



STEWARDSHIP vs OWNERSHIP
LIVING A MODERN DAY PARABLE



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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REV. DR. DEBRA J. HANSON

Welcome

Hymn “Seek Ye First” (UMH #405)

Scripture Matthew 25:14-30 (dialogue written by Mike Treachler)

Reader 1:

It came to pass that a Master had 300 servants; and the Master, who was about to embark upon a long journey, called his servants together and entrusted talents to each of them. To some he gave one talent, to others two, to others three or more. But each servant – short or tall, clever or dull, trained or untrained – received at least one talent.

Reader 2:

Some received the talent of singing, some dancing, some painted pictures of waterfalls in the moonlight. Others were talented in public speaking, baking cookies, pushing children up and down on the playground swings, or visiting the sick. Still others received talents enabling them to collect money, vacuum the floor, or teach.

Reader 1: After the Master finished handing out talents, he addressed his servants.

Reader 2: “I am going on a long journey. As my servants, work wisely with the talents I have given you.”

Reader 1: With that, he left.

Reader 2: Then, a fellow who had the talent of organization spoke up.

Reader 1: “Very well, let’s band together in our Master’s service, using these talents to do the work he has left us.”

Reader 2: He pointed at a servant who had the talent of speaking the Master’s words.

Reader 1: You will remind us of what the Master has said. Those of you who have musical talents will sing to us of the Master and his work.

Reader 2: So it went, and before long each servant was given something to do according to his talent. Some cared for servants who were old or ill, some brought water to those who toiled in the Master's orchards, some invited strangers into their homes and made them feel welcome, and some taught others about the Master and his goodness.

Reader 1: Soon a group of servants who could use hammers and saws built a meeting house for the benefit of all, and those who were talented in making furniture and sewing curtains furnished it. People came from miles around to the meetinghouse to hear of the Master and honor him.

Reader 2: For a while the Master's work flourished, but on a day a change occurred. A servant who was talented in mending shoes decided his task wasn't important enough.

Reader 1: "I want to do something important, like singing or speaking the Master's words in the meeting house. Mending shoes is for nobodies."

Reader 2: "But mending shoes is important, wouldn't it be harder to do the Master's work in bare feet?"

Reader 1: "That's not my problem, I want a more important place. Those singers and speakers we've got now aren't so talented anyway."

Reader 2: The servant whose talent was mending shoes promptly stopped exercising his talent. Before long the other servants' shoes began to leak, and they became discontented, too.

Reader 1: "I'm tired of working with wet feet, let's hire a shoemaker."

Reader 2: "I want a more important job, too, placing long-distance phone calls to the Master isn't very exciting."

Reader 1: "Yeah, I'm tired of inviting strangers into my home. Let somebody else do it."

Reader 2: Soon the length and breadth of the Master's property was in an uproar. Some servants refused to exercise their talents, while others demanded a more exalted place. Some accused others of laziness or being puffed up. Some felt that their work required too much work. Still others said that certain talents should not be exercised, that perhaps the Master had not meant to give them at all.

Reader 1: When the Master's business had finally ground to a halt, the servant who had the talent of organization called an emergency gathering in the meetinghouse.

Reader 2: "All right!!! The Master's plan for us to carry out his work according to the talents he gave us is obviously not going to work. Therefore, we will make the following changes:

Reader 1: The speakers of the Master's words will also visit the sick, teach outsiders about the Master, sing, talk to strangers, and perform organizational duties. But their most important task will be to try to convince the rest of us to work, too.

Reader 2: Should a servant decide to work, his job will be determined by what he feels like doing and how convincing the speaker of the Master's words has been. Servants are welcome to keep their talents, but need not feel obligated to exercise them."

Reader 1: The servant whose talent was organization left the platform, surrounded by the cheers of the congregated servants. The few speakers of the Master's words reluctantly took on their new responsibilities, and the rest of the people went home.

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Prayer

Generous, giving God, you entrust us with your creation and ask us to invest our energies, money, and time wisely. The return you seek is faithfulness in following you and generosity in how we share our resources. As we consider the ways we will share from the gifts you have given us, lead us and guide us to respond with thanksgiving for the many blessings we have received. May our gifts make a difference for others, support the mission and ministry of this church, and continue to manifest your presence in our world. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn "We All Are One in Mission" (FWS #2243)

Sending Forth

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a burlap money bag. The bag is tied at the top and has a large black dollar sign (\$) printed on its front. The background is a soft-focus green and yellow, suggesting an outdoor setting. A red rectangular border is overlaid on the bottom portion of the image, containing the text.

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WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER

Juliann
Joan Allen
Naomi
Erin Frane
Madeline
Charles Gilman
Josh Jones
Jenn
Gary
Joyce

Harry Junkins
Marilyn & Gil
Donna Smith
Sophia
Bobbie Noble
Dan Strange
Danny Westbrook
Marion Collishaw
Mark & Sarah
Delores

Terry Sessions
Vicky & Emily
Christine & her parents
Those in nursing and assisted living care
Our Church family



WHO WE ARE

FUMC PORTSMOUTH A RECONCILING CONGREGATION

We, the congregation of the First United Methodist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, are dedicated in worshipping, learning, and serving with all people as we embrace Jesus Christ's message of love and acceptance. As a United Methodist Church we stand fully behind the statement "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors". We celebrate our diversity and invite all persons regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital or socioeconomic status, nationality, physical or mental ability into full membership and participation in the life of this community of faith.



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