

Worship Material
Using well what God gives to us
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 19th November

Begin with an opening prayer

Creator God, who has furnished us with all that we have,
we give you praise and thanks.

Remind us of our gifts when we lose sight of them.

Show us where and how to share them.

Give us the courage to offer them freely, as you give to us.

What others may seek to destroy, help us to protect and care,
and give us the conviction to stand fast when we are called to do so.

This we ask of you, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Read Matthew 25:14-30

Bible notes

This parable is about what readiness means. But what does the word 'talent' mean? In the original Greek, the word simply meant a substantial sum of money. Here it deliberately and ambiguously means something broader. Talents represent not so much individual abilities, but all the privileges and opportunities of God's kingdom. The failure of the third slave is not that he lost money, but rather he failed to make the most of that money for his master in his absence. Note that the first slave is eager to do his best (v.16); the second may not have been quite so opportunistic but still made a good return (v.17). It is the inactivity borne of the caution and anxiety of the 'wicked and lazy' slave (v.26) that is condemned in the parable. Note that the master's absence is prolonged, so it was easy to forget him in day-to-day matters. Indeed, the master may not even have been likeable.

Some may find the story difficult because it is about slaves. In the modern world, slavery is simply wrong. But in the Gospels, slavery was widespread and accepted. And remember too that slaves are the property of their owner. So too, according to Scripture, are we – we are God's creatures, owned by God. This relationship is renewed in Jesus. These concepts of ownership might be difficult for us, but the point being made is that we cannot truly exist as independent beings; rather we exist for the glory of God. How can we use what God gives us to serve him?

Prayer

Prayer of thanksgiving

We praise you, majestic God of light.

We thank you for your light in our lives;
for the love light in your created people,
shining in the faces of those we know and love;
for the light shining in the words and actions of all who know you,
and use their time and talents to serve well;
for the joy that pours in, lights up and empowers us
when we let go and trust you with all we have.

We praise and thank you, loving majestic God of light.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

This earth, this good earth,
The sunlight, the moonlight,
The sky that reaches over us,
The soil beneath our feet.
We will hold all this in our hands with gentleness and love.

Amen.