

## Be brave and take risk to invest your gifts

A lady came to the shop which had the notice board said: “Everything your heart desires available here”. The curious lady went to the shopkeeper and asked: “I want peace of mind, love, happiness, wisdom and freedom from fear”. The shopkeeper in return smiled and said: “madam, thank you for expressing your desire. But please note, I sell only seeds, not fruits”.

The listeners of today’s parable must have been shocked by the severe treatment given to the servant who buried his talent. Apparently, he did nothing wrong. He only lacked boldness, the courage to take risks. In old Jewish days, the safest place to keep coins was underground. This servant apparently was punished for doing just that!

Was he punished only for that? The Master accused him of being a ‘wicked’ and slothful servant. We can understand, he was slothful, he did not care to invest or make use of the talent he received. But why was he called wicked? It was because he had *no respect for the master and his wealth*. Above all, his *relationship* with the master was not of the right kind. He said: “Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow”. He understood his master as a cruel and exacting man, and not as a benevolent and merciful one, in spite of the trust the master placed in him, with his money. He had *no love* for the master. He only feared him, and that fear led him to bury the master’s money.

God has gifted the “seeds” of good things to all of us; benevolently gifted talent in each of us, according to our capacity. He looks at our abilities, and sees, not just who we are, but who we can become, and what we can accomplish for his glory. The talents are given to us, not for safe keeping. We have the potential to develop it. God has given them to us with his plan that we will succeed and be fruitful, and thus bring glory to Him.

*God gives each person different gifts.* We are not equal in talent; but we can be equal in effort. The two who placed the talents in the open market doubled their investment, and the only one who doesn’t is the man who fearfully buried his talent. Jesus’ success strategy for us seems to be, ‘whatever we have, get it out of our possession, risking it as quickly and as fully as possible. Means, place it at the service of God and others.

*You and I have precious gifts, valuable things to invest: our time, talents and treasure. Today the Lord invites us to be brave to take risks. Our work is never completed. When the first two servants showed how much they had earned, they were not told they could sit back and rest. No, because of their trustworthiness, even greater responsibilities were given to them. The parable teaches us that *the reward for work well done is still more work to do**

History books are full of stories of gifted people whose talents were overlooked by many, until someone believed in them. The greatest scientist ever lived, **Albert Einstein**, was 4 years old, before he could speak, and 7 before he could read. **Isaac Newton** did poorly in grade school but became the smartest scientist of his time. **Walt Disney** was fired from the newspaper saying, ‘*he had no good ideas*’. **Leo Tolstoy** was a college dropout, who later wrote the literature classic: war and peace.

Evidently, Jesus story was not concerned only with monetary treasure. In fact, he was speaking about the “*spiritual treasure*”; the greatest of which is faith, the Holy Spirit. God’s gifts are entrusted to us to be used. A person who is interested only in “preserving God’s gifts” will end up losing them altogether.

This parable is exceptionally relevant, also for our times. The rapid pace of change in today’s world is disturbing to many of us. People who feel that the soil under their feet is going away try to cling desperately to the religious practices of their youth. Of course, the essential core of our faith has not changed, cannot and will not change. But in a constantly changing world, *the way we express and live our faith does change and must change*. Otherwise, our faith may soon or later become like an exhibit in a museum, something to be admired, perhaps, but not a living, present reality that makes sense for our life today.

People who are particularly concerned, only with preserving the faith, are like the man who buried his master’s treasure in the ground. Jesus, who challenged the listeners of his time challenges you and I today, to live and express our faith in ways that are unmistakably relevant to our times!  
Amen.