**“Entrusted”**

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Zephaniah 1:7-16

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

 24th Sunday after Pentecost

“[Jesus said:] It will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

When looking up the definition of “**sacred trust**” on the internet, the first thing that pops up is **our country’s commitment to our veterans in the “National Cemetery system”**. “For all who visit” (says the video **called “Sacred Trust”** about this “trust” to our veterans) “a National cemetery is an awe-inspiring experience, the final resting place for over 3 Million American **heroes**. This is **hallowed ground**, where we **honor the service and sacrifice of our nation’s veterans**, and the National Cemetery system began when Congress authorized President Lincoln to purchase cemetery grounds for casualties to the Civil War. Since then, **veterans from every era and every conflict have been buried in National Cemeteries across the country**. All honorably discharge veterans **are eligible** for a **burial at no cost to the veteran’s family, as well as a burial flag, headstone or marker and presidential memorial certificate**. **With that burial** comes a **commitment to maintain every grave in every Cemetery forever as a national shrine**. **To our veterans and their families from a grateful nation,** **this is our sacred trust to you**.”

Such a sacred trust that’s committed-to and executed with and for every bit of **all that’s** **trying to be returned as appreciation (in some small way)**, **this is** the least of what can be offered-in-return for that sacred trust veterans had in **offering their lives for our freedoms and safety**. The police have that similar sacred trust to protect us locally; doctors have it to heal and parents do in child-rearing and children do in the (maybe one-day) caring, then, for their parents. We all have areas where trusts are known-of as **sacred**. **Jesus expects us to know that those expectations find their origin in God’s entrusting of us**. A **sacred trust, us with God**, gives meaning to all other trusts called “sacred” (meaning “holy). **That one, too**, is **essential to keep** because it has implications beyond this life here on earth. **Its** consequences are **eternal … and of ETERNAL life OR death (we should know)**.

Text

A parable of the **kingdom**,Jesus puts it (just adding to the parable about the ten virgins / the baptized, but with some missing a quantity of active faith, “foolish” ones one day to knock on heaven’s door but kept out. Today gets the whole issue identified as the **sacred trust**, “entrusted” (as Jesus uses the word) “like a man” (and He is that man) “going on a journey” (His ascension after accomplishing redemption ready to gift to people as Gospel ), yet Him out of sight for a while, “journeyed”, so far, for two-thousand years but reigning from His heavenly place and promised a return to finish the last of sins residual in death …

… and no one knows **how much longer** His “journey” will last. The verse before this parable, Jesus said: “**WATCH, THEREFORE, for you know neither the day nor the hour**” … and we have to think it’s **soon now**. So oil (an abundant amount of it in a workable faith) is what we’re to be filled up with always so that the “wicks” of us can be well-“trimmed” and lit). Our duty (until then) is to advance that faith workably (invest it well, manage) acknowledging everything in you as **HIS IN AND WITH YOU**.

So, Jesus described three different people in His parable, ALL not only **acknowledging the ownership of their charge His, but caring for it (investing it as His)**, cash and properties, our kids and our neighbors and our friends and all our **HOLDINGS THAT ARE OF HIM (GOD).** **All** “talents” have been **given by God**, and “talents” are the Good that God gives us to hold onto and advance for Him, **“entrusted to us” but His for our responsible and faithful (Good) utilization (of which we will be required to give account)**. Our children and income are among the things that we’re **HOLDING FOR GOD**, our jobs and our abilities to do them He’s given us the core of, our personalities where their cordial and civil, He’s birthed, our intelligence and simple common sense and decency, His seed, our reason and ability to make Good decisions, His gift to us. The “**trust**” is God’s to us by everything He’s “**entrusted us with**” (as in placed into our hands), and **that** in **differing degrees** for each of us of course … yet (in all cases) **His trust “entrusted” as He calls it**.

And it’s **all “His property”** as He says right there in verse 14 (at the very start of the parable) … that **foundations** it. See, none of it is innately yours, it began always as God’s … even with an unbeliever. After that, it’s joint development with His Holy Spirit or its nothing, really, eternally consequential at all. And **all of it’s gift** … we knowing that “interest” **is expected** / “gain” fruitful from those gifts. Because it’s to be returned, and to Him (God) that return is due (even the “interest” or “gain” He wants back since the principle was His). God gives, but God **EXPECTS FROM THE GIFT**.

What He has **MOST GIVEN** is **His life (made human to do so) to save yours and have you His and fruitful (as in useful)**. Zephaniah says that “**The Lord prepared a sacrifice**” and among the “talents” that Jesus and His Father has given us is redemption by holy bloodshed satisfying the demand for sin in death. Our sins He atoned for by death upon a cross, so more than house and home, wife and kids, income and any ability we’d have to spend income, all upon this earth have been redeemed from the wages of sin, death, and the devil. Free and abundant salvation and reinstatement into the Good graces of God and potential usefulness is everybody’s **largest** and **most valuab**le **HOLDING**.

And that “trust” becomes **IDENTIFIABLY OURS and OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SOMETHING WITH** by what’s spoken of in the second half of Zephaniah’s phrase in chapter 1, verse 7: by the “**consecration of God’s guests**”. See, **all** have that **bloodshed gifted for an appreciation**, but this “**consecration**” then puts the promise of it in the **water and Spirit done-once-promise by God in His name (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)**. “Trust” goes beyond **basic** for the “consecrated”. Their trust is, then, “two” or “five talents”, **swelling the baptized to have beyond any just “one”** **… with many more offered**.

And we’re called **not be lazy with that**. Zephaniah 1, verse 12, says that God **intends to and** **will** “search Jerusalem (especially His Church, which is Jerusalem) with lamps of light, and I will **punish** (He says) the people who **are** **complacent**”. The world will be ignored as not noticeable, but these (His Church) will be searched for to find “activity”. And being “consecrated” “children of light” as we’re called in the Epistle lesson, we’re to **be, that way, “fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, while people even say ‘there is peace and security’, then sudden destruction” and the accountability of judgment will be upon the world**. **“Let US not SLEEP AS OTHERS DO, but KEEP AWAKE AND SOBER”**.

Application

Now, I have **some idea of how many “talents” each of you’ve been “entrusted” with** … but while I have **some idea**, I don’t have the **full tally or yours**. I do know (though) the big one in Christ crucified for you and risen, and that you are baptized into that, so “consecrated” and expected upon as not “complacent”. We have a responsibility in what we expect are these last days, and that Gospel “trust” carries through to all your personal trusts, so we’re **HIGHLY EXPECTED OF**.So, let’s pray:

“Lord, we know what’s coming, and we know how much we’ve been blessed. **Make us appropriate to our calling: investors of your gifts to us, putting them into the marketplace for your use and to creative action toward saving others**. Lord, we beg you for the determination to **see this as a “sacred trust”, a charge of infinite consequence that You will judge us on**. Let us not ultimately let you down. May we one day be judged “good and faithful servants”. Set us over more and more of your blessings, making us worthy for that additional trust by our combined efforts. For those dependent upon us (including ourselves), may we be a significant eternal benefit. Where we fail, forgive us and re-focus us by renewal. Where we err, may we show humility and dependence upon You for change. Thank You for Your many gifts which we acknowledge certainly by the profession of our lips, but may we always be vastly appreciative and deliberate in also service. All this (and our lives each day) we ask to offer it all in return to You, Lord God … in Jesus’ name and for His sake. Amen.”