

## Homily by Fr Peter 2011-11-13.pdf

TODAY'S GOSPEL IS THE LAST OF THE PARABLE OF THE KINGDOM GOSPELS FOR THIS YEAR. THESE GOSPELS REMIND US THAT WE HAVE A REALLY AWFUL GOD: A GOD WHO SHOULD FILL US WITH AWE.

IN THESE GOSPELS JESUS IS SAYING TO US: THIS IS WHAT GOD IS LIKE AND ENCOURAGING US IN HOW WE OUGHT TO RESPOND TO HIM IN OUR LIVES.

HERE, GOD IS DEPICTED AS A MAN WHO ENTRUSTS HIS PROPERTY TO HIS SERVANTS WHILE HE IS ABSENT. HE IS A VERY ENTERPRISING EMPLOYER, WHO HOPES THAT HIS SERVANTS WILL REFLECT HIS OWN FLAIR AND DARING. HE DOESN'T TELL THEM WHAT TO DO; HE TRUSTS THEM TO USE THEIR INITIATION AND IMAGINATION.

THIS DARING AND IMAGINATION THAT JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT IS DIRECTED FIRSTLY TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. THEIR MAIN AIM WAS TO SIMPLY HOLD ONTO THE LAW THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED, TO KEEP IT UNCHANGED AND STERILE. IN THEIR OWN WORDS THEIR MISSION WAS "TO BUILD A FENCE AROUND THE LAW", TO HEM IT IN AND KEEP IT IN A STATE OF PARALYSIS.

LIKE "ONE TALENT MAN" THEY SEEM TO HAVE AN INVESTMENT IN KEEPING THINGS EXACTLY AS THEY WERE. IT IS FOR THIS ATTITUDE THAT JESUS CONDEMNS THEM. JESUS TELLS US THAT THEIR CAN BE NO TRUE RELIGION WITHOUT RISK, NO TRUE RELIGION WITHOUT ADVENTURE, NO TRUE RELIGION WITHOUT ENTERPRISE. WILLINGNESS TO DARE IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR FAITH.

JESUS ALSO SPEAKS ABOUT GOD. WE ARE INVITED TO IMAGINE A GOD WHO GIVES GIFTS TO ALL OF US. WHAT OUR GIFTS ARE IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS HOW WE USE THOSE GIFTS FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

GOD IS A GAMBLER WHO FOREVER TAKES RISKS IN GIVING HIS GIFTS, NOT KNOWING HOW THEY WILL BE USED, WITH NO GUARANTEE OF ANY RETURN. HE EVEN RISKS HIS GIFTS JUST BEING BURIED AND LEFT UNUSED.

THERE ARE ALSO DIFFERENT ATTITUDES TO GOD IN THE PARABLE.

THE FIRST TWO SERVANTS ATTITUDE IS SO DIFFERENT FROM THE THIRD. THE FIRST TWO KNOW THEIR MASTER WILL EXPECT THEM TO SHARE HIS ATTITUDE IN USING WHAT HE GAVE THEM IN ORDER TO GAIN SOME ADVANTAGE, TO DARE TO USE THEIR IMAGINATION AND THEIR OWN SENSE TO SUPPORT THE MASTERS PLAN.

THE THIRD IS SO AFRAID OF THE MASTER, SEEING HIM AS A HARD MAN, SO HE PLAYS OUT HIS OWN FEARS AND SIMPLY BURIES HIS GIFTS. INSTEAD OF

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SEEING A CHALLENGE AND AN OPPORTUNITY, HE ORGANISES A QUIET FUNERAL. TO LOSE NOTHING HE RISKS NOTHING.

HE BLAMES HIS OWN PRECONCEIVED IMAGE OF HIS MASTER, NOT HIS OWN TIMIDITY. HE PUTS THE BLAME WHERE IT SHOULDN'T BE: HE BLAMES THE MASTER, NOT HIMSELF, FOR HIS LACK OF ENTERPRISE.

THIS CHALLENGES US TO QUESTION OUR OWN ATTITUDE TO GOD AND HOW THAT INFLUENCES THE WAY WE LIVE. IS MY GOD AN EXACTING TASK MASTER WHO DEMANDS A RETURN ON WHAT HE HAS GIVEN US?

IS MY GOD AN ADVENTURER, A GAMBLER WHO IS READY TO TAKE A RISK WITH ME AND IS ALSO READY TO ACCEPT THE RESULT OF US BEING A BIT DARING LIKE HIM?

GOD TOOK THE GREATEST RISK WITH US WHEN HE GAVE US HIS PERFECT GIFT...HIS SON. GOD DARED TO DO THIS REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES.

IS MY FAITH LIFE A LIFE OF FEAR, A CAREFULLY TIMID LIFE OF NOT DARING TO TRUST AND HOPE IN GOD'S LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE...EVEN ACCEPTING MY MISTAKES.

SOME PEOPLE, TOO MANY PERHAPS, LIVE THEIR FAITH WITH THE MOTTO: IF YOU'RE CAREFUL ENOUGH, NOTHING BAD OR GOOD WILL EVER HAPPEN TO YOU.

THAT SHOULD NEVER BE SAID OF CHRISTIAN FAITH. OUR FAITH BEGINS WITH GOD, WHO IS A GOD OF DARING AND ADVENTURE. HE RISKED CHOOSING A PEOPLE TO BE HIS AND THE STORY OF THEIR RESPONSE AND DARING, OR LACK OF IT, IS THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE RISK HE TOOK IN SENDING HIS SON IS THE NEW TESTAMENT. GOD TAKES A RISK WITH US EVERYDAY. MAYBE WE NEED TO LEARN FROM HIM AND LIVE OUR FAITH WITH A BIT OF DARING, A SENSE OF ADVENTURE, NOT BUILDING A FENCE AROUND IT, BUT TAKING IT OUT TO WALK THROUGH OUR LIVES.