



# JOIN THE CELEBRATION

*Worshipping together in spirit*

## *THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS*

*The Gospel reading for today is the story known as The Parable of the Talents. We are the servants in the story, and the master is God. He gives us skills and talents, which we can develop, in order to enrich our lives and to serve others. It is an insult to God's generosity not to use the talents that he gives us. This is reflected in the story.*



Where did I bury those talents?

The video of this service can be found at: <https://youtu.be/IAGeBLdHk2k>

### OPENING WORDS

O Lord, open our lips  
**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Your faithful servants bless you.  
**They make known the glory of your kingdom.**

Blessed are you, Sovereign God,  
ruler and judge of all,  
to you be praise and glory for ever.

In the darkness of this age that is passing away  
may the light of your presence which the saints enjoy  
surround our steps as we journey on.

May we reflect your glory this day  
and so be made ready to see your face  
in the heavenly city where night shall be no more.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

## HYMN BASED ON PSALM 95 – REJOICE, THE LORD IS KING:

Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore.

Mortals give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore.

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice. Rejoice, again I say rejoice!*

Jesus the saviour reigns, the God of truth and love.

When he had purged our stains, he took his seat above.

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice. Rejoice, again I say rejoice!*

His kingdom cannot fail; he rules o'er earth and heav'n.

The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus giv'n.

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice. Rejoice, again I say rejoice!*

He sits at God's right hand 'til all his foes submit,

and bow to his command and fall beneath his feet.

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice. Rejoice, again I say rejoice!*

## THE CANTICLE:

**I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.**

1 'I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.'

2 Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea,  
a path in the mighty waters,

3 'Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.

4 'Behold, I am doing a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

5 'I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert,  
to give drink to my chosen people,

6 'The people whom I formed for myself, that they might declare  
my praise.'

*Isaiah 43.15, 16, 18, 19, 20c, 21*

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.**

*from Psalm 89*

## THE READING – MATTHEW 25.14-30:

‘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.”

## THE REFLECTION:

It is said that if you don't use it, you will lose it! This could apply to any sort of talent, sporting, musical or maybe speaking another language well. This also appears to be the message of our Gospel reading for today. It is a story in which Jesus does not pull any punches with his message.

At the Discipleship Course on Saturday morning, we were talking about different ways of approaching the Bible. One of them it to imagine that you are a character within the story that is being told, and think about your actions and words, and the feelings that go with them.

This morning we are going to become the first servant, who is given five talents. The household is in uproar because the Master is preparing for a long journey. He is a harsh man and people are scuttling about to do his bidding and not get shouted at. He calls you and two other servants into his office. He explains that he does not want his money standing idle, but accruing interest while he is away. He gives you the most – five gold talents, to invest for him. And then he is gone, in a clatter of hooves and swirl of dust.

- How do you feel about the responsibility which you have been given?

*Reflect on this question.*

After some consideration, you take the money to the market. You buy silk cloth with it. You then take it to a neighbouring town, and sell it to another merchant. You do this twice more, until you have doubled the money.

- How does your trading and success make you feel?

*Reflect on this question.*

When your master returns home, you and your fellows are once again asked to present yourselves before him. You say, with some pride, that you have doubled his money, and so does one of the others. But the third servant, who has always been intimidated by the master, has not increased his talent. There is an unpleasant scene, during which you are given the talent from the third servant, and he is thrown out.

- How do you feel about the treatment of the third servant?
- In your life, what are your five talents? (Yes, you do have them!)
- Who is the third servant in our lives?

*Reflect on these questions.*

God is generous and loving, and we need always to keep asking ourselves the questions about what we do with that generosity and love. Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Uniting our prayers with the whole company of heaven,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

## HYMN – SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD

*Sung twice:*

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

## CLOSING WORDS:

May Christ, who has opened the kingdom of heaven,  
bring us to reign with him in glory.

**Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

