

Thirty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time - A 2020
Prv.31.10-13/19-20/30-31////1Thes.5.1-6////Mt.25.14-30

→just heard in the gospel a story told by J. about a rich man who had decided to take an extended journey

→before leaving, he entrusts his wealth to three servants

→two of three worked hard, invested wisely, and doubled the original amounts

→but **FOCUS** of the story falls on the third servant who decides to play it safe with what he had been entrusted

→rather than taking the risk of losing everything, he buries the money in ground...and when the master returns, the original amount is waiting for him

→nothing had been gained **AND** nothing had been lost...

→NOW...the surprising part of this story is how the master reacts to all this...

→you would have thought.....the master would have been pleased to have his original money back.....but just the opposite happens.....

→he isn't pleased...in fact he is quite angry....and he shows his anger by punishing the poor servant severely and taking away from him what little he has....

..... →**AND THAT IS THE POINT OF THIS STORY...the fact that this servant did nothing at all with what he had been given.**

→recall another story that J. told about a man beaten and robbed and left beside road half dead....the hero of the story was the Samaritan who helped the man and saved his life

→but who were the villains....it wasn't the thieves and robbers...they were just the backdrop to the story.....the real villains were those who passed the man by and did nothing at all

→likewise, in the story of the Prodigal Son, the reckless and irresponsible young man was not the villain....but rather...it was the other son who did not want to go into the party...[recall] he was the one who ends up getting reprimanded

→so the message that J. is makes abundantly clear...is that we DO NOT need to be bad people in order to displease God....

→nor we need to do bad things to be a disappointment in the eyes of God

----ALL WE NEED TO DO IS NOTHING AT ALL----

---in essence, ALL WE NEED TO DO....is to take what God has given us, bury it in the ground and refuse to use it or share it

---ALL WE NEED TO DO....is to live life with indifference or apathy or with a lack of concern....

---....to stick with those things we already know and are familiar with....and never venture beyond or go the extra mile

---....to keep the friends we already have, to never get involved, or help out, or be concerned about anyone or anything

---...**ALL WE NEED TO DO** is to adhere to the old saying: "*nothing ventured, nothing gained*"

<PAUSE>

→[you see,]....I believe many people today fail to use or share the talents and gifts that God has given to them.

→we live in a world and culture...where it is much easier to hide those gifts away rather than to share them with others....that is what this servant does in today's gospel...

→he hides the talents, the gifts, for fear of losing them, for fear of taking a risk and being taken advantage of

→and how often have we also done the same

[you know]... very often...we tell our young people...or remind ourselves...that what counts is not whether we win or lose but how we play the game!

---and when you think about it, that is truly a biblical statement....one that we should remember when we look at the gifts we have been given

→what counts is not whether we win or lose, but whether or not we are even trying to play the game

→what counts....is whether or not we dare to risk those gifts and talents that God has given to us

→whether or not we invest ourselves in God's kingdom by using what we have been blessed with for the good of others

→whether or not we embrace the blessings we have received and are grateful for what others have received

---whether or not we seek to build up the community and bring hope to those in need

---whether or not we reach out to those, and multiply joy and divide sorrow OR instead just bury our heads and hands and gifts and talents in the sand....

that...my friends.....is the message of today's story and the challenge before us.

PAUSE

→today's parable is about seizing the moment, seizing the opportunities we have been afforded, the talents we have been given.....the time we have...for the goodness of each other and the kingdom of God here on earth.

→in the end, it all is rather quite simple:

---in our Christian lives...nothing will ever be gained....if nothing is ever spent

---nothing will ever be gotten....if we never take a risk....

never make an effort, never seize the opportunities before us...and invest ourselves in them....

→if we never embrace the Gospel message and make it a true and real part of our lives

→nothing will ever happen, if we don't take a chance and use the gifts given to us by God and share them with one another

→perhaps it's a lesson that's not only for our children but for all of us.....it's not about winning or losing as much as it is about how you play the game

→**it's about**..... how we do the work of the Lord in our lives here and now