This last servant did not trust himself with the wealth, perhaps he worried that he would spend the money on himself. He did not trust the bankers with the money, he may have been concerned that they would unwisely invest their money and he would lose money on his investments. So instead, he hid the money and never touched it the whole time the master was away.

Spiritually speaking these are the people who fail to use their lives for the Lord. The people who live in this world enjoy the blessings, the grace, and the mercy of the Lord. People who God is calling back into relationship with him, but for their own reasons they do not place their faith in God fully and instead just enjoy their time here on earth.

These are the virgins without oil in their lamps, the man in the wrong clothes at the wedding feast, the tenants of the vineyard who killed the master's servants and son, the son who said he would go to work in the vineyard and never did. People who profess Christ, who may believe in him, love him intellectually, emotionally, and religiously, but do not love him first in their hearts, soul, bodies, and minds. People who do not produce fruit in their lives!

This is what the man who buried his money in the ground did. Verse twenty-four tells us that he called the master a hard man, reaping where he did not sow and gathering where he had not scattered. He did not know his master; he did not trust that his master would reward him for investing.

This one talent that is given to every human being on the planet is their life. God has blessed every person who has ever lived, who is living and who will ever live with their life. A time on this planet where they can fully enjoy the blessings of God, his love, his grace, and his mercy. The only thing that they need to do is believe in him as Lord and Saviour and they can enjoy that for all eternity. Yet there are many that will fail to do even that simple task.

These are the one who on the day of judgement will have their life taken away, their blessings, grace and mercy taken away from them as they are cast out of God's economy, out of his kingdom, into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The parable of the talents is a teaching intended for Christians and non-Christians; it tells the reality of what we can expect when Jesus Christ returns as the end of the ages. It reminds us that as faithful followers of Christ we are called to take the gifts that God has given us, whether it is a long list of talents, an abundance of wealth or just the time we have in this life and invest it back into the economy of the kingdom of God. We are meant to be out in this world sharing the gospel with family, friends, and strangers, in our words and deeds.

Let us Pray,

**For Mercy and Grace**

O God, our true Life,  
 in whom and by whom all things live,  
 you command us to seek you,  
 and you are ready to be found.  
 You command us to knock,  
 and open when we do so.  
 To know you is life,  
 to serve you is freedom,  
 to enjoy you is a kingdom,  
 to praise you is the joy and happiness of the soul.  
 I praise, bless, and adore you,  
 I worship you, I glorify you, I give thanks to you for your great glory.  
 I humbly ask you to remain with me,  
 to reign in me,  
 to make my heart your holy temple,  
 a fit habitation for your Divine majesty.  
 Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible,  
 preserve the work of your own hands,  
 your people who trust in your mercy alone for safety and protection.  
 Guard me with the power of your grace,  
 here and in all places,  
 now and at all times, forevermore. **Amen.**

*Source: Augustine of Hippo*

**Hymn #358: "There is a Redeemer"**

There is a redeemer  
 Jesus, God's own Son  
 Precious Lamb of God, Messiah  
 Holy One

Jesus my redeemer  
 Name above all names  
 Precious Lamb of God, Messiah  
 Oh, for sinners slain

Thank you, oh my father  
 For giving us Your Son  
 And leaving Your Spirit  
 'Til the work on Earth is done

When I stand in Glory  
 I will see His face  
 And there I'll serve my King forever  
 In that Holy Place

Thank you, oh my father  
 For giving us Your Son  
 And leaving Your Spirit  
 'Til the work on Earth is done

### **Invitation to Offering**

#### **Offering**

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3). We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer:

**E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. [standrewspert offering@gmail.com](mailto:standrewspert offering@gmail.com) If you have an Offering Envelope #, please include it in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.**

#### **Offertory Prayer** **(Congregant Prepared)**

#### **Closing Hymn # 746: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"**

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
 all our sins and griefs to bear;  
 what a privilege to carry  
 everything to God in prayer.  
 Oh what peace we often forfeit,  
 oh what needless pain we bear,  
 all because we do not carry  
 everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?  
 Is there trouble anywhere?  
 We should never be discouraged:  
 take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful,  
 who will all our sorrows share?  
 Jesus knows our every weakness:  
 take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
 cumbered with a load of care?  
 Precious Saviour, still our refuge:  
 take it to the Lord in prayer.  
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
 Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
 in his arms he'll take and shield thee;  
 thou wilt find a solace there.

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
 we, your unworthy servants, give you humble thanks  
 for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
 to us and to all whom you have made.  
 We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
 and all the blessings of this life,  
 but above all for your immeasurable love  
 in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
 And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies  
 that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
 not only with our lips, but in our lives,  
 by giving up ourselves to your service,  
 and by walking before you  
 in holiness and righteousness all our days,  
 through Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
 to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 be honor and glory throughout all ages. **Amen.**

### **Benediction**

The love of God the Father, the faithful creator,  
 the peace of Christ, the wounded healer,  
 the joy of the challenging Spirit,  
 the hope of the Three in One  
 surround and encourage you  
 today, tonight, and forever.