

# Talent

*~Jackie Morgans*

1 THESSALONIANS 5. 1-11. MATTHEW 25. 14-30. ST NICHOLAS 9.30 AM 16.11.14. 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Sunday before Advent.

I have to admit that I have a certain amount of sympathy with the servant who was given one talent and who was then penalised for what he did which was to bury the talent – I'm not a great one for taking risks either but as a disciple of Christ we're encouraged and indeed expected to take steps of faith during the course of our Christian journey and it's not always easy is it?



When Jesus told this parable which is always known as the Parable of the Talents, it would have had an immediate lesson for those who heard it for the first time and it certainly has lessons for us today.

The talent was not a coin, it was a weight and so its value obviously depended on whether the coinage involved was copper, gold or silver. The commonest metal involved was silver; and the value of a talent of silver was about £240.

There's no doubt that originally in this parable the whole attention is certainly on the useless servant. There's little doubt that he stands for the Scribes and the Pharisees and for their attitude to the Law and the truth of God. The useless servant buried his talent in the ground so that he could hand it back to his master exactly as it was.

The whole aim of the Scribes and Pharisees was to keep the Law exactly as it was. They wanted to build a fence around the Law. Any change, any development, any alteration, anything new to them was a definite no. Like the man with the talent they wanted to keep things exactly as they were – and this is why they were condemned.

What relevance then is there for us today when we read this parable? In this parable Jesus tells us that there can be no religion without adventure, and that God can find no use for the closed mind. Our knowledge of God and our faith at the beginning of our Christian journey should be continually growing, it isn't enough to stay the same. God wants us to not only have knowledge of Him but to know him and there is a big difference in knowing about something or someone and knowing them. But there's a lot more in this parable than that.

It tells us that the reward of work well done is still more work to do. The two servants who had done well aren't told to take a break and rest on their laurels because they've done so well. Instead they're given greater tasks and greater responsibilities in the work of the master.

It tells us that the man who is punished is the man who won't try. The man with the one talent didn't lose his talent; he simply did nothing with it. Even if he had tried to do something and lost it, it would have been better than to do nothing at all. It's always a temptation for the one talent man or us to say, "my talent is so small and it won't make much difference so it's not worth- while to try for all the contribution I can make." The condemnation is for the man who, having even one talent, will not try to use it, and won't risk it for the common good.

The meaning is this. If a man has a talent and exercises it, he is progressively able to do more with it. But if he has a talent and fails to exercise it, he will inevitably lose it.

If we are particularly good at a game or an art, if we have some gift for doing something, the more we exercise that talent, that gift, the harder the work and the bigger the task we'll be able to tackle. On the other hand if we fail to use it, we lose it.

That's equally true if we play golf or some other game, if we play the piano or some other musical instrument, whatever our God given gift might be, if we don't use it, we lose it. The only way to keep a gift is to use it in the service of God and in the service of our fellow human beings – that's why God gives us these gifts and sometimes He asks us to take a leap of faith by challenging us to step out of our comfort zone.

If you think of a packet of flower seeds when you plant them and check them after a few days there's nothing to see but eventually the seeds will grow into beautiful flowers but patience and time are needed before this happens.



God gives us the seeds of faith but it's our responsibility to nurture them. If we don't open the packet it will still look intact and beautiful on the outside but there's no chance of any flowers growing. For that to happen we have to open the packet, sow the seeds in suitable soil and let them grow.

It involves a certain amount of risk but the end result makes it worthwhile.

Likewise if we don't use our faith, take a few risks for God and give it a chance to grow, our lives will never bear fruit for God's kingdom. God calls us as individuals and as a church to step out in faith to follow Him we cannot stand still.

If we offer God our faith, however small it may seem, and move forwards trusting his guidance, it will grow like the seed into something infinitely greater.

Whether we feel that our particular gift is nothing to shout about, whether we think it seems insignificant, it's not for us to decide. It's a gift given by God and we should be using it for the good of everyone. Even if we think it won't make a difference to anything, God has given it to us and he will use us to help make a difference.

The only way to keep a gift is to use it in the service of God and of our fellow human beings.

We're called to encourage each other, to build up each other – to use our gifts for the good of everyone.