

## Old Testament Reading: Zephaniah 1:7–16

- <sup>7</sup> Be silent before the Lord God!  
For the day of the Lord is near;  
the Lord has prepared a sacrifice  
and consecrated his guests.
- <sup>8</sup> And on the day of the Lord's sacrifice—  
"I will punish the officials and the king's sons  
and all who array themselves in foreign  
attire.
- <sup>9</sup> On that day I will punish  
everyone who leaps over the threshold,  
and those who fill their master's house  
with violence and fraud.
- <sup>10</sup> "On that day," declares the Lord,  
"a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate,  
a wail from the Second Quarter,  
a loud crash from the hills.
- <sup>11</sup> Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar!  
For all the traders are no more;  
all who weigh out silver are cut off.
- <sup>12</sup> At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,  
and I will punish the men  
who are complacent,  
those who say in their hearts,  
'The Lord will not do good,  
nor will he do ill.'
- <sup>13</sup> Their goods shall be plundered,  
and their houses laid waste.  
Though they build houses,  
they shall not inhabit them;  
though they plant vineyards,  
they shall not drink wine from them."
- <sup>14</sup> The great day of the Lord is near,  
near and hastening fast;  
the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter;  
the mighty man cries aloud there.
- <sup>15</sup> A day of wrath is that day,  
a day of distress and anguish,  
a day of ruin and devastation,  
a day of darkness and gloom,  
a day of clouds and thick darkness,  
<sup>16</sup> a day of trumpet blast and battle cry  
against the fortified cities  
and against the lofty battlements.

## Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the times and the seasons,  
brothers, you have no need to have anything written  
to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves are fully aware that the  
day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.  
<sup>3</sup>While people are saying, "There is peace and secu-  
rity," then sudden destruction will come upon them  
as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and  
they will not escape. <sup>4</sup>But you are not in darkness,  
brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup>For

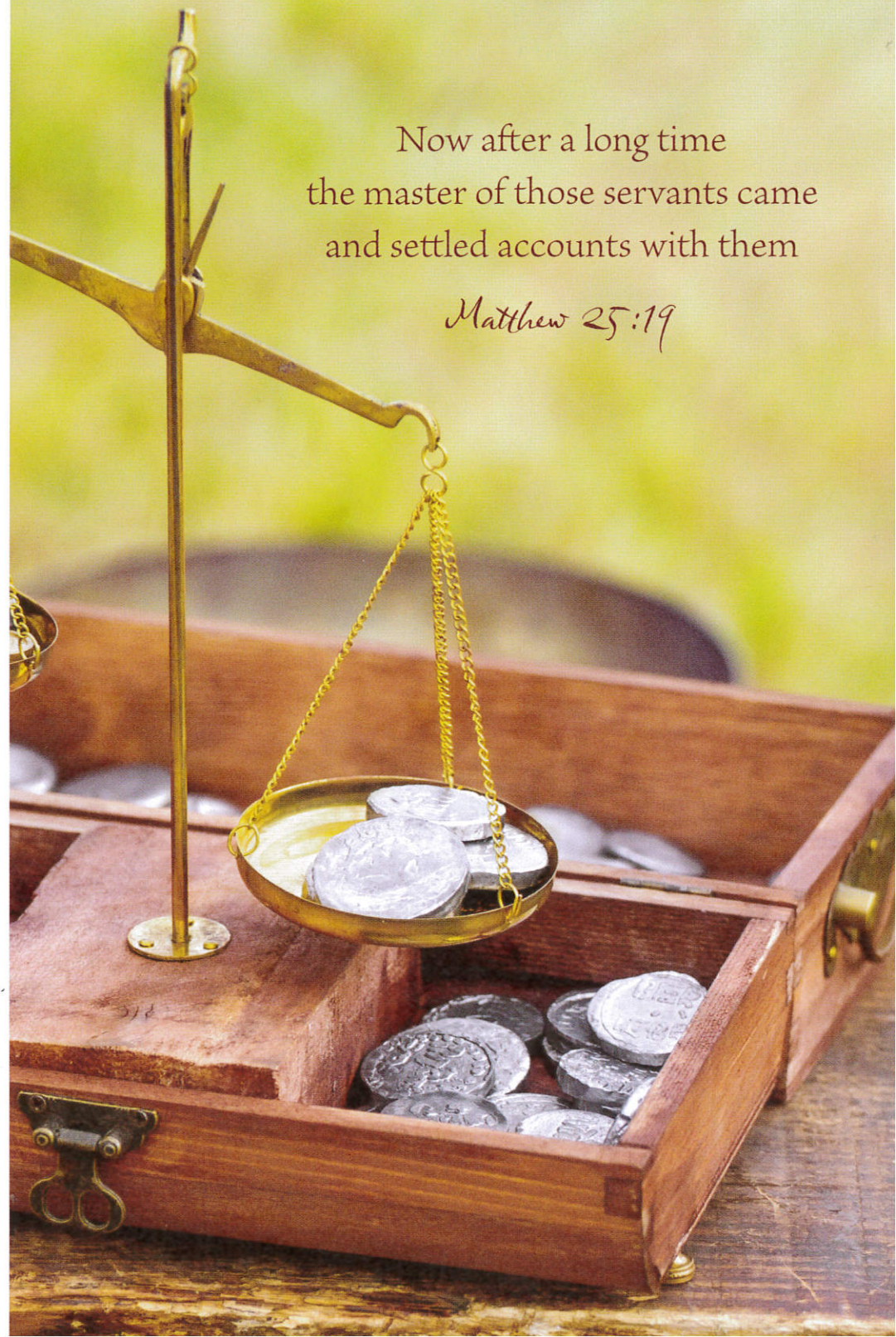
you are all children of light, children of the day. We  
are not of the night or of the darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let  
us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and  
be sober. <sup>7</sup>For those who sleep, sleep at night, and  
those who get drunk, are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since  
we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on  
the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet  
the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has not destined us  
for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord  
Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us so that whether we are  
awake or asleep we might live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore  
encourage one another and build one another up,  
just as you are doing.

## Holy Gospel: Matthew 25:14–30

<sup>14</sup>[Jesus said:] "It will be like a man going on a  
journey, who called his servants and entrusted to  
them his property. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents,  
to another two, to another one, to each according  
to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>He who had  
received the five talents went at once and traded  
with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup>So  
also he who had the two talents made two talents  
more. <sup>18</sup>But he who had received the one talent went  
and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.  
<sup>19</sup>Now after a long time the master of those servants  
came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>And he who  
had received the five talents came forward, bringing  
five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to  
me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'  
<sup>21</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faith-  
ful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will  
set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'  
<sup>22</sup>And he also who had the two talents came forward,  
saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here  
I have made two talents more.'  
<sup>23</sup>His master said to  
him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have  
been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.  
Enter into the joy of your master.'  
<sup>24</sup>He also who had  
received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Mas-  
ter, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you  
did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no  
seed, <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent  
in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'  
<sup>26</sup>But  
his master answered him, 'You wicked and sloth-  
ful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not  
sowed and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup>Then  
you ought to have invested my money with the  
bankers, and at my coming I should have received  
what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent  
from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.  
<sup>29</sup>For to everyone who has will more be given, and he  
will have an abundance. But from the one who has  
not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>And cast  
the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that  
place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Now after a long time  
the master of those servants came  
and settled accounts with them

*Matthew 25:19*



**About the Cover:** When the master returned, he expected that his property would have been used for its intended purpose. The third servant thought that storing it away was the safest form of management. However, it was given to be invested. Christ has given His Church His valuable Word, not to be stored away but invested in the lives of people. It will always accomplish its intended purpose because God's Word never comes back empty (see Isaiah 55:11). Jesus emptied Himself on the cross for our sake to bring us the richness of His forgiveness, life, and salvation.



**St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)**  
**8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254**  
**309-949-2516**

**November 19, 2023      Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

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*Divine Service Setting Four (Lutheran Service Book, p. 203)*

**Hymn of Invocation 651 I Love Your Kingdom, Lord**

**Invocation and Versicles (p. 203)**

**Introit**

*Psalm 143:2, 5–6, 10–11; antiphon: v. 1*

Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

**Enter not into judgment with your servant,  
for no one living is righteous before you.**

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done;

I ponder the work of your hands.

**I stretch out my hands to you;  
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.**

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!

Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

**For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life!**

**In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning,**

**is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

**The Kyrie (p. 204)**

**Salutation and Collect of the Day (p. 205)**

☞ Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

☞ **Amen.**

**Readings (on back of bulletin)**

**Gradual**

*Revelation 7:14b; Psalm 84:5*

These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**Blessèd are those whose strength is in you,  
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.**

**Alleluia and Verse (p. 205)**

**Nicene Creed (p. 206)**

**Hymn of the Day 508 The Day Is Surely Drawing Near**

**Sermon**

**Prayer of the Church**

*After each petition:*

☞ Lord, in Your mercy,

☞ **hear our prayer.**

*The prayers conclude:*

☞ ...one God, now and forever.

☞ **Amen.**

**Presentation of the Offering**

**Service of the Sacrament (p. 208)**

*(Please see the Communion statement in the pew pads for receiving the Sacrament at St. John's.)*

**Distribution Hymns**

**628 Your Table I Approach**

**515 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers**

**673 Jerusalem, My Happy Home**

**Nunc Dimittis (p. 211)**

**Hymn to Depart 924 Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing**

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## *The Giving Tree*

Would you like a simple way to share the ‘*Good News*’ with others?

In the Narthex you will see ‘The Giving Tree’. On this tree are 3 different opportunities for you to reach out to others with the love of Christ and the message of His salvation.

Choose the ornament/ornaments you desire and follow the instructions on the back of the each.

**Lutheran Heritage Foundation**  
**Siberian Lutheran Mission Society**  
**Christian Rescue Mission**

Your love and gifts will be greatly appreciated this holiday season.



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## ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org  
Website: [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo>

### **HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**

**Rev. Timothy Nerud** **Pastor**  
309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Elder: Carl Freeman

Organist: Gail Tutt

Greeter: Janet Bertso

Videographers: Joel Werling, Nicole Nerud, or Heidi Nerud

**WE PRAY:** Gracious Lord, to whom belong all times and seasons, lest we be left to Your wrath when this season of grace ends and the time of Your visitation comes, support us all by Your Holy Spirit that we may wait with patience and be ready for Your arrival; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

### **WELCOME TO ALL!**

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

**IF YOU DESIRE**, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

### **OFFICE HOURS**

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm  
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)  
(Tuesday— Friday) please call ahead

**STREAM SERVICES** <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org).

**DAILY DEVOTIONS FROM LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES** - use this website ([www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org)) to have daily devotions sent to your email or phone. You never have to be without God's word.

*All bulletin announcements need to be in the Office by Wednesday mornings.*

## ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—4 Adult Bible Class—10 Worship—46

### **OFFERING**

Offering last Sunday	\$2,940.00
Weekly income needed per 2023 Budget	\$4,212.60
Dollar for Missions for October	\$ 104.00

### **WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S**

Today	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Holy Communion
	11:00 am	Youth Group
Wednesday	5:00 pm	Confirmation class
	7:00 pm	Thanksgiving Eve Service
Thursday-Friday	<b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
Next Sunday	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."  
Psalms 122:1*

**MATTHEW 25:30** – “And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness.” Why did the worthless servant act the way he did? Because of what he believed about the Master. He didn't trust or love the Master; so, his actions did not demonstrate love and trust, but rather hate and mistrust. It's the same with us, but in reverse: since we know our Lord God to be faithful and kind, we desire to serve Him and render faithful service with what He has given us.

**ATTENDANCE BOOK**—We ask everyone attending this morning to sign the red attendance book found at the end of each pew, then pass it back.

**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS** will adorn our Altar during the Christmas season. Cost is \$10 if you would like to donate one. Please sign the sheet on the table next to the coat room and pay Terri Hock. We only have several weeks to get our order in (Dec. 1).

**THANKSGIVING BASKETS**—Thank you to those who graciously helped fill the baskets. We were able to help 4 families in need.

**UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION**—Please review the model directory found on the table next to the coat room. Make any corrections or additions to your contact information and that of family members not regularly attending. We appreciate addresses, land line phone numbers, cell numbers, and emails. Also if there are changes to the people in the household please note that as well.

**LOST AND FOUND**—Our box of items is full. Please check if anything might be yours. Thank You!

**CHRISTIAN LIVING**—Matthew 22:34-46: Love! The greatest love story ever shared was God sending His Son to fulfill every requirement of the Law of

God on our behalf and the shedding of His blood on the Cross for our redemption. We now have the opportunity to reveal the will of God through love in action as we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves. The cross is a symbol of redeeming love fulfilled for God and for mankind. As we bear witness, share the love of Jesus which is always a perfect love through the Cross. **2024 Wall Calendars**—Hillcrest Home would be very happy to receive your extra 2024 wall calendars to hang in their patients' rooms. Please place them in the tray on the table by the coat room. Thank you!

**DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS:** A Dollar for Missions gathers many small gifts – one dollar at a time! – to add up to a big impact for the spread of the saving Gospel of Christ. The current Dollars for Missions Project is to raise \$20k for stipends to pastors to begin visiting four new prisons or jails in 2024.

**ALTAR FLOWERS**—The **2023 Flower Chart is now on the bulletin board next to the restrooms.** Cost for weekly flowers are \$30 for two arrangements. We greatly appreciate those who help with providing flowers for Sunday worship services. **Please sign up for a Sunday.**

#### **PRAYER MINISTRY** *Give thanks as you pray:*

**MISSION**—*Thank God for Christian marriage.* May all learn to love as Christ loves His Church.

**ST JOHN'S**—**Mr. Alex Thompson**—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Alex and ask Your blessings upon him.

**ST. JOHN'S FAMILY**—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Elizabeth Bjork	Betty Firch	Wanda Rahn
Paula Chapa	Arlyn Helke	Drew Schillinger
Jim Dahl	Lynne Johnson	Marilyn Woods
Jessica Johnson	Aaron Raschke	Carolyn Werner

**Anthony/Sami Sedotto** (2022/2023 Adopted seminary student)

**Don Eggers** ( son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

**Jodi Martins** (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

**Jon/Anita Clausing** (missionaries in Kenya)

**Marilyn Potts** (wife of Cal Potts, former St. John Laborer for Christ)

**Bruce & Debbie Bley** (sister & brother-in-law of Cathy Schillinger)

**Laurie Sanford** (sister of Jan Dahl)

**Mike Erdman** (nephew of Bob Erdman)

**Shandel Loenser** (wife of Gabe Loenser)

**Paul Werner** (brother of Dan Werner)

**Jim DeFauw** (son of Joyce DeFauw)

**Scott Wilson** (Great nephew of Darla Johns)

**MILITARY**—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:  
**Mandy/Richard Davila** (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)  
**Luke/Nicole Thompson** (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)  
**Karl Flynn** (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)  
**Casey Powers Jr.** (step son of Lisa Powers)  
**Brittany Loenser** (daughter of Gabe Loenser)  
**Rylie Hallendorff** (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)

#### **LUTHERANS FOR LIFE**

“For it can be easy on Thanksgiving to be thankful for the things, thankful for what we are and have, but thankfulness in faith cries out to God, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on me!’ and falls on its face at Jesus’ feet, giving thanks to Christ.”  
*Rev. Cody Cooper, Guest Speaker on “The Lutheran Hour” – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)*



## **Enchilada Sale Fundraiser! \$20 per dozen**

**2 Flavors: Chicken or Beef**

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 9TH, 2023**

**PICK UP ORDERS: 1-2PM**

**LOCATION:**

**CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**1301 19TH ST. EAST MOLINE, IL**

**50 dozens available - Order by 11/30/23**

**Jose Nunez (309) 373-1788**

Proceeds will go towards  
Christ the King Lutheran Church

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

November 19, 2023

Text: Matthew 25:1-13 (Gospel Reading)

Other Texts: Zephaniah 1:7-16 (Old Testament Reading); 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 (Epistle)

### **“Talents: Gifts Given to Be Used for Christ”**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

This morning we heard what we have come to call, for obvious reasons, the Parable of the Talents. But before we begin studying it, we need to remember that this parable, though distinct, follows right on the heels the Parable of the Ten Virgins which we heard last week and, more, both of them are but parts of Jesus’ much larger sermon on the End Times. And we learn that whereas the Ten Virgins speaks of the delay in the Lord’s return and the need for perseverance in faith, hope, and love until then, the Talents deals more specifically with the duty and work of believers *as we await* His return. With that, let’s consider the parable in more detail.

[Jesus said,] “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.”<sup>i</sup>

We immediately recognize that the man going on a journey is the Lord Jesus ascending into heaven and thus removing His visible presence until He returns on the Last Day. But what is particular here is His entrusting His property to His servants, giving to each a differing amount.

Actually the ESV (along with many, though not all, English translations), make a translation decision here that is not accurate to the Greek text. For the Greek word “servant” is *diakonos*, but here the word is *doulos*, which means bondservant, that is, slave. But while the hesitation to use this word is understandable, and we rightly and unequivocally condemn the brutal and dehumanizing institution of slavery in our nation’s history, we must let God’s Word speak and not change it in any way. For the word *slave* makes clear at least two Biblical truths.

First, when it comes to our relationship with the Lord, we are *not* hired servants, employees who are free to look for “a better deal.” No, *we are truly God’s slaves*, for He has paid for us. St. Peter, who calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ,<sup>ii</sup> writes, “You were ransomed..., not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.”<sup>iii</sup> So also St. Paul, who also refers to himself as a slave of Christ Jesus,<sup>iv</sup> writes, “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.”<sup>v</sup> Instead of changing the Bible, let us recognize the difference in the masters. For it is Jesus’ very act of purchasing us *that is our salvation*, His bloody death rescuing us from slavery to Satan, the wicked tyrant, to become not only His slaves, but also children of God and coheirs of His kingdom!

But, and here’s the second point, Scripture teaches that even as we are God’s children and heirs of glory, so too are we also His slaves. This is not a contradiction, but God’s revelation which details the fullness of spiritual reality in which *both are true*. For as God’s child and an heir of heaven, our new nature desires nothing other than to do everything that our Heavenly Father

desires us to do. But we are not fully new. Our sinful nature continues to blind us to God's will, make us resentful of it, and fills us with the desire to do things our own way. So as a person who is both saint and sinner this side of eternity, we need to hear the wonders of being God's children (Gospel) *but also* that we are His slaves (Law). And as that second point is the primary sense of *this text*, out of faithfulness to Christ it is what we will focus on this morning.

Fellow redeemed, being Christ's slaves is a powerful and necessary reminder that whatever He entrusts to is not our own any more than we are our own. *They are His*. He greatly honors us by entrusting us with them, but we are *not* entitled to them. Since they are His, we must use them as He wants us to, truly as He commands us to. And it is critical to remember that we are fully answerable to Him for how we use them, or fail to use them.

And so we are stewards, that is, managers of that which *another owns*, accountable to our Lord and Master for everything that He has entrusted to us; which is, of course, *everything*! Thus the Apostle Paul writes, "What do you have that you did not receive?"<sup>vi</sup> Yet, while confessing that all things are from God, this parable teaches that God gives to some more, to others less. Consequently, while it is true that our physical and spiritual lives are His gifts to us, as are His Word and Sacraments, the forgiveness of our sins, and the certain hope of eternal life in the new creation, these do not seem to be in view here, at least primarily, as they are *equally given to all believers*. So what can we say about these talents?

A talent was originally a unit of money; a single talent being about *twenty years* of wages for a laborer. So even the slave who was given only one talent still received a huge amount. So first of all, we are reminded that the Lord Jesus is quite generous with His gifts, as even those who receive less still receive much! Therefore, let none of us be caught thinking that God has given us nothing special with which to serve Him as that is completely untrue.

Second, as talents vary, we recognize that they are made up of many things. They include spiritual gifts, such as knowledge of God's Word and wisdom to apply it. They include the many natural abilities given to us by our Creator which are sanctified in believers. Finally, they embrace such things as our time, position, influence, education, property, money, and any and every other earthly blessing and advantage that He has given. Though a different illustration, St. Paul makes the same point by saying that we are all different members composing one body.<sup>vii</sup>

After hearing of what these talents consist, we recognize from experience the reality that Christ gives His slaves differing amounts. We also hear that He gives them based upon the ability of each individual. Now we might wish that we had received more, but we should remember that a person is set up for failure when given more than he or she can handle; something our gracious Lord would never do! On the flip-side, to the one given more, more is also required.<sup>viii</sup> Being given more is not a gravy-train, but an opportunity and a requirement for greater service.

Therefore, instead of coveting what others have, would it not be better to be thankful for what we have received and to then use them, whatever they be, in whatever amount they are given, fully in His service. After all, that's why He gave them to us! At the same time, having more while saying we have little, perhaps with false humility, is not holy as it refuses to acknowledge His gifts and so sins in omission by failing to use them for the good He desires.

It should be noted that the amount of return is not the main point. Obviously the one given more should return more to the Master, as we see with the man given five returning five more talents as compared to the one who was given two returning two more. But the point is, though the amount of return differed, the faithfulness with what was given to them was equal in both cases. Thus our Master calls us to be faithful with whatever we have been given, using it to its fullest, but He is not unfair. The five and the two talent slaves were equally faithful, and so received an equal reward, “You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.”<sup>ix</sup>

Not that their works earned heaven! No, they were already believers and so received salvation through faith in Christ alone. But God is good! He not only gives us talents to use, He graciously rewards us for using them rightly! Here again the promise of rewards in eternity for our faithful service while here on earth is affirmed. While we do not know exactly of what they will consist, we do know they are real and they will be great, and so our dear Lord encourages us to be as faithful as possible, not only by warnings, but also by promised blessings!

And so we understand the one talent slave. He wasn’t unfaithful because he had only one talent. No, here the one talent slave is used to warn us that God expects *all* of His slaves to be faithful with what He has given them, and that even those of whom the least is expected can be lazy, faithless slaves. This slave did not see his gifts as an honor to receive and use, but a burden of work he despises, for he saw his Master as hard, giving so little, expecting so much.

This slave was not condemned because he was unproductive *per se*, but his total lack of productiveness for his Master *proved that he had no faith*. Here we rightly think of “faith apart from works is dead.”<sup>x</sup> It reminds us that the faith that saves is “faith working through love.”<sup>xi</sup> The Lord promises that all who connected to Him, the vine, will bear fruit.<sup>xii</sup> And so this slave lost his nourishment because he was no longer united to Christ in faith. Consequently, whatever he did on earth, no matter how seemingly noble, was not good in the eyes of his Master, since without faith it is impossible to please Him.<sup>xiii</sup>

So we must ask ourselves, “Am I using what I have been given primarily for the sake of Christ’s kingdom or do I see them as my own to be used mostly for personal joys and gains?” Then let us repent of our failures and pray to be more productive slaves, diligently working for the Lord. Doing such so that we do not lose our faith through unfaithfulness. Doing such that we might hear that glorious commendation, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.”<sup>xiv</sup>

God grant us all to hear this at Christ Jesus’ glorious return as our Judge. Amen!



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<sup>i</sup> Matthew 25:14-15. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

<sup>ii</sup> 2 Peter 1:1 (The Greek word is *doulos*, slave.)

<sup>iii</sup> 1 Peter 1:17-19.

<sup>iv</sup> Romans 1:1. (The Greek word is *doulos*, slave.)

<sup>v</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a.

<sup>vi</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:7.

<sup>vii</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:12ff.

<sup>viii</sup> Luke 12:48.

<sup>ix</sup> Matthew 25:21, 23.

<sup>x</sup> James 2:26.

<sup>xi</sup> Galatians 5:6.

<sup>xii</sup> John 15:5. See also the last part of the verse, “for apart from me you can do nothing.”

<sup>xiii</sup> Hebrews 11:6.

<sup>xiv</sup> Matthew 25:21.

**Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 28A)**  
**19 November 2023**

**Collect of the Day**

Almighty and ever-living God, You have given exceedingly great and precious promises to those who trust in You. Dispel from us the works of darkness and grant us to live in the light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, that our faith may never be found wanting; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Lord God, enter not into judgment with Your servants, for no one living is righteous before You. Have mercy on those haunted by guilt and shame, and faithfully convince them of Your grace and holiness for them in Christ Jesus. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to do Your will, for You are our God. Strengthen pastors to faithfully meditate on Your Word and so proclaim Your full counsel in all its truth and purity, that Your good Spirit may lead us on level ground, holy and righteous before You. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father in heaven, You have made us children of the light and of the day. Bless our homes, especially parents as they teach their children Your ways, that Your people may walk as those armored in faith, love and salvation. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Ruler of the nations, even as we recognize that wars and rumors of wars will continue and even increase until You bring this dying world to its close, we also know that You declare the peacemakers to be blessed. In Your mercy, bring peace to the nations that Your Word may continue to be proclaimed and more sinners be made citizen of heaven through repentance and faith. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, a nation that despises You will be as a sacrifice to others, for it has rejected You as its strength and shield. Grant repentance in our land, that our laws may be just, our transactions honest and our love for others fervent. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, give ear to our pleas on behalf of the afflicted including Elizabeth, Bruce, Debbie, Paula, Jim, Jim, Don, Michael, Betty, Arlyn, Jessica, Lynne, Shandel, Jodi, Marilyn, Wanda, Aaron, Laurie, Drew, Carolyn, Paul, Carolyn, Scott, and Marilyn. For Your name's sake, preserve their life and grant them healing according to Your will. In Your righteousness, strengthen their faith through all trials and bring their souls out of trouble. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly King, remember Alex Thompson. Bless him in body and soul with all things needful for this life and eternity. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, You would not have us to come under Your eternal wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Until the day of His coming in glory, grant that we may welcome Him at the altar, even as we are welcomed to Him, receiving His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins which brings eternal life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of life, Your Son died for us so that, whether awake or asleep, we might live with Him. Receive our thanks for Your kindness to all who have died in the faith. Comfort those who mourn with the consolation that all who die in Christ live with Him forever. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of grace, preserve us from the temptation to consider You a hard and unmerciful master. Keep us mindful that You give us every good thing in abundance, most of all a place in Your household; for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

#### **Presentation of the Offering**

Heavenly Father, who gives to each of us gifts of varying degrees, seeing fit to give more to some than to others even as You expect more from the one given more: bestow Your grace upon us all, that on the Last Day it would be revealed that we have invested wisely in using the talents You have given to us for the sake of the Gospel and love towards our neighbors. Relying on Your grace and confident of Your continual blessings, we present our offering to You. Accept it, we pray, and may it help to prosper the preaching of the saving Gospel of Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.