

**Worship at Home**  
**for Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020**  
*from Brian and Clare Kennard*

**Opening sentence:** “I will praise You, O Lord,  
with my whole heart” (Psalm 9 v1)

**Hymn suggestion:**

PRAISE, MY SOUL, THE KING OF HEAVEN;  
To His feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
Who like thee His praise should sing?  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise Him for His grace and favour  
To our fathers in distress;  
Praise Him, still the same forever,  
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Glorious in His faithfulness.

Father-like, He tends and spares us;  
Well our feeble frame He knows;  
In His hands He gently bears us,  
Rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Widely as His mercy flows.

Angels in the height, adore Him;  
Ye behold Him face to face;  
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,  
Dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

**Prayer time:**

*“I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart”*  
Express to God your praise, not only for what He  
has done for us in creation and salvation through  
Jesus, but also for who He is: awesome, eternal,  
holy, merciful, wise, full of love and compassion..

**A confession:**

*“Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a  
right spirit within me.”* (Psalm 51:10)

Heavenly Father,  
You alone are Holy through and through.  
So often I am full of mixed motives, half-hearted  
devotion and faltering discipleship.  
You see beyond our words and gestures to our  
inmost hearts.  
Cleanse me in the deepest places, and fit me for  
your service and ultimately for your very  
presence.

“Wash me, and I shall be clean.” **Amen.**

**Bible Readings:**

If you have a Bible of your own, please read  
**Exodus chapter 4: verses 1-17**

**Gospel reading: Matthew 25: 14-30**

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called  
his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he  
gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another  
one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his  
journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went  
at once and put his money to work and gained five bags  
more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two  
more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug  
a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned  
and settled accounts with them. The man who had received  
five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said,  
‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained  
five more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and  
faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I  
will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your  
master’s happiness!’ “The man with two bags of gold also  
came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of  
gold; see, I have gained two more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!  
You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in  
charge of many things. Come and share your master’s  
happiness!’ “Then the man who had received one bag of  
gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard  
man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering  
where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went  
out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what  
belongs to you.’ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy  
servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown  
and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you  
should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so  
that when I returned I would have received it back with  
interest. ‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the  
one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more,  
and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have,  
even what they have will be taken from them. <sup>30</sup> And throw  
that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there  
will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

**Brian’s message: PARABLE OF THE TALENTS**

*Then the LORD said to Moses, “What is that in  
your hand?”* (Exodus 4:2)

The context of the text above is God encouraging  
Moses to fulfil his mission. If you read the whole  
story whole story, you will soon see that Moses  
felt totally inadequate for the task given him,  
namely to free the Israelites from slavery in Egypt  
(and who can blame him!?). But Moses had to  
learn that God’s provision was sufficient and most  
important of all God’s presence with us is up to  
anything life throws at us.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus is saying the same thing. First, we are to remember that whatever gifts, talents, abilities and opportunities we have, they are entrusted to us from God. Second, our responsibility is to use and develop whatever has been entrusted to us wisely and well – for our own good, for the blessing of a needy world, and most of all for the honour and praise of our generous God. This applies in every area of life, not only in “spiritual” matters, because the physical material world was made by God and declared “good”. (It has been spoilt by our sin but God is in the redemption business). It’s also true that spiritual gifts (such as the lists found in Romans 12: 6-8, 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10 and elsewhere) are not for selfish enjoyment but for “building up the body” (Ephesians 4:12)

Next, we are assured that God’s way of doing things (“The Kingdom of Heaven”) really will happen, and indeed it’s already here where men and women, boys and girls, live under the benevolent rule of the Lord, Jesus Christ. It is said that to plant an oak tree, you must believe in the future, as an act of faith – since you won’t live to see it come to maturity. Likewise, there may not be an obvious or immediate return from “investing in eternity” - giving yourself to the service of God: it is an act of faith, that what God has promised to those who love Him, He is well able to deliver.

Jesus gives two serious warnings in this parable. First, none of us should embrace the lie that we have nothing to offer (remember God’s question to Moses?). We may have only a little, but that is no excuse for burying our talent. Second, those who refuse to invest in eternity are headed for eternal loss (v.30, for example).

Two final points: did you know that we only use the word “talent” in English to refer to skills and abilities because of this teaching of Jesus? Actually, a talent was a large sum of money in Roman currency. Finally-finally, this story isn’t about money, nor mainly even about using our gifts wisely. The main point is about being ready for when the Lord Jesus returns (v.19, for example). The way we conduct ourselves in the daily routine is an indication of whether or not we are ready for the King to rule **on earth**.

Are you ready? God bless us and help us each one to live out His Kingdom now. **Amen**.

### **Prayer time:**

In your own words, remember before God:

- those in authority in this country and around the world grappling with the present crisis and the many other difficult problems humanity faces;
- all those “on the front line” whether NHS staff, transport workers, shop workers, the emergency services...
- those most personally affected by the Covid-19 outbreak: the bereaved, those seriously ill, those who have already lost their jobs;
- Jeanne Moore recovering from an operation;
- the Church of Jesus Christ as together we seek to witness to the love and care of God in word and action;
- that people everywhere would recognise that those of every race and language are made in the image of God and that we are all one in Christ;
- and for yourself and your family;
- Remember, too, thankfulness!

### **The Lord’s Prayer** (traditional version):

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,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

### **The blessing:**

Now may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with and remain with us always. Amen.