

Thirty-Third Sunday A

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1Thes 5:1-6; Mt. 24:36, 25:14-30

Ever been afraid? Ever tuned to the media all the time? Ever read the daily news? We all know what fear is.

“More than 194,000 COVID-19 cases identified last Friday. We must get the pandemic under control,” said the CDC (11/13/20)

“Hawaii sees 110 new coronavirus infections bringing total cases to 16,412,” reported the StarAdvertiser (11/13/20)

“Japan facing third wave of COVID-19 infections,” reported KITV, last Thursday (11/12/20)

Fear is real, isn't it? It can motivate us to face the pandemic and do responsible and courageous thing like soldiers on the battlefield or it can cripple our emotions and paralyze us into passiveness.

Yes, fear can sometimes motivate and compel us to do helpful things or harmful things, courageous things or cowardly things, holy things or sinful things.

**“Master, I knew you were a demanding person . . .
so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground.”**

Like the servant in our Gospel parable we just heard, who did absolutely nothing with the talent entrusted to him and buried it in the ground out of fear. Fear can overwhelm us to not use our talents as God wants us too. This might have been the greatest “sin” of all.

**“For ... from the one who has not,
even what he has will be taken away,”**

Jesus tells us.

**“And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside,
where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.”**

Dear sister and brothers in Christ:

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Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1Thes 5:1-6; Mt. 24:36, 25:14-30

When you use the talents God has given you, and I use what God has given me, our world is a better place than if one of us neglects to use our talents and leaves all the work up to the other.

When we use the talents God has given us, when everyone of us and each person on earth uses his and her talents as God intends, all of God's creation is taken care of properly. No one of us can do it all. But when we each do our part, it all gets done, if not better.

That's part of what we hear so much about in these weeks and months of the COVID-19 pandemic. It takes each and every one, man and woman, teen and child, to "defeat" the virus!

It is not just the elite, or those who sit in the chairs of political and medical authority that can "win" this war. It is all of us! Each and every human being in varying degrees and to varying extents have been given some of the talents and abilities of God.

Our lives and abilities are not meant only for ourselves, the world is not ours to pillage and plunder as we wish. We are to use the good God has placed in us for furthering the good of all God's creation. It is only in using what we have for the good of others that we become open ourselves to receive from God, what is genuinely good for all.

Like the three servants in today's parable some of us may have been given more than others, but not necessarily better. The man with the five talents and the man with the two both entered into their master's joy. So would have the man with only one talent if he had used it to produce good as his master had trusted him to do.

Not long ago, in July of 2020, during the second "lockdown, a story about Chris Downey, an architect who lost his eyesight in 2008 was aired on 60 Minutes in 2019, a decade after losing his sight.

Correspondent and broadcast journalist Lesley Stahl said she can only describe Downey as having a "different kind of vision."

Downey came up with a way to “sketch” his ideas onto the plans using a simple children’s toy – malleable wax sticks that he shapes to show his modifications to others. He says, something surprising started to happen. He could no longer see buildings and spaces, but he began hearing them.

He said, “It was sort of this excitement of, I’m a kid again, I’m relearning so much of architecture. It wasn’t about what I’m missing in architecture, it’s what was about what I had been missing in architecture.”

Till today, he helps designers innovate with the disabled in mind. In all his work he endeavors to achieve greater access, not only of space and information, but also to “delight.”

When asked if he could see again, would he still want to be able to feel the design, even if he got his sight back, Downey said, “I don’t really think about having my sight restored. There’s some logistical liberation to it. But will it make my life better? I don’t think so.”¹

Dear friends:

God wants us to use what he has given us the talents as he has entrusted to Chris Downey. No matter what kind, how limited and small, or how unlimited and great God’s many gifts, what is important to God is that we use them for the betterment of other people.

Remember the words of the unprofitable servant, “I didn’t do anything ... I am afraid ...” Rather, in faith, be able to say, “I tried my best.” That’s all God asks of us to enter into God’s happiness.

**'Well done, my good and faithful servant ...
Come, share your master's joy.'**

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/architect-chris-downey-goes-blind-says-hes-actually-gotten-better-at-his-job-60-minutes-2020-07-05/>