

Sunday, November 15, 2020
XXIV after Pentecost/Proper 28, Year A

Introduction

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope, eager to welcome the good news of Christ's coming among us.

Prayer of the Day

Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Readings and Psalm

[Psalm 90:1-12](#)

So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. (*Ps. 90:12*)

[1 Thessalonians 5:1-11](#)

Be alert for the day of the Lord

[Matthew 25:14-30](#)

The story of the slaves entrusted with talents

Psalm: Psalm 90:1-12

So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. (Ps. 90:12)

- ¹Lord, you have been our refuge
from one generation to another.
- ²Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born,
from age to age you are God.
- ³You turn us back to the dust and say,
“Turn back, O children of earth.”
- ⁴For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past
and like a watch in the night;
- ⁵you sweep them away like a dream,
they fade away suddenly like the grass:
- ⁶in the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.
- ⁷For we are consumed by your anger;

we are afraid because of your wrath.
⁸Our iniquities you have set before you,
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
⁹When you are angry, all our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
¹⁰The span of our life is seventy years,
perhaps in strength even eighty;
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow,
for they pass away quickly and we are gone.
¹¹Who regards the power of your wrath?
Who rightly fears your indignation?
¹²So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Though we do not know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But

the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "

Prayers of Intercession

When I say, "Hear us, O God," you respond, "**Your mercy is great.**"

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence is held as we gather our prayers.

Lord of the Church, ignite your people with the passion of your love. By the fire of your Holy Spirit, unify us across ministries, congregations, and denominations, and refine us to participate in your activity throughout the world.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Lord of creation, as we witness trees robed in their fall glory, we stand in awe at the works of your hands and praise you for the beauty of nature. Bless the earth for your glory and restore its integrity where exploitation has caused ruin.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Lord of the nations, we remember before you our own beloved nation, the United States of America. *pause*

Where we are fractured from division and in-fighting, show us new pathways toward the shared life we know we have in this congregation, in this community, and also in our nation. Let your light show us how to live together toward the common good: for the sake of our public health; for the health of sustaining work in businesses and schools and industry; for all that will allow us to flourish again as a nation, where each is honored.

pause

Where dissention remains, let your presence bring new understanding.

pause

Bless the newly elected, all who will govern with them, and all the people.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Lord of all in need, search out all who cry to you in distress. Scatter the heavy clouds of depression, chronic illness, unemployment, and loneliness with your radiant light. Send us as encouragement and signs of your healing.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Lord of the stranger, remind us that our ancestors were once wanderers, that we might remember your great love for those who are vulnerable. Open our hearts to others you send into our midst:

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Lord of life, we place our offerings, and the offering of ourselves, before you.

Use us and our gifts to extend your work in the world, beginning outside our doors.

We pray that you may be seen in and through the work of our hands.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Lord of the living and the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors. Rouse us to live by their example, that saints yet to come may also know your love.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.

Amen.

Blessing

May the God of all creation,
in whose image we are made,

who claims us and calls us beloved,
who strengthens us for service,
give you reason to rejoice and be glad!
The blessing of God,
Sovereign, ✝ Savior, and Spirit,
be with you today and always.
Amen.

Dismissal

Beloved of God,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

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Prayers adapted by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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