The 25th Sunday after Pentecost
““The final accounting of the faithful and the faithless”
Matthew 25:14-19
November 15, 2026
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 25th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 25:14-19.

“14 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.”

So far our text:

Today’s Gospel reading from Matthew 25 is the second of three parables that Jesus spoke about the coming final judgement of the world. It’s not a question of “if” Jesus will return, but “when” He will return.

No one knows. The bridegroom was delayed in last Sunday’s parable. 5 bridesmaids, the wise believers in Jesus, were ready with the oil of faith in their lamps, 5 were foolish and did not believe in the Gospel message of Christ Crucified, a stumbling block for the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. But as we know from 1 Corinthians 1:

“it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”

The wise believing bridesmaids enter into the wedding feast when Jesus the Bridegroom arrives. They were ready and faithful. The foolish were locked out of heaven, hearing the fateful words of the Jesus, “I do not know you”. There was no relationship with Jesus. The Good Shepherd who knows His sheep by name and the sheep follow Him, does not

know the these unbelievers. The unbelieving bridesmaids who would not repent and trust in the Good Shepherd are not given a second chance. There are no do overs. The door to heaven is shut forever.

And so Jesus continues with this theme of readiness for the final day of judgement in today's second parable of the talents. Again, there is a long delay before the master returns. Jesus is now described as the Master who gives His visible church spiritual gifts to use until He returns. Jesus ascended into heaven and sent His people to continue the work of evangelizing the world.

As we heard last week, God doesn't want anyone to perish and be left out of heaven. He delays to give all people time to hear the Word of God, repent and believe for one's salvation in Jesus.

2 Peter 3, which will be our epistle in the 2nd Sunday of Advent, reminds us:
"8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Until Jesus returns, He puts His people in charge. You and me who have been given the gift of faith and other spiritual gifts are in charge. The Master went on a long journey and it was a long time before He returned to settle accounts with His servants. But He did return. There will be a settling of accounts and those who are faithful will hear the beautiful words of the Lord Jesus say, **"'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."**

Those who have been unfaithful, unbelievers in Jesus, will hear the terrible words **"You wicked and lazy servant…cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

With each succeeding parable the final day of judgement becomes clearer and more detailed.

Next week, we will hear the final parable of the separation of the sheep from the goats. This parable doesn't begin with any time delay of the final judgement. It jumps right in

with the words, **“31 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.”**

Again, it’s not a matter of “if”, but “when” the Son of Man comes. So as the church waits, we are called upon to be faithful with the gifts that God has given us to do His work.

God is the giver of all gifts. The greatest of gifts is faith in the Son of Man, Jesus, the Son of God who is glorified now. Jesus is using all His divine power now as a true man for the good of His church. He sends His Holy Spirit to create faith through the hearing of His Word and also impart the gifts that He wants each person to have for the upbuilding of His Church, for your upbuilding and mine.

We hear from Galatians 5: **“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”**

Such talents, such gifts God gives to His people, to you believer in Jesus. He gives them to you to use, not to bury. For the person that buries his or her talents tells the Lord that these gifts have no significance, no meaning. They are dead and buried for there is no desire to use them to please their Lord. It’s very telling what the unprofitable servant says at the time of accounting:
“25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

Where there is no faith, there is only fear, not a trusting relationship, not a knowing of God as a merciful, loving and faithful God. “Take what is yours”. It’s not mine, I have no relationship with you. And that is the admitting of the unbeliever that Jesus means nothing to him or her.

And without any relationship to Jesus as one’s Lord, there is no future with Jesus in heaven. How could there be? Instead there is only weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell.

As believers in Christ, we respond, “may this never be to me”. Keep me faithful to You. Guard me from the evil one. Help me to crucify the sinful desires in me and not follow them. Strengthen me by your faithful forgiveness of my sins to be a profitable servant to you.

God gives His gifts, His talents to His people. Everyone has different gifts. Some have more than others. But the important teaching of this parable is to be faithful with what you have received. Through faith in Jesus, all our works are pleasing in His sight, purified by the blood of Jesus. The believer’s return of the talents is 100% through Jesus.

It’s always 100% no matter how many gifts one has been given, because Jesus gives a full return through faith in Him. A believer is not saved by his or her works but they are a witness of the faith, the fruit that the Holy Spirit is working in one’s life.

In what ways is God calling you to use the gifts that He has given you? How can you witness His love for you in what you do and say to those around you? To your family? To your friends? To new acquaintances? To fellow believers of Immanuel? God has made each of us different with unique ways of serving Him. Has God given you the gifts to comfort the sick, visit the lonely, teach young people, serve in the church as an elder, usher, on the altar guild, helping with the upkeep of the church, preparing and serving food in the kitchen, leadership, computer and math skills, music, singing…there are so many different ways that God blesses His people for what He knows is needed.

We should not be afraid to use the gifts that He has graciously given us, but trust in Him to lead us always. For He is faithful to us always. So we said earlier in Psalm 143:
“Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, and in Your righteousness.” And He does answer us always. And in trusting faith, the Psalmist continues:
“Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.”

Through Jesus death and resurrection we can proclaim that God is our God. He has given us salvation through Jesus faithful doing of His Father’s will. Jesus sacrificed Himself to make us profitable servants. He gives us His righteousness through faith that accounts for our salvation. We stand without fear before Him because He has claimed us as His own, given us His righteous robe in our baptism, and continues to forgive us through His body and blood in the Lord’s Supper.

Yes, our days of our lives as we read in Psalm 90 are: **"seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years…So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands."**

So our prayer is to be faithful in our days as ever long as they may. Give us a heart of wisdom and establish the work of our hands. God has to establish it for it to be fruitful. Trusting in the Lord, the beauty of His salvation through Jesus our Savior, our Lord…we answer with faith a resounding "yes", establish the work of our hands to Your glory. Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)