

OPENING PRAYERS AND HOLY COMMUNION ARE AVAILABLE AS A VIDEO ON OUR ONLINE SUNDAY SERVICES PAGE HERE OR ON OUR YOUTUBE PAGE HERE

PART 1 – OPENING PRAYERS

GREETING

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
His steadfast love endures for ever!
Grace and peace be with you
and also with you.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

My brothers and sisters, believing God is faithful to forgive, let us rid ourselves of what we need to carry no longer.

Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you
in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,
who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith:
pardon you and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Eternal God and Father,
by whose power we are created and by whose love we are redeemed:
guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give ourselves to your service, and live this
day in love to one another and to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PLEASE PAUSE THE VIDEO – PRESS THE SPACEBAR TO PAUSE

PART 2 — AN ALL AGE VIDEO “*KNOCK KNOCK?*” —*REVELATION 3:20* AND DOWNLOADABLE MATERIAL FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN [HERE](#)

PART 3 — LOOK UP AND READ THROUGH THE READINGS, LISTEN TO THE [SERMON PODCAST](#) (READ ALONG IF YOU WISH) BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE, AND PRAY THE INTERCESSIONS, TODAY BY KEL TAYLOR.

READINGS (NRSV preferred)

Judges 4:1-10

Psalm 123

Matthew 25:14-30

SERMON BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE

Available to listen online and/or download – access via Pentecost 2020 link and notice also a reasonable library of past sermons for you to listen to as you exercise or meditate...

*Let us pray,
In the name of the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Amen.*

There was this 20 dollar bill and a 1 dollar coin on the conveyor belt at the downtown Reserve Bank. As they were lying there side by side, the 1 dollar coin said to the 20 dollar bill, "Hey man - where have you been? I haven't seen you in a long time?"

The 20 dollar bill replied, "Man I have been having a ball! I've been traveling to distant countries, going to the finest restaurants, lots of wonderful and exciting experiences!

(this was in pre Covid times)

After describing his great travels, the 20 dollar bill asked the 1 dollar coin, "What about you? Where have you been?"

The 1 dollar coin replied, "Well, I've been to the Baptist church, the Uniting church, the Pentecostal church, the Anglican church, the Catholic church and the Church of Christ..."

"WAIT A MINUTE!" shouted the 20 dollar bill. "What's a church?"

I think it is good to start with some humor, as this allegorical story of Jesus' becomes rather confronting. This story, like last week's is fictional and complex. It also exaggerates to a point of being ridiculous.

Let me put you in the picture. What is a talent?

No, it is not a gift nor is it a natural ability. It is a sum of money, a very large sum of money. One talent is a lifetime's wages, for a slave, probably equivalent to 144 years of wages. That is *one* talent.

And this incredibly wealthy man (not a king, just a man) entrusts to three slaves, the first: five talents (720 years worth of wages), to the second slave: two talents (288 years worth of wages), and to the third slave: one talent (the 144 years worth of wages). In this story the man entrusts this money with them, but it is not said if he told them explicitly what to do with it. Then he goes away.

Well we typically hear this story as commending those with financial wisdom and smarts. I sometimes think of this story as one for financial managers and planners. And what a story to turn up at this point in our COVID recession!

Much safer to interpret talents as being gifts and natural abilities to be put to good use.

But Jesus did use specifically, and notably the metaphor of money. And money, in any age and place means power.

How might Jesus' disciples have heard it? How would they, a mixed bag of fishermen, zealots and taxmen have heard it? Who in their world has such large sums of money and power?

= *Rome*.

Who was given money and power to manage when Rome went away? Puppet kings, the elite leaders and aristocracy who were to manage the fine balance of staying in favor both with the local population and with their Roman overlords. They were the organ of liaison between the two. A set of people who tried to serve, as it were, two masters.

Remember the sermon on the mount? *No one can serve two masters ... you cannot serve God and wealth*. Jesus had much to say about people who got obsessed about money. And Jesus' suspicions regarding money were not novel in his tradition.

The Jewish Talmud instructs subordinates what they should do if their master entrusts them with significant cash.

“Take no risks,” says the Talmud. “Bury it in the ground.”

Why? Because the power differential makes it unsafe and unwise to do anything else. The master owns slaves. The slaves do the work; the master collects the gain. When the master turns over such a large amount of money to people

who do not even own themselves, the slaves are under no obligation to put their lives and families and futures at risk.

An earlier parable told of a slave who ran up great debt after being entrusted with his master’s wealth. In the light of our recent history, perhaps the market timing went against him?

The Talmud recognizes such situations, and recognizes the abuse of power present in them, and advises that a person put in such danger would do well to bury the money to keep it safe.

Well, that’s interesting isn’t it? For in both these stories, the slave who doesn’t produce the goods gets it.

There is risk in all the actions in this story. The slaves who invested the money took a risk, it paid off for them, it also meant that they were going to be given more responsibility, so there would be more risks to take.

Like the aristocracy and leaders of the Jewish states, they are caught between making money for their overlords and extorting the money out of the peasants. And yes, they do enter into the joy of their master when it all goes well. They get their share, they get their opportunity to feather their own nests on the side. Matthew the tax collector knew all about that.

The slave who buried his talent took the risk in saying no. Some call him the anti hero, a type of whistle blower who knew full well what his master was about. He resisted the opportunity to speculate with the money entrusted. He resisted making more money by exploiting the peasant or village base. And he paid for it.

Thrown into the outer darkness. In company with others who are cut in pieces, consigned to eternal fire and punishment. How very Roman, the hard master who does indeed harvest what he did not plant and gathers the spoil of war to himself.

And this third slave, how like Jesus who refused to play the game of those who had the power. Jesus, who got thrown into the outer darkness, was tortured and condemned. If we think the third slave was too passive, even in his resistance, what do you call Jesus?

This has been an upside down telling of this allegory. Yet it has always been problematic in terms of its content. It is also problematic in where it sits in this gospel, among the stories and illustrations of how to live faithfully before the return of Jesus.

Most of the stories imply rewards for those who have done the right thing and suffering for those who did not.

Yet, as we survey the whole realm of Scripture, even the gospels, we know it’s not like that. It’s not like that in our experience. The Christian life has its share of suffering, of trouble, of persecution – Matthew’s community knew that well. Taking up one’s cross was about a discipline of denial, and of not playing the world’s games.

If we take the common interpretation of this story, we have to admit that it is rather crass for Jesus. And so I wonder. Maybe I and some others who have looked at it this way are wrong. But we’re allowed to wonder and think more deeply about it.

These stories in Matthew 25 are all quite intense. And they can be read very black and white, it's the easy way to read them. You are in or you are out. You are productive or you are lazy. You are a sheep, or you are a goat – that's next week. All in all, you better watch out!

If you read any of these stories and get a feeling in your gut, pay attention to it. What is that feeling saying? Use that feeling to probe further, to ask questions and struggle with it. There may be no glib or satisfactory answer, but instead an invitation to keep journeying and exploring.

Let us pray

Teach us, Jesus, how to live and worship without being worldly or greedy. Drive from our lives what spoils them and make us temples of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (NZPB 582)

INTERCESSIONS BY KEL TAYLOR

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for all your gifts to us – our daily food, our health, our freedom to choose and for the gifts of your word, your power and your love. Encourage us to speak, act and pray that all we hold in trust may be used wisely. May we be worthy of the trust you have placed in us. With the gifts you have given us help us to seek the values that will bring joy in this changing world.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, we pray for the community in which we live. We thank you for teaching us to love others regardless of racial, economic or other differences. May our community be known for love and fairness. Eradicate prejudice from our hearts, our words and our actions. Give us pity and concern for those members of our community who suffer misfortune. Give us compassion and empathy we need to understand what those in our community are going through.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the achievements in our State and in our nation in reducing the level of coronavirus infection. We pray that for those who are still suffering from infection your healing hand may be upon them. We pray for those in other nations who are still significantly affected by this disease. We pray for the doctors, nurses and supporting staff who are in the front line of the fight against this virus and we remember before you those who have lost their loved ones due to the virus. May they know that you are with them at this time.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of Peace, on this Sunday following Remembrance Day, we give you thanks for the peace and security we enjoy in our nation. We remember those who in time of war faithfully served their country. We pray for their families and for our nation whose freedom was won at such a cost. We pray for peace in your world and hasten that day when nations will not seek to solve differences through armed conflict.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father we pray for our Parish here in Mount Eliza. We pray that as we recommence our regular worship and other activities you will guide us in all that we do. We ask for your continued blessing on our Vicar Jennie and our Lay Minister Sam as she prepares to commence her theological training. We pray for our Wardens and Parish Council as, together with Jennie, they plan the future direction of our Parish.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, we bring before you those whom we know and love who are in need at this time. Give strength to the weak and hope to those patients who are recovering from surgery. We particularly remember those in our own Parish who request your healing power at this time and others known to us personally who also seek your healing hands.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray for your faithful servants of every age, for all who have followed your rule of love. We pray for the loved ones of those whose anniversary falls at this time. Heavenly Father, may we too worthily love you and at our life's end, raise us up to share with you in glory.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ who taught us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the
glory, are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.
His Spirit is with us.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.
Blessed be God for ever.

OPENING (GREAT THANKSGIVING)

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

COMMUNION

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
making us in your own image.
We praise you for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by his death on the cross
and rising to new life
offered the one true sacrifice for sin
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.
Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying,

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory,
hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said,
share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread
and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take and eat. This is
my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said,
"This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me."
Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ
and to remember all he has done for us:
Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and
bringing your peace to this world that you have made.
Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessing and honour and glory and power,
are yours forever and ever. Amen

**THE BREAKING AND SHARING
OF THE BREAD AND WINE.**

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one
bread:
so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

THE COMMUNION

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray together:

We thank you, Lord,
that you have fed us in this sacrament,
united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet
prepared for all peoples.
Amen.

BLESSING

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

DISMISSAL

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ. Amen.

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