



SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2020

DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

The Parishes of: Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

33rd Sunday of the Year (A): Matthew 25: 14-30

“It’ll never fly, Wilbur! The man said. But the Wright brothers persisted - the rest is history. It was only on December 17th 1903 that the Wright Flyer took to the air and look what’s happened since. Risk and failure brought new knowledge and progress. Giving in wasn’t an option.

Today’s Kingdom parable is the challenging story of the talents. A talent was originally a big sum of money. The trading image used in the story holds good if we’re thinking finances - but Jesus’ stories are about other riches.

Our God is a giver - it’s who he is, what he’s like. What we receive freely from him, we must also give to others. His love for us must not sit with us, going nowhere. Doing nothing is just not on.

A worried friend shared a story about a fine young relative - bags of potential, but he’s become your classical couch potato. Doesn’t do anything, expects from others and spends his days and nights sleeping, watching telly and living in a texting, cyber world. Clearly he needs help. Our parable talks accountability.

Jesus’ story shouts at us. Life is a gift. Wings are to be spread, potential is to be realised, risks must be taken - it’s the dynamic of growth, of learning and development. We’ve received God’s Spirit. When we give it away, it increases. A talent buried in the ground is not a talent saved - it’s a talent lost, there is no increase. God has invested much in us so that the needs of the world can be served through us. “It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit”. (John 15:8) Trading with the talents needs courage. Our love can’t be mere words. It matures in a tough, needy world as we make commitments, involving ourselves in doing the Master’s work.

Being faithful in small things requires an outlook that bothers to recognise everyone’s need of the love of God. Our world view should include attention to detail, thinking like Jesus, giving signals great and small to honour the presence and dignity of every living being.

Notice the third servant in Jesus’ story is afraid. Fear can immobilise people. They may do irrational things - or like this individual, do nothing. Fear cripples initiative, fails to venture into new things, battens down the hatches and robs us of confidence in our abilities. We can shut life out, become negative, shift blame and risk nothing. It’s a dreadful position to be in; it diminishes all that is good in us. If we find we’re like that, we need understanding help. We’re unlikely to get out on our own.

Branching out and increasing our talents or God’s Spirit, is infectious and encourages more. God’s intentions are met in us and he makes a superb promise - “You’ve shown you can be faithful in little things, I will trust you with greater. Come and share in your Masters happiness. Wow!



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And here’s Pope Francis

In some areas of cities there is still a lively sense of neighbourhood. Each person quite spontaneously perceives a duty to accompany and help his or her neighbour. In places where these community values are maintained, people experience a closeness marked by gratitude, solidarity and reciprocity. The neighbour gives them a sense of shared identity. Would that neighbouring countries were able to encourage a similar neighbourly spirit between their peoples! Yet the spirit of individualism also affects relations between countries. The danger of thinking that we have to protect ourselves from one another, of viewing others as competitors or dangerous enemies, also affects relations between peoples in the same region. Perhaps we were trained in this kind of fear and mistrust.

There are powerful countries and large businesses that profit from this isolation and prefer to negotiate with each country separately. On the other hand, small or poor countries can sign agreements with their regional neighbours that will allow them to negotiate as a bloc thus avoid being cut off, isolated and dependent on the great powers. Today, no state can ensure the common good of its population if it remains isolated.

Fratelli Tutti paras 152-3