Weekly Reflection 11/15/2026

This week we continue in Matthew's gospel with another challenging parable set alongside apocalyptic visions in Thessalonians. In this week's parable a man gives three servants each a vast sum to manage in his absence. The first two make use of the money and it doubles for the owner of the fortune. The last one, motivated by fear, buries it in the ground. When the master returns, he gives back the dirt-coated coin to the master with a shrug saying, basically, "I was too afraid and didn't want to do anything with it, so here you go."

We might be tempted to turn this into a story about God's demand that we don't squander our gifts – financial or otherwise. We could see God as someone keeping account of just how much return we've gotten on our investments. But the man in the parable doesn't chide the third servant for not earning enough; rather he chides him for failing to do anything at all. One gets the sense the man would have rather lost the money on a bad investment than have the servant bury it.

I wonder what we miss out on because of our unfounded fear. What gifts have we squelched because we thought they wouldn't be welcome or because we didn't have it all polished and ready to go? What joy have we missed by burying parts of ourselves or hiding out gifts? I think God is more interested in our life being full of adventure and joy than in how much we are getting done, how much we're earning, or what the return on God's investment is. At the same time – living with that sense of freedom and joy is precisely what begins to bear fruit in the world. Where will you find a space to joyfully share something of yourself this week?

Image: Parable of the Talents by Annette Gandy Fortt, inspired by her trip to Ghana