Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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November 15, 2022
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"To everyone who has, more will be given" (Luke 19:27).

Rv 4:1-11; *Luke 19:11-28*

As the church year comes to an end, the Lectionary offers us predictions and parables from Jesus that must have been very significant for the early church as it struggled to survive both persecution and catastrophic loss. For Luke's faith community, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE would have been the equivalent of 9-11 for Americans. The very foundation of their reality had been shaken.

Today's gospel reading is one of these dire warnings in the form of a parable about a nobleman who had to depart to a distant country to obtain his kingship. Jesus himself is that Lord, departing for heaven where he will be revealed in glory after his death on the cross. The nobleman gives portions of his great wealth to his servants to invest until his return. Some servants boldly use their gift and increase it tenfold and fivefold, but another servant fearfully buries his charism in the ground.

The servants are like the members of the church eagerly longing for the return of Jesus and struggling to be faithful in ordinary ways as the second coming is delayed. History is moving forward and evangelists like Luke are beginning to realize that the charisms Jesus promised his followers were already available. But they had to be used with insight and courage to demonstrate how Jesus was already fully present through the Holy Spirit. The church was now his presence in the world.

In the parable, the returning king, like Jesus, rewards those faithful servants who invested their gifts while he was away, but he severely scolds the one who cowered in fear and failed to use his gifts.

Do we believe that Jesus is present in the world through us? If we sit back and wait for miracles or for others to trust his promises, we will be like the servant who buried his gifts and did nothing. Only if we obey his instructions to take up the tasks that influence society-- especially by practicing the corporal works of mercy and living the beatitudes—will we demonstrate the power Jesus has invested in us to change the world.

Now is the time to do what we can, however small, to activate our faith fully. If not now, when? And if not here, in our ordinary daily lives, then where?