

33rd Sunday A (Matt 25:14-21)

Jesus was a storyteller, and the stories he told always made a point. The point of the story he tells us today is that it's wrong to do nothing. What was there about that man that did nothing with the money he was given to merit such a severe scolding from his master now returned from a journey? The servant wasn't a thief, nor was he prodigal or wasteful. He had enough money to finance quite a fling, but this he didn't do. Vulgar, riotous living wasn't his sin. He wasn't a liar who came up with an alibi. He told the truth. What was this man's sin? He buried his money in the earth, left it there, and refused to use it. In the eyes of Jesus, it's wrong to do nothing.

The man's money was taken away and given to the man with 10 talents. Jesus is simply reminding us of one of the basic laws of life- either you use what you have or you lose it. The servant who buried his money didn't realize that he was burying himself along with his master's money. The hole he dug became the grave for his own potential. He decided to play safe rather than invest, and the result was no gain. Playing safe applies in the area of human relationships. To destroy a relationship or friendship, all you have to do is ignore it, leave it alone, and it will eventually die. In a marriage, all you have to do is leave your spouse alone, don't show any signs of affection, never express any appreciation, and the relationship or marriage will die. A religious community will thrive if we don't take each other for granted, treat each other with respect and as valued walking images of God.

The spiritual life is about increase. God asks us to increase and multiply every blessing, but this only happens if we count our blessings, recognize our gifts, and are willing to develop them. The more we invest of ourselves, the more our gifts surface.

What do you think stops a person from doing something rather than doing nothing? I suggest that it's fear, and that fear is the really big stopper in life. What if we don't do it perfectly, or what if we may fail, or what if people criticize us, or if we don't measure up to someone's expectation? Jesus' most frequent message to us in the Gospels before his resurrection is "Fear not," "Don't be afraid," "What are you afraid of?" Perfect love casts out fear. Jesus constantly calls us to cast away fear and to trust him as the eminently trustworthy one. Jesus is the one who tells us in a convincing way that we are the beloved of God and that we need have no fear that keeps us from doing something, something in the service of our brothers and sisters, something that calls us to be more and more joyful people of the resurrected life of the Lord Jesus. Let us give thanks.

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