

Thursday, November 23

Happy Thanksgiving! We hope you have a wonderful and safe day with family and friends. Read once again Matthew 25:14-30. Yesterday's devotion asked you to think about your talents that have been a blessing to you. Perhaps you've experienced these talents as a blessing in your life and perhaps they have been a burden to you, especially if you have been asked to share them often. In Luke's Gospel Jesus said, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." (12:48)

Perhaps you listed your talents yesterday. Maybe you're shy about your talents – hiding them under a bushel basket so to speak. If you consider your talents and resources as blessings from God, do you believe that you have a responsibility to use them for God's Kingdom work on earth? Do you have a responsibility to use them in our church? For the sake of our community? Consider these thoughts and write your ideas here.

Friday, November 24

The messages ended with these words: "With the talents we have been given, we can accomplish everything that God wants us to do while receiving God's blessing. We can hear the words of Jesus echo within our souls, "Well done. Well done." This thought is accompanied with the idea that we need to let go of worry and forget about failure and judgment. Can you do so and risk using your talents for the sake of others that God may be thanked and glorified. Why not think about how you could serve well in the mission and ministry of Central Church? Why not have conversations with Pastor Jack or other leadership to see what opportunities exist in Central's mission and ministry? Prayerfully offer yourself with the knowledge of God's love and call upon your life and that one day you will hear, "Well done!"

Message Notes – November 19, 2023

*Finding Faith in Failure**

- I. Whether museums focus on space exploration, artwork or warfare, they contain the _____ of the _____.
 - A. Did you know that you can go to a museum to see things that _____?
 1. The Museum of _____ in Brooklyn, N.Y. according to *Fast Company* magazine, "paints an epic portrait of _____ big and small."
 2. Dr. Samuel West, the curator of the museum said, "You have to take _____. If designers were less _____ of failure, or getting negatively _____ by their peers, we'd see more great design."
 - B. _____ knew that you have to take risks.
 1. In particular, he _____ the slaves who traded their talents to make more talents.
 2. We should not fail in understanding what Jesus means when he uses the word "_____."
 3. Christians in the United States who were pro-slavery were _____ of misinterpreting the words of the _____.
- II. We also have to understand that a _____ is a huge amount of money.
 - A. The five-talent slave used his resources to make five more talents, and the two-talent slave made two more talents, but the one-talent slave _____ his talent in the ground.
 1. The same is true for us, in our personal and congregational lives. If we bury our _____, we will never gain anything.
 2. It is fitting that the word "talent" works both as an _____ word for a unit of money and a

*Matthew 25:14-30

- _____ word for ability.
- B. When we focus on the talents that we have been given, the challenge of the parable shifts from taking a risk to _____ in God.
- III. We make that mistake ourselves, don't we? We _____ to _____ our God who has given us such amazing talents to use in our personal and congregational lives.
- A. That is what we need here are Central United Methodist Church; your talents and to be clear I'm talking about _____ of talents for today – both your abilities and your financial resources.
- B. For years, we've trusted the _____ here at Central Church and our budget has run on a deficit for decades.
- C. As Christ followers, however, our goal is to trust the _____ instead of the _____. Our Creator who loves us.
1. So, let's not worry about ending up in the Museum of Failure. Instead, we can put _____ aside and forget about failure and judgment.
 2. With the talents we have been given, we can accomplish _____ that God wants us to do while receiving God's _____.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, November 20

The message began with a discussion of museums and Halls of Fame as celebrations of success. After all, to have your name ranked among such other talents and sensational creativity is all about success. How important is success to you? How would you define success? How much influence do others have on your

definition of success? Meditate on these questions and write your reflections here.

Tuesday, November 21

Read Matthew 25:14-30. Yesterday we talked about success. Today let's talk about failure. Did you know that there was a Museum of Failure in New York City? (Brooklyn to be precise; we don't want to fail in our precision!) Can you name some epic failures that were not mentioned during the message? Have you personally experienced some "epic failures" in your own life? What does failure feel like to you? Why do we fail? There is definitely a connection between fear and failure; in fact a core lesson from our scripture in Matthew's Gospel is that the third slave failed because of his failure. How is fear connected to failure in your experience? Contemplate these concepts and questions, pray for God's wisdom and write your response here.

Wednesday, November 22

Read Matthew 25:14-30. Jesus praised the five and two talent slaves for their ability to invest the money and receive a nice return on that investment. They took a risk and it paid off for them. Have you ever wondered what would have happened if they invested that money and lost a significant portion of it? Remember though that this parable is not just about investment and taking risks; it is about trusting the Master. This parable not just about the nature and actions of the three slaves; it is about a land owner – the Master – who gives to the slaves, "each according to his ability." (Verse 15)

Take a moment and think about how much God entrusts to you. What talents, both your abilities and your resources, have been blessings to you and how have you used those talents for God's Kingdom work on earth? How might God be calling you to risk your talents for the sake of God's mission and ministry in the world? Pray about these questions and write your ideas here.