

Good Morning! What a blessing to be here on this beautiful morning.

Last week we heard Janet give a presentation on time. This week I would Like to speak to you about talents—what they are and who has them. I'm sure we have all heard the parable of the talents many times so I won't go into it in any depth, but basically it was the story of a wealthy man who was going on a journey and entrusted his gold, called talents at that time in history, to three of his servants. Two of them used the money wisely and were able to return to the master more than he had given them, which pleased the master greatly. The third one buried his and did nothing.

So how does this relate to us? Well a parable is usually a short, fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. In this parable, Jesus was referring to himself as the master going on a long journey and someday returning. The talents he gave his followers, US, are not gold and silver, but something more beautiful—something that we can and should use to the glory of his name, not because he needs us to, but because we want to. So, who has these talents? Everyone—there is no one that has no talents. Now you may be thinking she's wrong. What talent do I have? After all, not many of us conduct a symphony orchestra, paint like Picasso, or become Hollywood actors. But talents are also defined as abilities, and we all have at least one. Some have the talent of helping the old or infirm, giving of their time, comforting, listening, and so many more. Many of them fall under the category of kindness and caring for others.

For instance, when I was injured last year, I was blessed to be the recipient of some of these talents and abilities that were given by members of this very church.

- One stayed with me in the emergency room to offer comfort and reassurance.
- One figured out my phone password and called my family
- One stayed with me the first night when I was so strung out on drugs that I could hardly stand up and helped me to walk to the bathroom
- One organized others to bring me meals for a month!
- One provided transportation to doctors appts.
- One even brought me chocolate!
- And the list goes on and on

In church there are many ongoing up-front ministries such as acolytes, lectors, and greeters and there are numerous things that need doing behind the scenes that are just as important and pleasing to God. Maybe you are good at planning, making lists, thinking of details, decorating, cleaning up, mowing the

lawn, etc.. These are talents and abilities as well. And there are ALWAYS ways to be kind and generous to our brothers and sisters in Christ just as you were to me. So, in closing, I would ask you to use some of the time that Janet spoke of last week to exercise your talents because our Master WILL return, and when he does, he will want to know what we have done with this precious life we've been given—were we good stewards of the talents that he gave us or did we bury them like servant #3?

Let us pray:

O Lord, the best thing about the new liturgical year is the word new. Give me a new attitude Lord, a new focus, a new passion, a new mission—all based on the new things you want to do through me this year.

Lord, from this past year I would like to save in the scrapbook of my life just those days that brought you glory—days when in spite of my self-absorption and often worldly focus, you were able to accomplish something through me. Those are the days I cherish lord. Help me to move into the next year more available—more open—to living such scrapbook-worthy days.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul said: “keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love” the first part of this passage conjures up images of a soldier decked out in full combat gear, and the second part makes me think of my grandmother. Trying to interweave the two, looks like my grandmother in camouflage and face paint with a tin of oatmeal cookies in her hand. The Christian life is kind of like that though. We are called to be tough in our commitment to serving god and yet tender-hearted toward all those around us.. Combat boots and cookies—the life of a Christian in action, -- Lord, help me be strong in faith and service and gentle in love today and throughout the coming year. AMEN

By Pennie Davidson