Sermon for the
Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost



Date: November 15, 2026
Location: Zion – Colby, WI
Christ – Abbotsford, WI
St. Paul – Green Grove, WI



Old Testament: Zephaniah 1:7-16
Epistle Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:14-30

Sermon Series: Faithful to the Last
Sermon Title: Faithful at His Coming
Sermon Text: Matthew 25:14–30

Hymns:

Opening: 902 – Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now(v.1,3,4)
Sermon: 555 – Salvation unto Us Has Come (v.1,9)
Offering: 783 – Take My Life and Let It Be (v1,3,4,6)
Closing: 924 – Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

Distribution:

LSB 698 – May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill
LSB 851 – Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us
LSB 702 – My Faith Looks Up to Thee
LSB 611 – Chief of Sinners Though I Be



Text: Matthew 25:14–30

[Jesus said:] “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who 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 scattered no seed, 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 scattered no seed? 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 everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Entrusted with His Gifts



Have you ever been handed something valuable that belonged to someone else? A house key. A delicate antique. A child. It's different when you're trusted with something that you know matters to someone else.

Last Sunday we waited for the bridegroom. Today Jesus gives us another picture of waiting: servants entrusted with their master's property until he returns.

A master gives five talents to one servant, two to another, and one to the last, each according to his ability. Know that even the one talent is a substantial amount of money. A Talent was about 15-20 years wages. The master goes away leaving each in charge of his amount. Two of them put what he gives to work. The third buries it. After a long time, the master returns and settles accounts.[1]

The Lord Who Returns

That "long time[2]" matters. The servants don't know the date of their master's return, but his absence doesn't make his gift meaningless or their readiness any less important. They have been entrusted with real responsibility. When he does return, the first two bring what has been gained. Though the amounts differ, their welcome is the same. The master commends their faithfulness, entrusts them with more, and invites them into his joy.[3]

Then comes the third. He describes his master as hard and says he was afraid. That is the servant's accusation, not a description of God we should accept. His fear becomes an excuse. The master's answer exposes the truth. Even on his own account of the master, he has failed to act. He is called wicked and lazy. His gift is taken, and he is cast into the outer darkness. Jesus wants us to hear the warning. When He returns, judgment will come.[4]

He also wants us to hear that the Lord who will return is the Lord who has already come to rescue us. He will not be a stranger when He returns. He has baptized you into His name. He speaks forgiveness into your ears. He feeds you with His Body and Blood. His gifts enable you to serve in trust, not fear.

Those gifts do not make unbelief harmless. They call us away from it. When we have buried our responsibility in excuses, we don't need a better excuse. We need repentance and the forgiveness Jesus freely gives.

1 Matthew 25:16-19
2 Matthew 25:19
3 Matthew 25:20-23
4 Matthew 25:24-30

Saved by Grace with Faith Bearing Fruit



The first two servants receive the same welcome, though the amounts entrusted to them differ.

The Bible says:

> By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.[5]
>
> For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.[6]
>
> Abraham believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness.[7]

We sang that confidence in the hymn Salvation unto Us Has Come:

> …faith looks to Jesus Christ alone
> … He is our one Redeemer.[8]

Our service cannot replace His saving work. Only He has paid for the sins of the world. Faith looks to Jesus now and on the Last Day. The One who has redeemed us is the One whose return we anticipate.

The hymn also teaches faith rests in Christ's cross, while its fruit serves the neighbor.

> Faith clings to Jesus' cross alone…
> With love and hope increasing…[9]

God does not need us to purchase His favor. The people He has placed beside us do need our love.

That service often looks fairly ordinary. A parent sets a task aside and listens to a child. A husband cares for his wife when illness makes the day difficult. A Christian calls someone who has been alone too long. Someone with enough can share with someone who doesn't.

What has God entrusted to you? Who has He placed near you? What opportunity for care lands in front of you today? This Last Sunday call to watch doesn't mean staring at the sky while our neighbors go unattended. We wait with our hands ready for service.

Our Sins Forgiven and Buried

But what about your sins? You have a lot of them. So do I. They include: The opportunities we ignore. The gifts we used selfishly. The excuses we called discernment. Our confidence

5 Ephesians 2:8-9
6 Romans 3:23-24
7 Genesis 15:6
8 LSB 555 v.1
9 LSB 555 v.9

before the returning Lord rests on His forgiveness, not on a sinless record of service. Listen to the promises God gives elsewhere in Scripture:

> He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.[10]
>
> For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.[11]

Those promises belong to you because Jesus carried your sins to the cross and rose defeating death. You don't need to excuse your failures. You just confess them. Christ has answered for it.

St. Paul tells us why we can hope: God has not destined us for wrath,[12] but for salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that we might live with Him. Our hope is grounded in His death for us. That promise strengthens faith and sends us back to our responsibilities with courage. What better Lord could you ask for?

Entering His Joy



We heard a pretty severe warning from Zephaniah today. The Lord confronts those who have settled into complacency. His day will expose that false security. We should not so often dismiss that warning. It calls us to repent. Later in the same prophet also speaks of the Lord taking away judgment and rejoicing over His people. That later promise helps us hear God's final word to those who take refuge in His mercy is not abandonment. It is joy in Christ, who endured judgment for us. Mercy comes to messed up sinners like us.

Our service to God will not always feel successful. We may see limited results at times. We may be tired or worn out. Faithfulness is not measured by the wealth of kingdom currency you have accumulated. The same commendation is spoken to both servants faithful servants. Their master is glad to share his joy.

So come and receive the Body and Blood of the Lord who gave His life for you. He forgives the sins you bring and strengthens the faith given as you leave. Then go to the responsibilities and people He has entrusted to your care.

The Lord who gives Himself to you now is the Lord whose joy you will share when He returns. Trusting His promise, your hope rests in the faithful Savior. And His welcome is worth waiting for.

Amen.

10 Psalm 103:10-12
11 Jeremiah 31:34
12 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

