**“Entrusted”**

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Zephaniah 1:7-16

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

**Matthew 25:14-30**

 25th 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. Amen.

Bridge

Stories of lottery winners squandering windfalls are so abundant that jokes are made of it … and people get mixed as to whether or not they’d even like to win … so many don’t play. I was reading an (I think) joke-story of two Powerball winners of some $587 Million dollars both (within 24 hours, the story says) “divorced from their spouses, alienated from their families, and completely bankrupt because of it”.

While 24 hours may, or may not, be an accurate time frame, and the decimation of that vast amount of funds may be exaggerated for the story, still the challenge of dealing with a “windfall” is cautioned … everyone knows how **possible “squandering” is**. From inheritances to, yes, lottery winnings to big bonuses and, even, gradual successes that are more **managing of a person** than they **are prudently managed by the person**, financial planners and career and skill coaches and mentors of all kinds find customers of people needing help navigating a proper and sustained use (with even further development and enhancement of a person’s acquired assets) in capabilities, holdings, or skillsets.

Some “windfalls” **fall** over time, like maybe discovering a good vocal voice or musical or art propensity or sports skill. But some are, from youth, “prodigies” of special aptitudes. Some get born into a physical beauty or graceful movement. Some are naturally mechanical by insight or trade usefulness. Some are more naturally hospitable or gregarious in socially relating; some naturally are quick witted or funny or a storyteller that many gravitate towards to hear. I would say that every seemingly random “windfall” is **gift from a (through creation) seed of it, some developed beyond that start and some sometimes wasted**. Jesus speaks of that, but more of a **particular gift** in this parable … both, though, and all also. The main **gift to develop and never squander** is the redemption of mankind (and each individual, individually) of His cross with a promise upon it and, then, a baptism into that which a person can waste, but ought never too … as a matter of fact, improve and practice its effect. **Squandering hope placed into a person by God’s gift will be what’s judged one day, besides simply, the receipt of that hope as gift thankful for**. And as our bulletin cover says, from Matthew 25:19: “After a long time the Master of those servants [so entrusted with grace] **came to settle accounts on that with them**”.

**Text**

We’re in the time of the Church Year where we’re especially reminded of God’s “**settlement of accounts**”. November ramps to a fevered Judgement Day (Last Sunday of the Church Year) focus that occurs in next weekend’s service that is here to put an **exclamation point to the fact of it: we’re born to live upon this earth gaining blessedness … then (sooner than one can ever think) judged for how we did with that … WHAT we did with it**.

For those **in the middle of that process (all of us here and, even, here)**, we can **forget the end result and the preparedness for the goal**. We’re reminded (in this parable) of the giftedness of the windfall itself (the **ENGRUSTEDNESS OF, WHAT HE CALLS, SERVANTS**), and **THEIR INVESTMENTS / GROWTH / DEVELOPMENT / USEFUL RESULTS** upon the conclusion of the process / His return / our passing from this life / Judgement Day which is coming. Baptized into the saving work of Jesus (His holy and sacrificial on a cross to save, that “windfall” of blessing as Promise received faithfully by us) must grow into a faith personally deep and detailed. A baptism is God’s investment to trust us with (by us developed and matured-in demonstrating itself in a cosmic humility and hunger and thankfulness. It’s **wanting** … and that wanting of Him and His grace is a wanting every day all-the-more by an awareness of what we’ve been given. It’s an **elation** (being **elated**, and that elation is a foundation joy that’s **all-the-more that with every maturing day**). It’s getting to know (more and more as time goes on) the graciousness of God, and how little we deserve it … yet get granted it.

And it's not accidental, but (again) **gifted**, that Thanksgiving falls, always, on the week of the Church’s focus upon this final result in Judgement. No one **IS** more thankful than a person who knows well (and better every day) **WHAT ALL OF EVERYTHING** **one should be thankful for** … **investing in that by** **exercising it most (and with constant regularity) in more and more (and deeper and deeper) thankful expressions of loving God because of IT ALL**.

“Talents” are **weights of valued holdings**. Part of what is our gifted holdings by God’s grace is monetary substances like money or property, but behind that is, most certainly, what we caretake in abilities and the windfall gift of His Promises which He’s **ENTRUSTED** **us with to be thankful for, enjoy, and do miraculously blessed divine things with**. As the parable describes, the gifts are “windfalled” in a salvific way for all of us enjoying our baptism by faith, but also in usefully differing ways and (maybe in some things) different degrees. I was never, for instance, gifted (or, perhaps also, cursed) to be 7 feet tall, so no NBA team has ever sought me out for development. Yet I am tall enough to reach the upper shelves of our kitchen’s cabinets, so Kami has sought me out, and called on me to use the height that I have to reach things beyond her. I’m called by my God-given capabilities and wherewithal to **(in all things) do what I can with what I’ve been given**.

“A Man goes on a journey, but called His servants and entrusted to them His property”. The “talent” of salvation by gracious Promise through the means of baptism and forgiveness in absolution is the **BIG PROPERTY** referred to here. It’s His to give and He gives it in the specific ways He Promises to (through Word and Sacramental / Mysterious ways of Baptism, the Supper, and an Absolution upon Confession). **Burying** those given “talents” is criminal (go hide your shovel on that one). Investing / doubling the investment / getting, at least, “interest” is what would gain the “Well done, good and faithful servant.” There’s that indication that the **more will be entrusted based on the faithful investment**.

Application

We, the baptized (so Promised **inheritors**) share **that windfall**, paid out upon the death of our benefactor, Jesus. We have it now but will be **judged by how we use it** (and all the trusts of skills and assets and children and grandchildren that God has graced us with). Be, most certainly, ready having been matured and grown **useful** by heavenly standards. Bear fruit abundant of Godly advances to what you’ve been blessed with. Never be lazy or negligent, and always be repentant of lackings. Believe that **a reckoning is coming (and, maybe, extremely soon)**. **You will** meet God face to face as you have met Him graciously hidden through gifts He’s provided for you to believe in. And hear the comfort of an **already preparation** (from 1 Thessalonians): “**you yourselves are** fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘There is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But **you** are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children **of** **light**, children **of the day**. We are **not** **of** the night or **of** the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us **keep awake and be sober**, we **have been gifted** the breastplate of faith and a divine love, a helmet of the hope of salvation. God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him.”

So there, again, is your **windfall restated … to enjoy and build upon**. “**Therefore** encourage one another and build **one another up**, just as you are doing.” In +Jesus’ name. Amen.