

Take Lord Receive MI
Matthew 25: 14-30
November 15, 2020
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry

May the God...

Good Morning!

So we drag our self out of bed. We shuffle on into the bathroom.

What is it that I'm doing today? We think. More Zoom, more masks, more social distancing, not touching and hugging and being.

Why is that? How is that fair? And thus begins the litany of what is and isn't fair in this world and in our lives.

We pull out the floss, glance in the mirror, and for a moment think, "Well at least I look alright. Not too bad." But then we realize our entire visage is maybe a little bit blurry. Of course, the reason we look so good, this day, is because our CVS glasses are still on the alarm clock next to our side of the bed.

What does the day hold? Is it going to be good, is it gonna be bad? And if it's going to be not so good—will we at least get a story out of it, suitable for late night retelling? Or is this day, this day of our life, just going to fade into obscurity as a time when we did some things, but not most things, put off doing many things and got to the end of the day, as we fell asleep vaguely hoping for something better the next morning?

Call me the queen of projections—but I'm thinking that's how he felt, our ridiculed friend, for whom I have so darn much sympathy. The head of the house, the boss, the big guy with all of the power and money, goes on a trip and says to the people left behind. "While I'm gone, I need for you to take care of some things. You—I think the world of you—some I'm giving you five talents, which in today's economy— given inflation, taking into consideration, the pandemic, the post-election uncertainty, the excitability of the stock market, five talents in today's market—is about 2.5 million dollars.

The master says "I'm giving to each of you according to your abilities. Here's two and a half million for you." To the next fellow he gives two talents—let say to make our math simple—I million dollars.

And to our guy—my man—to him he says, "And for you—for you—here's half a million dollars. I'll be back."

Mister five talent guy—from all accounts—doesn't blink—he takes the five—and makes five more. Sweet. The middle fellow—gets two talents—1 million, and doubles that. Do these guys even break a sweat? We don't even know.

But our guy—my guy. Gets a half a million dollars and all he can think is “oh my God—this is all I have. I cannot blow it. I cannot screw this one up. I never asked for this—I didn't want it. What in heaven's name am I supposed to do with it? This guy will get me—If I screw up.”

So our guy buries it. Rabbinical law was clear: whoever immediately buries property entrusted to him is no longer liable because he has taken the safest course conceivable. (Eduard Schweizer p 471).

He buries it and wakes up every morning there after wondering:

“What does the day hold? Is it going to be good, is it gonna be bad? And if it's going to be not so good—will I at least get a story out of it, suitable for late night retelling? Or is this day, this day of my life, just going to fade into obscurity as a time when I did some things, but not most things, ignored or put off doing many things and got to the end of the day, and fell asleep vaguely hoping for something more?

He took what he had, what had been given to him, and buried it deep down in the hole because he could not bear, could not imagine, risking it, using it and losing it.

He buried it—Because of his fear of failing, his fear of not being good enough, or worthy enough prevented him from using what had been given to him to make a difference, to matter.

And then time goes on. Those days, those normal days of waking and rising, working and sleeping, they come and go. Eventually, eventually, after a really long time—Eventually the owner of the property comes back. What's he got to show?

You don't need me to beat this one home. He has a tepid life, lived in fear, enacted in the shadows. He blew his chance to use the gracious gift given to him to make a freaking difference.

Here's my ask. Here's my plea to myself and to all of us. We are made in God's image. God has given us gifts and talents. Use them. Use them all. Offer all you have. All we have. Digging holes, squirreling our blessings, our wealth, our talents away—that is some serious waste of good dirt.

Come what may—this is what we know—our lives are what we have—to make a difference. Make a huge awesome difference. Live on the edge, take the risk, spit into the wind, stick your head out the window, breathe deeply, and offer back to God—every awesome and awful thing you have.

Make it all one big fat gift with an angst encrusted bow. Then bow before God and say, “This is it. This is what I have. I worked it. I tried.”

Or as St. Ignatius of Loyola prayed some 500 years ago,

“Take Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will all that I have and possess. You have given all to me.

To you O Lord I return it. All is yours, dispose of it wholly according to your will. Give me your love and your grace, that’s enough for me.”

We might dare to pray, here, here, here, now, now now God—I am giving you my all. Why not—we’ve got nothing to lose!

Amen.