

November 15, 2020
24 Pentecost, A Proper 28
St. Mary's-in-the-Valley Episcopal Church
Ramona, CA

Open Hymn: # 370, I Bind unto Myself Today
Played and sung by Joshua Charney

1-I bind unto myself, the strong Name of the Trinity, by invocation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three.

2-I bind this day to me for ever, by power of faith, Christ's Incarnation: his baptism in the Jordan river: his death on cross for my salvation; his bursting from the spiced tomb; his riding up the heavenly way; his coming at the day of doom; I bind unto myself today.

6 -Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me.

7-I bind unto myself the Name, the strong Name of the Trinity, by invocation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three. Of whom, all nature hath creation, eternal Father, Spirit, Word: praise to the Lord of my salvation, salvation is of Christ the Lord.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
People And Blessed be God's kingdom now and forever. Amen.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hid: 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.*

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy immortal one
Have mercy on us

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy immortal one
Have mercy on us

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy immortal one
Have mercy on us

The Celebrant then says

The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Celebrant Let us pray.

Collect

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Judges 4:1-7, lector, Deb Lewallen

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died. So the LORD sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.

At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, ‘Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin’s army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.’”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people
Thanks be to God

Psalm 123, lector, Deb Lewallen

Ad te levavi oculos meos

- 1 To you I lift up my eyes, *
to you enthroned in the heavens.
- 2 As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, *
and the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
- 3 So our eyes look to the LORD our God, *
until he show us his mercy.

4 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy, *
for we have had more than enough of contempt,
5 Too much of the scorn of the indolent rich, *
and of the derision of the proud.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, lector, Rob Lewallen

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Thanks be to God

Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus said, "It is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made

two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ

Sermon:

24 Pentecost A p. 28 November 19, 2017
Judges 4:1-7 Psalm 123
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Matthew 25:14-30

The parable of the 5, 2, and 1 talents arrives in our reading in the fall when it is Every Member Canvass Time. I wonder if that is just a sheer coincidence, or did the lectionary makers know the financial rhythms of parish life? So, the preacher is all set up to deliver a stewardship sermon emphasizing, not equal giving but proportionate giving, and to remind us all about the cruel law of atrophy which applies even to our gifts in ministry; use it or lose it as the saying goes. If one fails to develop one's baptismal ministry, then those who are diligent will take up the slack and do the ministry which the slacker was given to do.

These are good sermon ideas, I've worn them out many times but for today, I'd like to presents some insights that this parable provides for people who have no choice but to live in time, and what does time mean? It means continuous change. I would like for us to understand this parable as wisdom insights regarding the stewardship of time and change.

In life people are dealt different situations in life, and some of what we are dealt are gifts which can be invested and developed. Some have five talent occasions, some two talent occasions and others one talent occasions.

The five talent guy took his five and not only retained his original five, he added five more. The two talent guy, did the same. He kept his two and added two.

But what about the one talent guy? The parable says that he acted in fear and buried his talent in the ground so that he would not lose it. No matter what happen, he thought he would always have the same.

Let us consider the one talent guy with this illustration. We all know what freeze-frame is when it comes to videos; we can stop a video and have it frozen so we can cherish the moment. We can turn a moment in the movie into a single photo.

We suddenly want to preserve the movie by stopping it permanently at a favorite moment. This might be like what the one talent man did.

Burying what we is a gift or trying to freeze-frame what we once enjoyed is the act of Conserving, of being a conservative. We think that we can freeze-frame conserve and we do this out of anxiety and fear of loss. And what happens? We can lose all because we fail to realize that the gift and blessing of this moment are not meant to be the end all of life; they are to be a gift for us to invest in the present and in the future for better outcomes.

One might think, "I love this gifted moment; I want to stay here. I want time to stop because if I bury it and keep it same, I will not lose it and I am fearful about loss."

Let us apply this for a moment at many who hold literal biblical views. We like the Bible as our holy book. And we may want to be very literal about a biblical view, and so we try to freeze-frame the Bible to preserve or keep what we think is valuable. And indeed we can find great value. But look what we see in a biblical freeze-frame of the Bible. We see slaves, we see subjugated women whose abilities are not developed or cherished, we a perceptual flat earth and many other cultural details which cannot be validly woven into our current lives.

What if we did the same as American Constitutional Originalists: We freeze-frame the primitive American Constitution situation. We see grand ideas of law and justice, but when we look closer we see Washington and Jefferson as slave-holders, we see that women and non-landowners unable to vote and many other practices that are out-dated with enlightened justice. So why should we "freeze-frame, bury or completely conserve" a good time, when it still is a time with much unfinished business?

The church can be selectively "Amish" in many of our practices who decided that it was god-like to stop the advance of technology 150 years ago. A much different kind of life has gone on and developed outside of Amish cloistered life. The attempt to freeze-frame may have the romance of the simple life; but is it realistic to time and change?

The good stewardship of time and change means that we conserve the good in dynamic engaging investment in the now and in the future, but what else do we do? We expand our investment beyond the good that was and is surrounded by too many bad actors who did not live up to the ideals of love and justice for all.

What if we were to freeze frame our church now; what do we see? We see many young people uninterested in our liturgies and practices, just like we are not interested in taking up Amish

buggies. If we look closer we will also see some wonderful good. We are trying to open our doors of full participation to more people, in the way in which St. Paul saw the message of Jesus expand beyond the boundaries of Judaism to the Gentiles. We see the inclusion women in the full ministry of the church, we seek the full sacramental participation of gay and lesbian persons in the life of the church, we seek to be both religious mystical poets and brute fact scientists. And do it without contradictions as we find faith to be a force for graceful mediations of all of the facets of the ways in which we can be fully human. And we do this on the quest to more a perfect embodiment of love and justice.

The parable of Jesus invites us to move from the sense of anxiety and fear of the good that we think we might lose, and move into the dynamic investment in the now and in the future. Why? Because the faith of Jesus Christ is the call to surpass ourselves in a future state. The magnet of God's power bends us in an arc aimed at more perfect love and justice.

Dear friends, we are invited to the dynamic investment of time today. Let us not in fear, freeze-frame what we might revere as the "good 'ol days;" let us be investors in real time, continuous time. By doing so we conserve the good of the past into the present and future, even as we continue to work on what is yet unfinished in reaching the wonderful love and justice of Jesus Christ for all. Amen.

The Nicene Creed (page 357)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People:

Confession

Let us confess our sins against God and our Neighbor
Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins
through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all
goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in
eternal life. Amen.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.
People: And also with you

Hymn: Come Weary Traveler, Chris Rudd
Used by permission from C. R.
Played and sung by Rob and Deb Lewallen

1. There's a place, Up Beyond the Blue
We call home, When our Toils are through
We'll enter in, By God's request

Come Weary Traveler, I Offer Rest

2. There's a time, That's not known by man
It's up ahead, in the master plan
We'll gather in, with our loved ones blessed

Come Weary Traveler, I Offer Rest

3. There's a way, to the great white throne
It's by the cross, and it leads to home
In robes of white, we'll all be dressed

Come Weary Traveler, I Offer Rest

Repeat Verse #1

Doxology: Sung by Rob and Deb Lewallen
Eucharistic Prayer B

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

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and every- where to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who on the first day of the week overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

Sung and played by Deb and Rob Lewallen

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."
After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with the ever blessed Virgin Mary, and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. *Amen.*

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Led by Rob and Deb Lewallen

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.
The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion Hymn: Peace Before Us
Sung and played by Joshua Charney

Peace before us, peace behind us, peace under our feet. Peace within us, peace over us. Let all around us be peace.

Love before us, love behind us, love under our feet. Love within us, love over us. Let all around us be love.

Light before us, light behind us, light under our feet. Light within us, light over us. Let all around us be light.

Christ before, Christ behind us, Christ under our feet. Christ within us, Christ over us. Let all around us be Christ.

Peace before us, peace behind us, peace under our feet. Peace within us, peace over us. Let all around us be peace.

Post Communion Prayer (BCP, page 365)

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and

serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Benediction:

Dismissal:

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God!

Closing Hymn: Leaning on the Everlasting Arms
Played by Stanley V. Smith, Jr., on the Hammer Dulcimer

What a fellowship, what a joy divine
Leaning on the everlasting arms
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine
Leaning on the everlasting arms

Leaning, leaning
Safe and secure from all alarms
Leaning, leaning
Leaning on the everlasting arms

O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day,
leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning
Safe and secure from all alarms
Leaning, leaning
Leaning on the everlasting arms

What have I to dread, what have I to fear
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near
Leaning on the everlasting arms

Leaning, leaning
Safe and secure from all alarms
Leaning, leaning
Leaning on the everlasting arms