



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Sunday, November 15th, 2020

Dear Lake Toxaway UMC family and friends,

When I read scripture, I am comforted, challenged, changed, corrected, guided. These are only a few of the verbs that describe how scripture works in the lives of God's people. The Gospel lesson is so familiar to us, so I invite you to take another look.

The Greek word translated, talent, is a word that indicates a large sum of money: fifteen years of wages. This is almost an unthinkable sum of money and difficult to translate into modern terms. If you worked at your job for fifteen years and retained all of your income, you would have a talent. If you earned \$100,000/year, a talent would equal 1.5 million dollars. Jesus tells the story with almost no details in its beginning other than "a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them: one 7.5 million, another 3 million, and a third 1.5 million.

Then the story continues with the choices each servant made with the money entrusted to them. The first two servants double the investments. The third guards the money carefully and retains the original amount. Then the master returns after a long time away and there is a settlement of accounts.

I want to point out a few things which I often overlook. The money was distributed to each slave according to ability (English translation); the Greek word is better translated power. As it comes to the third slave, I remind us a first-century Jew would have considered collecting interest as illegal; this was the sin of usury.

So... I find myself focused on this third servant and asking what Jesus was saving about the one-talent servant. I find the master's statement about this third servant and the judgment harsh just as the servant had described the master. Is there a hint to look again at the story?

Remember, Christians do not enter into a joy of material abundance; we know this does not bring real and lasting joy. Entering into the joy of the Christ we follow is different from the joy that surrounds us: amassing stuff, getting ahead, striving to be number one. Our joy is rooted in the hope of a God who loved us so much that Jesus, His only Son, came for us.

Perhaps Jesus is setting up his listeners to the story that comes next in Matthew's gospel where the sheep and goats are separated based on unrecognized generosity. Perhaps Jesus really wants to contrast the difference between managing talents and giving away talents. Perhaps the challenge is to hear this story as troubling and to recognize God's work in the world is one of casting grace generously in order to seek all to come to Christ.

I have not completed the sermon yet, so I cannot tell you my conclusion. I hope you are wrestling with me in this preparation. I trust the Holy Spirit to speak to you and guide you in applying this lesson.

I know you as a people to be generous and loving. May we continue to live in this joy, the joy of Jesus!

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
November 15th, 2020**

9:30 A.M. Livestream link: <https://youtu.be/qSkqLmOHrnc>

PRELUDE

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence arr. Robert Lau

GREETING

L: The time for harvest is close at hand. What have you done with the gifts God has given you?

P: We have brought our gifts to the house of the Lord.

L: Praise God for the gifts and for opportunities for service that they represent.

P: We praise God for all the ways in which our lives have been blessed.

L: Generous God, accept our gifts and our lives this day.

P: Loving God, accept our praise and gratitude. AMEN.

HYMN #101

From All that Swell Below the Skies

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OPENING PRAYER

Awesome God, you created the world and all that is in it. You blessed each element of creation with your love. You called us from slavery into witness and service. Be with us this day as we gather to worship. Clear our minds of all the distractions which would draw us away from you. Open our hearts and spirits and let your healing and empowering love flow in. Prepare us to be witnesses to your power and love as we use the gifts with which you have blessed us in your service. For we offer this prayer in the name of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Judges 4:1-7

- 4:1 The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died.
- 4:2 So, the LORD sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim.
- 4:3 Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.
- 4:4 At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel.
- 4:5 She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment.
- 4:6 She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun.
- 4:7 I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'"

Psalm 123 (read responsively the text in bold)

- 123:1 To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!
- 123:2 As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until he has mercy upon us.**
- 123:3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.
- 123:4 Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

- 5:1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you.
- 5:2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.
- 5:3 When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!
- 5:4 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief;
- 5:5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

- 5:6 So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober;
5:7 for those who sleep Jobin's at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night.
5:8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.
5:9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
5:10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.
5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Matthew 25:14-30

- 25:14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them;
25:15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.
25:16 The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents.
25:17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents.
25:18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.
25:19 After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.
25:20 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.'
25:21 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.'
25:22 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.'
25:23 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.'
25:24 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;
25:25 so, I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

- 25:26 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?
- 25:27 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.
- 25:28 So, take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents.
- 25:29 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.
- 25:30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

L: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

P: Thanks be to God!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

We are "pack rats", O Lord. You continually pour gifts and blessings into our lives and we hide them away for fear that they might disappear or not be worthy of acclaim. We squander them wastefully on things that are not healthy or helpful to others. We confess that we have not always recognized the talents we have been given. We find it easier to belittle the gifts than to honor the giver. As Jesus reminded his listeners to honor the giver of the gifts by using them to create something better, for healing, for hope in the world; remind us that the message of Jesus is truly pertinent to us today. Forgive us when we have treated it as a nice story. Help us to take the gifts you have given us, to develop them, and use them in ways which will offer healing and hope. In Jesus' blessed Name, we pray. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

You are loved by God and given so many gifts to be used to help others. Do not fear to use these gifts, for God is with you, continually blessing you and the gifts in your service. AMEN.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God. AMEN.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH (THE APOSTLES' CREED Ecumenical Version)

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the
beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

Meditation on "How Great Thou Art" John Carter

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*There are no limits to the gifts you have given us, gracious Lord. Now we
return thanks to you for these gifts and we bring these tokens to you, asking
for your blessing on givers and gifts. Help these gifts and givers to be your
witnesses throughout the world. AMEN.*

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #399

Take My Life and Let it Be

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed with permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Voluntary Douglas E. Wagner

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Soloist/Vocalist: Will Cowan

Liturgist: Tom Blackstock

Prayer Concerns of the Community

Please pray for Marty Young, Madison Coleman & the Jeter Family, Chad Zimmerman and Frank Hardin.

Please continue to pray for those who have had the death of a loved one in the recent weeks and months.

Announcements

Liturgists needed. Do you like being a reader at our Sunday services? If so, please e-mail Saunders at administrator@laketoxawayumc.org to let her know your availability. A rotating schedule will be created.

Seven of our Students Scholars need you: Student Scholars Mentors are still needed. If you can pray, text, e-mail and call lending your support to our student scholars please reach out to Cathie Fussell at linguafrog@gmail.com or 910-572-2167. The students are in their final month of this semester as it will end at Thanksgiving. Now is a perfect time to be a mentor.

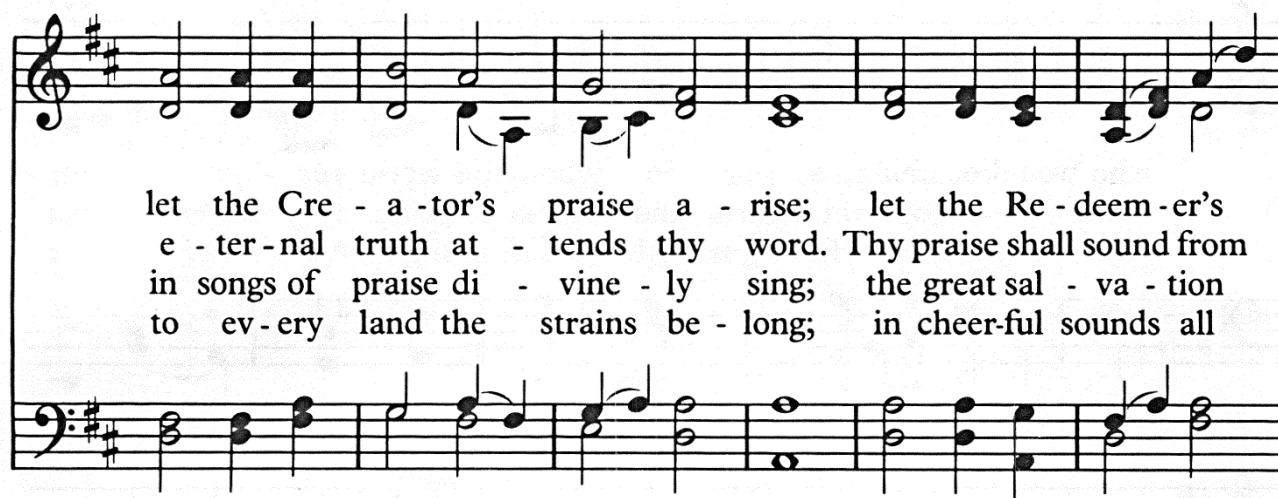
Administrative Council Meeting

The Administrative Council will meet on ***Friday, December 11th at 9:00 AM***. If you are a member of the Council, you will receive a Zoom Invite. If you are not a member and would like to attend the meeting, please email Tom Blackstock or Saunders Grommesh as these meetings are open to all members, but only members have a vote if actions are required. You may e-mail Tom at Tom.Blackstock@gmail.com or Saunders at administrator@laketoxawayumc.org.

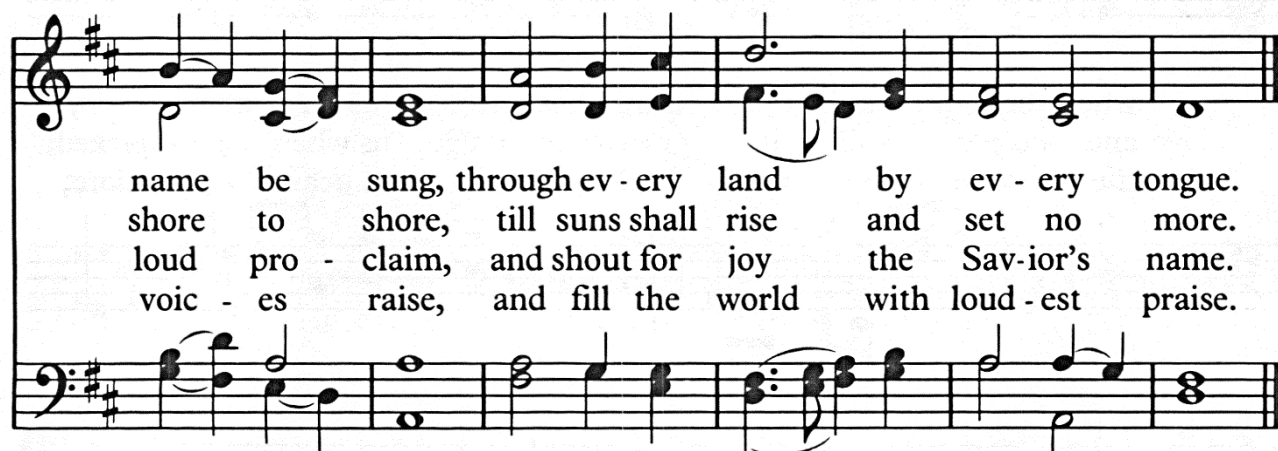
From All That Dwell Below the Skies 101



1. From all that dwell be - low the skies,
 2. E - ter - nal are thy mer - cies, Lord;
 3. Your loft - y themes, ye mor - tals, bring,
 4. In ev - ery land be - gin the song;



let the Cre - a - tor's praise a - rise; let the Re - deem - er's
 e - ter - nal truth at - tends thy word. Thy praise shall sound from
 in songs of praise di - vine - ly sing; the great sal - va - tion
 to ev - ery land the strains be - long; in cheer - ful sounds all



name be sung, through ev - ery land by ev - ery tongue.
 shore to shore, till suns shall rise and set no more.
 loud pro - claim, and shout for joy the Sav - ior's name.
 voic - es raise, and fill the world with loud - est praise.

WORDS: Sts. 1-2, Isaac Watts; sts. 3-4, anon., ca. 1781 (Ps. 117)
 MUSIC: John Hatton, 1793

DUKE STREET
 LM

399

Take My Life, and Let It Be



1. Take my life, and let it be con - se - cra - ted,
 2. Take my voice, and let me sing al - ways, on - ly,
 3. Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no

Lord, to thee. Take my mo - ments and my days;
 for my King. Take my lips, and let them be
 long - er mine. Take my heart, it is thine own;

let them flow in cease - less praise. Take my hands, and
 filled with mes - sag - es from thee. Take my sil - ver
 it shall be thy roy - al throne. Take my love, my

let them move at the im - pulse of thy love.
 and my gold; not a mite would I with - hold.
 Lord, I pour at thy feet its trea - sure - store.

Take my feet, and let them be swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.
 Take my in - tel - lect, and use ev - ery power as thou shalt choose.
 Take my-self, and I will be ev - er, on - ly, all for thee.

WORDS: Frances R. Havergal, 1873 (Rom. 12:1)
 MUSIC: Louis J. F. Hérold, 1839; arr. by George Kingsley, 1839

MESSIAH
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