

CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FL
WEIGHED AND MEASURED
PENTECOST XXIV- YEAR A
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THE REV. JON ROBERTS

When you dig a hole

and bury all, that you have treasured;

The master gives sentence,

saying that you have been weighed and measured.¹

A Miser had buried his gold in a secret place in his garden.

Every day he went to the spot, dug up the treasure and counted it piece by piece to make sure it was all there.

He made so many trips that a Thief, who had been observing him, guessed what it was the Miser had hidden, and one night quietly dug up the treasure and made off with it.

When the Miser discovered his loss, he was overcome with grief and despair.

He groaned and cried and tore his hair.

¹ The Rev. Jon Roberts; adapted from Daniel 5:27.

A passerby heard his cries and asked what had happened.

“My gold! O my gold!” cried the Miser, wildly, “someone has robbed me!”

“Your gold! There in that hole? Why did you put it there? Why did you not keep it in the house where you could easily get it when you had to buy things?”

“Buy!” screamed the Miser angrily. “Why, I never touched the gold. I couldn’t think of spending any of it.”

The stranger picked up a large stone and threw it into the hole.

“If that is the case,” he said, “cover up that stone.

It is worth just as much to you as the treasure you lost!”²

We follow the way of the Savior of the world once more into his teaching of his disciples with the parable of the “Talents.”³

He observed a miserly culture that had buried what was most valuable and used this parable to help them dig it out.

It goes like this.

² Aesop Fables, *The Miser* (c. 620-564 BC).

³ Matthew 25:14-30

A master summoned his three slaves.

To one he gave five talents,

to another two and the last, he gave one.

He gave them according to their abilities, and trusted them with this property.

It was quite a bit of property.

But it wasn't real estate.

It wasn't a big building.

It certainly wasn't anything made of paper.

The talent was something precious and it was weighed and measured;

33kg, or 75 pounds, to be exact, of either gold or silver.

Many historians have attempted to understand its net worth today.

If it were silver, a talent would be worth \$15,000 today.

If it were gold, a talent would be worth \$1.4M today.

You can do the math and make your own opinion as to the degree of what was weighed and measured for these three servants.

To one he gave five talents,

to another two and the last, he gave one.

After a “long time” it says, the master returned.

He said, “Well done, my good and faithful servant,” to the first two who doubled their portion.

But the last was not so wise, nor so fortunate.

He was imprisoned by the master for he did not take risk or invest.

He was weighed and measured.

What does this mean?

Similar to the story of the ten virgins who were told to keep oil in their lamps, we are called to be ready when the master comes.

As servants of God, we are called to increase and replenish.

Our faith in God and our worship of God is not static.

It is always on the move.

It does not get buried in a hole.

Many may say that by baptism they are saved, and therefore never return to the church.

Some may say that they come to church every Sunday, and therefore they satisfy the quota.

A few may say they have lived by example by giving to others, being a light in the community, therefore that is their best.

But if God weighs and measures your heart whereas you withhold in any way, keeping what you feel is yours and yours alone, be careful you are not burying your talents.

It is called the line in the sand.

We sometimes draw it with a finger and sometimes with a shovel.

We say, we have given you all of this Lord, but this portion, here, I cannot.

What can have so much worth, that you cannot imagine it being lost?

That is what it means to be a living sacrifice.

You are willing to let go of the things you feel are the most valuable.

The Father let go of His Son, that of greatest value and He got Him back.

There is a saying that goes, "If you love something so much, let it go, and it will come back to you."

In some profound way, God rewards a people who sacrifice and pledge to use the talents given and apply to His kingdom.

Does that mean the Church?

It does.

But a Church that becomes self-serving, unwilling to use its own talents to yield increase and renewal will be weighed and measured.

Let us not be hole diggers, burying what we have valued so much of our past, but let us be investors in our future.

Our common worship should always revitalize.

Our education and programming for our youth is so important.

Our missional work invites community into the knowledge of Jesus Christ, who gives hope and life.

These things will make us like the first two servants.

But the last servant reminds us that...

When you dig a hole

and bury all, that you have treasured;

The master gives sentence,

saying that you have been weighed and measured.

Give all that you have to the Lord.