

Worship@Home 19th November 2023 With Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Generous God, in abundance you give us things both spiritual and physical. Help us to hold lightly the fading things of this earth and grasp tightly the lasting things of your kingdom, so that what we are and do and say may be our gifts to you through Christ, who beckons all to seek the things above, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer from Revised Common Lectionary Prayers © 2002 Consultation on Common Texts admin. Augsburg Fortress. <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/07/prayer-hold-lightly.html>

STF 113 – O worship the King, all glorious above.

<https://youtu.be/25mleGwF1QM?feature=shared>

O worship the King, all glorious above
O gratefully sing his power and his love
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days
Pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise.

O tell of his might, O sing of his grace
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form. And dark is his path on
the wings of the storm.

The earth with its store of wonders untold
Almighty, thy power hath founded of old
Established it fast by a changeless decree
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail
In thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end
Our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend.

CCLI Song # 7192539 | © 2021 Emu Music Ltd. | Robert Grant | Arrangement: Alanna Glover & Philip Percival.

Please read:

Matthew 25:14-30

<https://bible.oremus.org/?q|=279863461>

Time to Reflect

The parable of the talents is located in the part of Matthew's Gospel that is frequently referred to as the 'eschatological discourse'. In this section Jesus is preparing his disciples for the challenges that they will face ahead of them and how they should live in anticipation of his return. Jesus, throughout his teaching, seeks to emphasize the uncertainty around the timing of his return and therefore the importance of wakefulness, attentiveness, and commitment in faith and discipleship during a time of active waiting for the Lord.

In the parable the servants of the household receive shares of their master's estate to administer, and each amount given to them is a significant amount of money. Matthew states that the share of the estate is given in proportion to the ability of each servant. The master does not indicate when he will be returning but when he does it seems to have been a long absence. The master on his return is pleased by two of his servants who have used what has been given to them well. He commends their faithfulness and entrusts them with further responsibility and receives them into his joy. However, the servant who buried his talent is admonished by the master, who points out that if he had at least placed the money in the bank, it would have been returned with some interest.

The meaning of this particular parable has widely debated by theologians and a number have come to quite differing conclusions about what the text might be saying to us. For a radical reinterpretation of the passage you might want to read Debbie Eisenbise's 'Redeeming Refusal' that can be found at: <https://politicaltheology.com/redeeming-refusal/> (accessed 13/11/23) who believes that the message within the passage is about economic injustice and truth-telling. In this interpretation there is a resistance to identifying the master as God or the third servant as deserving of punishment. Instead, the passage is about the injustice that the disciples will see and face in a sinful world.

Other interpretations of the passage have sought to assert that it is about responsible and attentive discipleship and using what God has entrusted with us for the good of the kingdom. John Wesley, in his notes on the passage, would seem to suggest that an inactive and passive 'faith' that never leads to growth in grace and holiness, or in doing any good, is not really faith at all.

Perhaps the message that both interpretations have in common is the imperative for those who follow Jesus to commit to the Kingdom of God and within that the command to love God and neighbour.

Each and every one of us is entrusted to share the good news of the kingdom (Matthew 24:14) by going about the work that the master has called us to do (Matthew 24:24-51). This work includes visiting the sick and imprisoned, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, and feeding the hungry (Matthew 25:31-46). In so doing, we are also called to the prophetic task of challenging injustice and living differently so that the world might know God and his righteousness.

By living out our calling in this way, helping the vulnerable and challenging injustice, we are imitating Jesus and thus are able to be called 'good and faithful servant' through the way that we have lived and worked out the faith that we have.

In the past year Northampton Methodist Church and Circuit has been sharing some of the discipleship resources that link to what it means to follow 'A Methodist Way of Life'. The resources seek to affirm that God loves all of humanity, unconditionally, and that this is shown in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the good news! Yet we are also called to go on a journey with God in our discipleship that involves taking risks, growing, and learning: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/mwol/>

As you reflect this Sunday perhaps you too can wonder and reflect on what you might be and do for God's Kingdom as we seek to follow Jesus. How might our words and actions seek to further the work of God's Kingdom and help those who need to know the love of God in their lives, in real and practical ways? For God has entrusted us with the greatest gift of all to share: His grace and love in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit who is with us. So let us commit ourselves to sharing that gift and in so doing glorify God.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:

The needs of the world...
The Church and its calling...
Loved ones going through difficult times...
For peace, justice, and reconciliation...
In Jesus name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

STF 407 – Hear the call of the Kingdom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65AuT49d1o8>

Hear the call of the kingdom, lift your eyes to the King; let his song rise within you as a fragrant offering of how God, rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem all who trust in his unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the kingdom to be children of light with the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ; walking justly before him, loving all that is right, that the life of Christ may shine through us.

King of heaven, we will answer the call.

We will follow, bringing hope to the world,

filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim salvation in Jesus' name.

Hear the call of the kingdom to reach out to the lost with the Father's compassion in the wonder of the cross, bringing peace and forgiveness, and a hope yet to come:

let the nations put their trust in him.

CCLI Song Number: 4930752. Keith Getty (b. 1974), Kristyn Getty (b. 1980) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963). Words and Music: © 2006, Thankyou Music.

Final Prayer

God, whose giving knows no ending,
we offer up the treasure that you have entrusted to us; we offer up the skills and time that you have graciously given to us; we offer up ourselves in service and praise. Receive these gifts by your grace. Multiply and use them through the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish Christ's work of love in the world. Amen.

Written by Joanna Harader, and posted on the Spacious Faith blog: <https://spaciousfaith.com/> and <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/10/offering-prayer-matthew-2514-20.html>