

Trinitarian Congregational Church  
November 15, 2020

**Announcements**

**Prelude:** “Wondrous Love” Lynne Walker  
traditional, arr. Fred Bock  
[Video - <https://youtu.be/XxDg1qpwb90> ]

**Call to Worship** Marion Scott

One: Lift up your eyes, and seek to know your God.  
Attune your spirits to the One in whom we dwell.

**All: We turn to God with thanks and praise.**  
**We will proclaim all God’s wonderful works.**

One: God’s love surrounds us here today.  
God calls us to live as children of God.

**All: Our souls wait for God and our hearts rejoice.**  
**God is our help and our shield.**

One: Living in faith and love let us build one another up in Christ.  
Setting your hope in salvation let us live with compassion and grace.

**All: We want to be faithful to the reign of God.**  
**We seek to invest our all for Christ.**

**Gathering Prayer** Marion Scott

**We come before you, gracious God, knowing your faithfulness and your righteousness. We rejoice in your abiding presence and long to be renewed in your grace. We want our eyes to be opened to your unseen realities. We want our ears to hear the call to become your holy people. In this hour turn us from the fear-filled grasping for security and help us to live with trust in you. Expand among us the mutual regard and encouragement that will build up a spirit of community and lead all of us to live in your light. Challenge our faith and love to move us from avoiding the cost of discipleship to investing our talents in service to your world, that you may be glorified. Amen.**

**Gloria Patri** [Video - <https://youtu.be/OLz3R1hnUjs>]

Psalm 90: 1-8, 12

- <sup>1</sup> Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.  
<sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.  
<sup>3</sup> You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."  
<sup>4</sup> For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.  
<sup>5</sup> You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning;  
<sup>6</sup> in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.  
<sup>7</sup> For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are overwhelmed.  
<sup>8</sup> You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
- <sup>12</sup> So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

Matthew 25:14-30

<sup>14</sup> "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup> to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup> The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup> In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup> But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> Then 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.' <sup>21</sup> His 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.' <sup>22</sup> And 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.' <sup>23</sup> His 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.' <sup>24</sup> Then 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; <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup> But 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? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For 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. <sup>30</sup> As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

## **Musical Reflection**

“For the Beauty/Simple Gifts” Lynne Walker and Chris Harris  
Conrad Kocher and Joseph Brackett. Arr. Anne Britt.  
[Video - <https://youtu.be/WT17HXo0cR0> ]

## **Sermon**

### **Entrusted**

Have you ever thought what it would be like to win the lottery? Right now the Powerball lottery is worth 158 million dollars, and Classic Lotto is valued at 2.3 million dollars. What would you do if you were the sole possessor of all that money? Would you invest it? Would you buy a new house? Would you travel? Would you set up a trust fund for your grandchildren? What would you do?

I have my own little fantasy about winning it big, but it is not the lotto. At times I've thought about what would I do if someone endowed the church with a couple million dollars. Part of the fantasy is that the trustees come up to me and say, “Rosemary, as the pastor we want you to decide how this money is going to be spent.” (some dream, eh?) But what would I do? Put it in an endowment? Give some to missions? Remodel the church offices? What would I do if I was responsible for that kind of money?

That is the context of the story in today's scripture. Jesus tells of a man, a wealthy land owner, who was going on an extended trip. And so he handed over his wealth to a number of his servants. He gave them talents, which is not skills and abilities (although they certainly had them). It was actually a weight of silver or gold. To one he gave the equivalent of 75 years salary, to another 30 years, and to the last 15 years. If you do the math you come out with approximately 2 million, 3/4 million, and 375 thousand dollars, in today's American market.

This was not chump change; this was big time finance. In order to understand the story, let's put it in the context of the reality show - Shark Tank. Imagine if the billionaire Kevin O'Leary, 'Mr. Wonderful' happens to meet you one day and takes an unexpected liking to you. So he hands you an exorbitant amount of money, and says “See what you can do with this?” You know 'Mr. Wonderful', and you know what he wants. For all his wonderfulness he wants you to make him richer and expand his empire.

So what do you do? Are you nervous at all? Are you excited? Some of you may invest in high risk ventures, supporting new products and developing markets. Some may risk the money in real estate or in alternative energy development. Some would back new start-up businesses, the way Bill Gates got financial backing to start Microsoft. There's many ways to make money with money. But then the day comes when Kevin O'Leary calls you into his office and says “show me what you got.”

That is the power in today's gospel story. Jesus tells us God has entrusted us with great riches. God expects us to use them well. And there will come a day when God will say “show me what you got.” Does that word make you nervous? Do you dread being called into account for the life you've lived and the things you have or haven't done?

That is what the wealthy landowner of this passage says to his servants – “Show me what you got.” Two of the servants had been quite successful, each doubling their masters initial investment. The third servant simply handed back the original money bag, untouched. He didn’t even try to work with the investment. And his master was furious.

But it’s not about money or success; it’s about faithfulness, or lack of it. And it is important for the people of God to be faithful. It is vital for the welfare of the world and for the kingdom of God. That is why Jesus is telling this story in the first place. It is just days before his crucifixion and resurrection. He is about to go away! And so here he is, entrusting to his followers all the riches he has known. He is turning over to them the keys to the kingdom of heaven. And says to them, “See what you can do with it.”

And Matthew has picked up this story and is sharing it with the generation that is about to inherit it from Jesus’ first disciples. Old now, they too are about to leave this earth, and so they are passing on the riches given to them, with the same word - “see what you can do with it.” For generations, down through the centuries, God’s people have taken up those treasures, and invested them for the glory of God, and then, in their turn, handed it over to those who followed asking them also to “see what you can do with it.”

We hear these words and we know we too must consider our labor and investment in the kingdom of God. Next week is Stewardship Sunday when we will make our pledges for the coming year. Many of you may think this is just about your tithe, what you will give financially to the church. If you think that is what stewardship is all about, you are missing the point.

Stewardship is more than what I give, stewardship is about being a steward, a care-taker; it is about investing all that God has entrusted to you for his sake. Stewardship is about recognizing all that God gives is not as your due, and it is not for your benefit and welfare. Rather it is what God gives in trust to you, for the sake of another. Stewardship is about being committed to that trust and acting faithfully with those gifts.

From the very beginning, when God created the world, when God made Adam and Eve, he gave them the earth. He called them by name and entrusted to them the welfare of his creation, “to keep it in your care” as one modern translator puts it. The world is not ours to possess, to use and abuse according to our desires. The world is a trust, to use and care for, for all that is now living, for all that will live, for this generation and all those to come. And most especially, it is for the glory of God.

But the earth is not the only great trust given to us by God. Since the time of Abraham, since the call to Israel, God has chosen a people and entrusted to them the riches of the covenant. God puts in our hands the joyful, powerful message of his love and justice, his righteousness and compassion, his judgment and grace. God entrusts to us the welfare of our brothers and sisters of this world, to bring life and joy, abundance and peace to all his children. And he entrusts to us the good news of salvation, and the gift of his Spirit, so that all may come to know the everlasting joy of friendship with God.

Jesus Christ came with that full intent; he was the faithful servant who invested his all for the sake of the world and the glory of God. He invites all people to enter into God's kingdom. And those who respond he puts to work for the sake of the world. We have been welcomed into God's household, and we have been appointed as God's servants. He calls on us to multiply God's gifts, to expand their reach, to extend their boundaries, and to use the resources God puts in our hands, saying to us "See what you can do with them"; in the hope that someday he may say "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master."

So what are you going to do? Amen

## Hymn

"God Whose Giving Knows No Ending"  
Robert Edwards, alt.

Lynne Walker

[Video - [https://youtu.be/rRi\\_giD-VyI](https://youtu.be/rRi_giD-VyI) ]

1. God, whose giving knows no ending, From Your rich and endless store:  
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom, Costly cross, grave's shattered door.  
Gifted by You, we turn to You, Off'ring up ourselves in praise:  
Thankful song shall rise forever, Gracious donor of our days.
2. Skills and time are ours for serving that your will on earth be done:  
All at peace in health and freedom, Races joined, the church made one.  
Now direct our daily labor, Lest we strive for self alone:  
Born with talents, make us servants Fit to answer at Your throne.
3. Treasure, too, You have entrusted, Gain through powers Your grace conferred:  
Ours to use for home and kindred, And to spread the Gospel Word.  
Open wide our hands in sharing, As we heed Christ's ageless call.  
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming, Honoring You by loving all.
4. Lend your joy to all our giving, let it light out pilgrim way;  
From the night of anxious keeping, loose us into generous day.  
Then when years on earth are over, and we've live our human span,  
God, fulfill beyond our dreaming, all our stewardship began.

## Joys and Concerns

As you meet with God in prayer, please lift up the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast. God is eager to be your help and strength, to listen to you and meet your needs. Prayer is a gift we can always use.

## Prayers of the People

We thank you and praise you, O God, for calling us as your people. We thank you for the many blessings we have known in life, and the varied gifts of your grace. We thank you that

in Jesus Christ you have granted us salvation and entrusted to us your great ministry. We are awed that you call us to be your servants and to labor diligently for the growth of your kingdom. And so we come before you God asking for the courage and power to live as faithful stewards of your trust.

We pray, for your church and for this congregation. Help us to recognize the gifts which are given to us, and the trust you have placed in us. Open our eyes to the promise of your kingdom and our hearts to the needs of the world that we may do our part to share your blessings with all people.

We pray, for those who have been entrusted with the leadership of this world. Grant them the vision and courage they need to labor diligently for the true welfare of this earth and its people. Grant to all who labor for your justice and peace the strength and courage they need to see your will done. And may we, who hear your call, join in faithful labor for the world's well-being. We pray also for all who are suffering today. May those who are ill know your healing power, those who mourn know your comforting spirit, and those who are in need receive your provision. We especially lift up... and we thank you as well for...

We praise you, faithful God, for your grace and call in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray...

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Choral Response** [Video - [https://youtu.be/lAivVHv\\_abc](https://youtu.be/lAivVHv_abc) ]

### **Offering**

All that we have and all that we are belongs to God. God calls for an accounting of what we have done with the manifold gifts entrusted to us. Our giving is a testimony to the fullness of our stewardship both in what we offer to the church today and in we offer to God every day. Let us dedicate our gifts with thanksgiving.

May the gifts we offer be acceptable in your sight, O God. Here we also offer our commitment to the ministry of Christ. Grant us grace and imagination to use all you entrust to us in ways that bring hope and new life to all people. Amen.

**Doxology** [Video - <https://youtu.be/5I7PEGUPAXQ> ]

### **Common Commission**

**Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

## **Benediction**

Go now into the world

And may God lavish all his grace upon you, so that in every thing and in every way  
you may have enough of everything, and may yourself be lavish in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

## **Postlude**

“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”

Attributed to Martin Luther; arr. by Fred Bock.

[Video - <https://youtu.be/XeIVDM36LSM> ]

Lynne Walker