

Pentecost #24

11/15/2020

J.V. Trautwein

Vicar Karen Pugatch

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Our readings during November speak to the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the Lord will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tell the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope – word, water, bread, and wine – eager to welcome the good news of Christ’s coming among us.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“When Morning Gilds the Skies”](#)

Psalm 90:1-12

Lord, you have been our dwelling place¹
in all generations.

² Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

³ You turn us² back to dust,
and say, “Turn back, you mortals.”

⁴ For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past,
or like a watch in the night.

⁵ You sweep them away; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning;

⁶ in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.

⁷ For we are consumed by your anger;
by your wrath we are overwhelmed.

⁸ You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

⁹ For all our days pass away under your wrath;
our years come to an end³ like a sigh.

¹⁰ The days of our life are seventy years,
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span⁴ is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.

¹¹ Who considers the power of your anger?
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.
¹² So teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart.

Hymn of Praise: [“Come, Come Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Righteous God, Our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Zephaniah 1:7,12-18](#)

2nd Reading: [1 Thessalonians 5:1-11](#)

The Gospel: [Matthew 25:14-30](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“We Give Thee But Thine Own”](#)

The Message and The Angel Tree ([Video Link](#))

One of the saddest things to see in life is the gifts of life being ignored and wasted within a person. Even sadder is that all too many children and young people have insufficient self-image and or have no one to encourage them to develop the gifts of life which they have. They end up just plodding through life not knowing its joys because it may take too much effort or even fear of failure to develop them.

Jesus speaks to this in one of His parables. To illustrate this He uses a contemporary familiar term of a unit of measuring weight –a talent. A talent was about equal to approximately 75 lbs. today. The monetary value of a talent was according to the worth of the material being weighed: gold, silver, copper etc. For instance if the material was silver it could have been worth about fifteen years wages for the average person.

The parable told by Jesus related that a man who went on an extended journey distributed his money or talents among his slaves. One received five talents, one two talents and one just one talent. Both the slaves with multiple talents doubled what they were given while the slave with just one talent buried it out of fear of losing it. After a long time the master returned home and sought an accounting of the talents he had given out. Upon hearing the results that the two slaves who doubled their talents they were both rewarded. The slave who buried his talent was reprimanded and left with nothing and banished

This parable was first meant to relate to the Scribes and Pharisees. It is a story of how they viewed the law which was in their keeping and interpretation in contrast to the real truth of

God's will. The Scribes and Pharisees were the slave who received one talent. In order to keep their talent safe, the law, they buried it as it stood not allowing it to increase in substance and relevancy. This is how they viewed God's law unchanging and unchangeable. God's revelation had effectively ended with the law and it was their duty to see that it never changed.

To view God as such would not only deny Jesus, who came to fulfill the law by giving a new perspective of God's relationship with His creation, but it viewed God's relationship as one based upon unchanging revenge and fear. With this view there is the denial that God is constantly being revealed through His active presence within life throughout all generations. To limit God to unchanging and unchangeable laws, is to say that God is not a living God and not relevant to each new generation throughout history.

Mankind with each new generation has experience continual change since the law centered religion of the Scribes and Pharisees. We have experienced continual revelations of God beginning with the incarnation in Jesus and His message of love and forgiveness. Today we are the result of the historic growth of mankind and his growing relationship with God. Throughout this process God has not been sitting on the sidelines as an uninterested observer, nor has He remained buried in some bygone era. He is and has been alive and active with each step man has taken in the journey of God's creative process.

But, many choose to live like the Scribes and Pharisees. To do so is to limit God's revelation to a book and to past traditions. Jesus tells us to get past such limitations for God is ever present and always revealing Himself with each new moment and each new day. To live only in the past is to limit life itself. To live in and for the past closes the door for new challenges, opportunities, and achievements. We then bury ourselves and what we have to give to the furtherance of man. This is to hide the gifts, our talents, which we have been given to share with the world. On the other hand to develop and utilize the gifts we have been given not only brings delight to each new day but can very well bring hope and joy to someone else. Therein we find our reward.

This parable of Jesus gives us a strong message about the realities of life and the reality of God. It tells us that God is not limited to ancient days and laws or even some canonized writings. To so limit God is to deny His continuing presence throughout history. It is this presence which leads man to a greater understanding of the miracles of life, of God's love and that God's creative process is still alive through us and how we utilization the gifts and talents that we have.

Thereby the parable tells us that to hide our abilities, talents, and gifts is to live as if in the past and die to the future. It is to deny life itself. But, to develop those gifts that we have and to share them is to find the reward of knowing the real joys of life. We are a child of God and must live as His child as we meet each new day as an opportunity to live it to its fullest. With a society in which so many wish to deny the present and future in order to live in the past we must be that shining witness to say that God's love and revelation points us to live in the present and work towards fulfilling the hopes and dreams of a new day, This is when we will realize Jesus'

words "...enter into the joy of your master." This is the good news of God's ever present love and revelation.

Anthem: "[How Can I Keep From Singing](#)", Agne G

Offering*: ([On-Line Giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Father of all creation and all gifts of life, no matter what age we may be experiencing, instill in us the motivation to continue to develop those talent and gifts which you have given us. Let us realize that sharing these gifts we may bring joy and meaning to someone's life.. Give us the creativity and will to do this especially during this time when our brothers and sisters need to find some joy in life.

As the pandemic rapidly spreads throughout our state, nation, and world, we seek comfort and healing to those who may be experiencing the results of this devastating virus. Give strength to those who are giving of themselves so that others may live. Let each of us understand the sacrifice they are making and be thankful for their service. Grant to us patience and the will to follow guidelines in order to slow the spread of this deadly disease.

We pray for all whole need your comforting and heeling presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Danny Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Kirk Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Richie Wohkittel, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you;

The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters

Live on knowing God's love,

The joy of living this life of love,

And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Lord Speak to Me That I May Speak"](#)

We will be discontinuing in person worship services on Sundays until further notice. The online worship experiences will continue as well as the Midweek Thoughts.

Bible Study with Vicar Karen Pugatch, Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30PM more information attached below.

*Offering to be sent to:

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org/>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291