



16th Sunday of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew 25:14-30

The Lord said this parable: "A man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'

He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'" As he said these things he cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Resurrectional Apolytikion in the 2nd Tone

When You descended unto death, O Lord who yourself are immortal Life, then did You mortify Hades by the lightning flash of Your Divinity. Also when You raised the dead from the netherworld, all the Powers of the heavens were crying out: O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory be to You.

Seasonal Kontakion

You sanctified the virginal womb by Your birth, O Lord, and blessed the hands of Symeon fittingly, O Christ God; and even now You came and saved us. Now, give peace to our Nation in time of war, and empower our Leaders, so loved by You, the only one who loves humanity.

Discussion

We have several things to look at today: the Gospel, the Presentation of Our Lord in the temple (celebrated on 2 February) and St. Haralambos (10 February).

There is a lot that could be said about the Lord's Presentation. Suffice it to say that in His Will to show us the way to salvation, He became Man in every way, following the law as stated in the Old Testament. It said that mothers would stay away from the temple for 40 days after giving birth and then bring their child to be blessed and purified. The Christ Child and the Theotokos did not need this, but did it anyway to set the example for us. Christ did not oppose the old law but completed it in every way. In the icon, Jesus is held by St. Symeon, who was enlightened by God to know that he would live long enough see the Christ.

St. Haralambos was a bishop, very old when he was taken and tortured as a Christian leader. But his love of Christ strengthened him in the contest, even forgiving and praying for those torturing him when they were injured during their gruesome work. St. Haralambos is a great example for all Christians.

In the lesson, we are reminded that all we have been given comes from God. We must always remember that He is the source of our blessings. He blesses us with these gifts to put to use in His Name.

Whatever your talents—your natural gifts and abilities, your acquired skills, the opportunities God sets before you for love and service, and yes, your money—these are the talents you can put to use in God's kingdom. We do this individually in our daily lives, and we do it collectively in our life together as church.

Note that the servant who did not try to put the master's gift into use was the one condemned.

What talents do we have that we are not using?

May God grant us the wisdom to see opportunities to use our blessings to glorify His Name.