

Daily Reflections



TAKE COURAGE

By Elisabeth Beall

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

“A nobleman ... called ten of his servants and gave them ten gold coins and told them, ‘Engage in trade with these until I return.’ ... [W]hen he returned ..., he had the servants called, to whom he had given the money, to learn what they had gained by trading. The first came forward and said, ‘Sir, your gold coin has earned ten additional ones.’ He replied, ‘Well done, good servant! You have been faithful in this very small matter; take charge of ten cities.’ Then the second came and reported, ‘Your gold coin, sir, has earned five more.’ And to this servant too he said, ‘You, take charge of five cities.’ Then the other servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your gold coin; I kept it stored away in a handkerchief, for I was afraid of you, because you are a demanding man...’ He said to him, ‘With your own words I shall condemn you, you wicked servant. You knew I was a demanding man ... why did you not put my money in a bank? Then on my return I would have collected it with interest. ”

Reflection

Are you a saver, or a spender?

It's a tough balance: it makes sense to use our resources, to spend our time and money where we can do the most good and get the most results. But it also makes sense to reserve some of our resources – to save a little for a rainy day, so to speak.

But this parable isn't suggesting we spend what we've got. It's about using the gifts we are given – and using them wisely.

The nobleman doesn't criticize the servant who only quintupled the gold coin he was given (in comparison to his fellow servant who increased his gold coin ten times). Both are praised for their clever trades, and both are rewarded. But the cowardly servant, who hoarded his coin out of fear of trading poorly and losing what he had been given – he is soundly chastised. Not only is he not rewarded, he actually has to return the coin he was given; and adding insult to injury, that coin is added to the cache of the servant who already had 10.

The Bible offers many reiterations of the idea that we are all called to make use of the gifts we are given.

As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

1 PETER 4:10

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them....

ROMANS 12:6

You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.

MATTHEW 5:14-16

We are all gifted; we are all called to use the gifts we have been given – and yet sometimes, we hesitate. Are we nervous that our gift will be rejected? Do we feel that the situation doesn't call for an investment of our particular gift? Do

we want to keep our gifts to ourselves?

In this parable, Jesus calls for us to be brave, to put ourselves out there, to share our gifts with others – for the love of the dear neighbor and the betterment of our world. So take courage! Invest the gifts that God has given you. After all, that's what they're for.



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For Pondering

- Recall a time when you hesitated to share a gift or talent with others. What held you back? What happened the next time you were in a position to share your gifts with others?
 - We are called to not hide our light under a bushel. Which of your gifts have you been hiding away, and why?
 - How can you take courage to share of yourself today?
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For Prayer

God of abundance,

*Thank you for the gifts you have given me –
the ones I recognize, and the ones that others see in me.
Help me to use those gifts to care for our beautiful, yet wounded world.
Guide me to invest myself wisely and without fear.
Create in me a generous heart and a giving spirit,
that I may give to others as lavishly as you have given to me.
Amen.*

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