

## A few words from the Vicar ....

*'... a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.'* (Matthew 25:14-18.)

Those of you who are familiar with the Parable of the Talents will know that when the master returned he rewarded the two slaves who had made something of the talents they had been given whereas the slave who did nothing (apart from make excuses for his poor performance) was ordered to be thrown *'... into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* (Matthew 25:30.)

Performance appraisal was somewhat unforgiving in those days!

Anyway, at our 10.30am service over the next few weeks we'll be examining the Parable of the Talents in a little more depth. So, if you want to get ahead of the game, why not familiarise yourself with the versions of the parable found at Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:12-27!

In the context of this parable we'll begin to explore the blessings that God showers upon each and every one of us. In particular we'll be thinking about how God blesses us financially (all that we have and own is from Him) and how He blesses us (albeit differently) with specific skills and special talents.

Think of it, each of us is talented in some way. For example, as we look around the congregation we can think of those who (unlike me) have an artistic flair, those who can sing, and those who are good at gardening. We can also see managers, administrators, teachers, accountants, IT specialists, successful business people, scientists, engineers, hairdressers etc., etc., etc.

Well, through the Parable of the Talents, Jesus challenges each and every one of us to make good use of our God-given gifts, to use them to the Glory of God and in the service of our fellow human beings. Indeed, Jesus also makes very clear that God takes a dim view if we do nothing with what he has given us.

Importantly this does not preclude us from using our gifting to earn a living and to get on in life. Indeed, in the parable the dutiful slaves made a profit and were rewarded financially and with a promotion for doing so.

Also, let's not forget that, whatever line of work we're in, we can serve God and the community through our paid work. This isn't a privilege reserved for those of us receiving a



**The Parable of the Talents.**  
The lazy slave searches for his buried talent, while the other two slaves present their earnings to their master.

*[Woodcut from Historiae celebriores Veteris Testamenti Iconibus representatae. 1712.]*

stipend from the Church of England! There are many others fulfilling a calling from God in their day to day work and you might be one of them. In fact, if you think about it prayerfully, you probably are because God can make use of you whatever you do for a living!

And then there's the offering we make of ourselves and what we have outside our working lives; the work we do for and our giving to the Church and to charities and our service to the community. Through the parable Jesus challenges each of us to use some of what we have received from God (our time, our gifting, our talents and, yes, our money) in His service.

So, during this month, as we begin to explore how each of us might rise to the challenge offered by Jesus through this parable, why not prepare the ground prayerfully? Give thanks for all the many ways that God has blessed you and then offer these back to Him in his service.

Then wait for His call!

Every Blessing!

*Dave*