

- In 1947 a boy named Tom was born without a right hand and only half of his right foot.
- Tom went to school and loved football, and actually played football, and even played on a junior college team.
- In time he began to be the place kicker, and got so good that eventually he was signed by the New Orleans Saints. (Good name).
- On November 8, 1970, the Saints were trailing Detroit 17-16 with two seconds to go
- They had the ball on the Detroit 45-yard line. The New Orleans coach tapped Tom on the shoulder and said, “Go out there and give it your best shot!”
- The holder placed the ball eight yards from the scrimmage line rather than seven in order to give Tom a split-second more to get the ball off...and so the ball was 63 yards from the uprights.
- And the rest is history; Tom’s half of a right foot made perfect contact.
- He later told Newsweek: “I couldn’t follow the ball that far. But I saw the official’s arms go up, and I can’t describe how great I felt.”
- The Saints won the game 19-17, and Tom Dempsey shattered the NFL field goal record by seven yards. There’s a cool YouTube video of that, by the way.
- *(From “Illustrated Sunday Homilies”, Mark Link, S.J.)*

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- In our parable today, the master had three servants—one of great ability, one average, and a third of lesser ability.
 - Jesus is the Master, and we are the servants.
 - God gives each of us a certain number of “talents” according to our abilities...and when we die, and when Jesus returns, He will judge us on how well we used our talents to work for the kingdom.
 - In Greek that word “talents” referred to weight of gold or silver—a large sum of money—but Jesus’ is actually referring by analogy more to what the English word implies - all the abilities and blessings we have received from God.

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- It's interesting to note that the man with the least ability made no effort to do anything with what he was given...inventing an excuse for his sloth...“Well...I have so little; what can I do?”
- But each servant was given something...and expected to go out and invest that talent for the master's purpose.
- God has given talents to each of us, and we are free either to squander those gifts, burying them in the hole of self-indulgence, fear, laziness, and greed...or, rather, to use them as Christ our master—our Lord—would have us use them.

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- Our contemporary world has come to look at Christ as sort of an over-indulgent mother—whatever we want to do is okay; nothing is wrong, there are no expectations of us.
 - But that is not what this parable, or what any of the teachings of Jesus say. God expects, and even demands, that we bear fruit.
 - As we have been blessed with the “talents” that He gives to us, so are we to go forth and pass on those blessings—whether it be in wealth or abilities—to teach, to serve, to give, to pray.
 - You don't have to be a bishop or a genius; even the person who cleans up or makes copies has a vital role to play in the whole.
 - For example, St. Bernadette near the end of her life, while painfully bedridden, would still have her basket of sewing... repairing things for her convent and for her sisters while deep in endless prayer.
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 - So we are not meant to hoard or work only for ourselves.
 - How are we to “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and your neighbor as yourselves*” by seeking only our own welfare?
 - Serving God and others is our duty, our mission, our command... indeed, our whole purpose in life. It is why God created you.
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- Never doubt the blessings—the talents—God has given you. What we are given we are given for a higher purpose which God intends.
 - He gives you some of what He gives you for the very purpose of you giving it back.
 - We have the Biblical mandate of giving back to God—to the Church and to helping others—at least a 10th of what we receive—the tithe of our work.
 - And if you think a tenth is a lot, think of how many have given ALL that they had...their very lives...for Christ.
 - Or simply look at the crucifix...a real event, and see how God Himself gave us every drop of His Precious Blood.
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 - There are three steps to follow in order to invest our gifts well - from a supernatural perspective.
 - First, identify what our gifts are. What type of thing do you enjoy most? What are you good at? What have you always dreamed of doing but were afraid to get started on?
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 - Also, we must to get right with God and stay that way.
 - That last servant left his life-mission unfulfilled because he didn't have a good relationship with his master...and we will follow his path unless we pray daily, wash our consciences and souls by frequent confession, and continue to study the Bible and Church teaching.
 - People often say: *“I wish God would send me a message on what to do!”* He did...and it sits unopened on living room tables.
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 - The third step: put our gift at the service of others: Be creative. Be courageous. Be like Christ!
 - Don't be afraid to DO! Like the Army Ranger motto goes: “He who dares, wins!”
 - Jesus tells us to love one another as he has loved us...and he showed us what love really is: to give our lives for others.
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- At first glance Tom Dempsey seemed to have little potential, but he refused to let his handicap stop him...and used his talent in that clutch moment won the game by his determination.
- If he would have focused on his handicap...his difficulty...what would have happened? His team would have simply lost.
- Likewise, don't focus on what you can't do, but what you can do for God and for one another.
- You may make that clutch play for the team of Christ...the one that inspires the CCD child to become a bishop...or feeds the person who, inspired by you, goes on to feed thousands more...or converts to the faith and saves his soul.
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- The prophet Malachi reminds us: “Bring the whole tithe [both our talents and treasure] into the storehouse...and thus put me to the test, says the LORD...and see if I do not open the floodgates of heaven for you and pour down blessing without measure. (Mal 3:10f)...all the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight.”
- And there is a saying: “What we give to ourselves dies with us; but what we give to others is, and will remain, forever.”

- Ex 23:15ff—“... none shall appear before Me empty-handed... You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God.”
- Lev 27:30--"All the **tithe** of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD.
- Lev 27:32—“And all the **tithe** of herds and flocks, every tenth animal...shall be holy to the LORD.”
- Dt 14:22--"You shall **tithe** all the yield of your seed, which comes forth from the field year by year.
- 2 Chr 31:5--As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the **tithe** of everything.
- Gen 28:16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place... This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven...and of all that thou givest me I will give the tenth to thee."
- *Malachi 1:6ff— I then I am a father, where is the honor due to me? And if I am a master, where is the respect due me, says the Lord of hosts... You say, 'How have we despised your name?'...When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not wrong? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not wrong? Present that to your governor; see if he will accept it or welcome you...So now if you implore the favor of God when you have done the like, will he welcome you?...Cursed be the deceiver who has a male in his flock but...sacrifices to the a blemished animal...(3:8ff) Dare a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me! And you say, "How do we rob you?" In tithes and in offerings....*
- *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, and see if I do not open the floodgates of heaven for you and pour down blessing without measure. (Mal 3:10f)...all the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delights, says the LORD of hosts.*
- *All that each man has done, whether openly or in secret, will...be brought to light. Therefore, a very good way of atoning for our sins is by being generous to the poor. Fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving surpasses both, for love covers a multitude of sins."* (Breviary, vol. IV, p. 526—from a 2nd century homily).

Considering helping the poor and the needy:

- Prov 28:25--**25** A greedy man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.
- **Job 29**--**11** When the ear heard, it called me blessed, and when the eye saw, it approved; **12** because I delivered the poor who cried, and the fatherless who had none to help him. **13** The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. **14** I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe... I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. **16** I was a father to the poor...I broke the fangs of the unrighteous, and made him drop his prey from his teeth.
- Ps 41:1--Blessed is he who considers the poor! The LORD delivers him in the day of trouble; 2 the LORD protects him...he is called blessed in the land;
- Pr 14:21--happy is he who is kind to the **poor**.
- Pr 14:31--He who oppresses a **poor** man insults his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy honors him.
- Pr 19:17--He who is kind to the **poor** lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.
- Pr 21:13--He who closes his ear to the cry of the **poor** will himself cry out and not be heard.
- **Isa 58: 6** "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? **7** *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him...?*

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- **Ez 16:48**--As I live, says the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you...have done. 49 Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. 50 They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them, when I saw it.
- And Zacchae'us stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house..." (Lk 19:8f)
- **Acts 10: 3** About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." 4 And he stared at him in terror, and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.
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- So as you fill out these cards, think about these things—especially of God great love and mercy for all of you.
- You never lose a thing when you give to God—you only lose when you hold back all for yourself.
- I remind you again of what I reminded you of last week in the Gospel of Luke: *"Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known."* (Lk 12:2)
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- So what will we do with the talents we are given? Will we hear: *"You wicked, lazy servant!"* ...OR, will we hear: *"Well done, my good and faithful servant... Come, share your master's joy."*
- Mt 19:21--*Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."*
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Reading 1

[Prv 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31](#)

When one finds a worthy wife,
her value is far beyond pearls.
Her husband, entrusting his heart to her,
has an unfailing prize.
She brings him good, and not evil,
all the days of her life.
She obtains wool and flax
and works with loving hands.
She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her fingers ply the spindle.
**She reaches out her hands to the poor,
and extends her arms to the needy.**
Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting;
the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
Give her a reward for her labors,
and let her works praise her at the city gates.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5](#)

R. (cf. 1a) Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Blessed are you who fear the LORD,
who walk in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
blessed shall you be, and favored.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
in the recesses of your home;
Your children like olive plants
around your table.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Behold, thus is the man blessed
who fears the LORD.
The LORD bless you from Zion:
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord.

Reading II

[1 Thes 5:1-6](#)

Concerning times and seasons, brothers and sisters,
you have no need for anything to be written to you.

For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come
like a thief at night.

When people are saying, "Peace and security, "
then sudden disaster comes upon them,
like labor pains upon a pregnant woman,
and they will not escape.

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness,
for that day to overtake you like a thief.

For all of you are children of the light
and children of the day.

We are not of the night or of darkness.
Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do,
but let us stay alert and sober.

Gospel

[Mt 25:14-30 or 25:14-15, 19-21](#)

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

"A man going on a journey
called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.
To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one--
to each according to his ability.

Then he went away.

Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them,
and made another five.

Likewise, the one who received two made another two.

But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground
and buried his master's money.

After a long time
the master of those servants came back
and settled accounts with them.

The one who had received five talents came forward
bringing the additional five.

He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents.

See, I have made five more.'

His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.

Since you were faithful in small matters,

I will give you great responsibilities.

Come, share your master's joy.'

Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said,
'Master, you gave me two talents.

See, I have made two more.'
His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.
Since you were faithful in small matters,
I will give you great responsibilities.
Come, share your master's joy.'
Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said,
'Master, I knew you were a demanding person,
harvesting where you did not plant
and gathering where you did not scatter;
so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground.
Here it is back.'
His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant!
So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant
and gather where I did not scatter?
Should you not then have put my money in the bank
so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?
Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten.
For to everyone who has,
more will be given and he will grow rich;
but from the one who has not,
even what he has will be taken away.
And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside,
where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'"

or

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