

Twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Text: Matthew 25:14-30

Related text: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Date Preached: November 16, 2008

Gracious God, giver of all things, help us to be good stewards of your gifts. AMEN.

What words would you use to describe your relationship with God?

It is entirely possible that different words may come to mind as we think about our relationship with God. It is entirely possible, even likely that our relationship with God now is different than it was say, as a child, or as a single person, or as a married person or as a parent or grandparent, or as a widow or divorce person.

As we know our relationships with people can change. As we go through life events we may discover that our relationships gain greater depth. Unfortunately, the reverse can also be true. That is, someone we thought highly of may break our trust, turn their back on us as we face adversity or in some other way, demonstrate that our perception of that relationship was not reality.

So, I ask you today, what words would you use to describe your relationship with God?

In the parable of the talents that appears in our Gospel lesson there are three individuals. The property owner entrusts various sums of money to each of the three individuals. We are talking about a large sum of money in this parable.

The first two immediately took action. Through dealing and trade they affectively take what was entrusted to them and use it to make more. They use what was not theirs to own, but given to them as a gift. They see that the owner has placed trust in them.

Now while there are no words used to describe the relationship of the first two servants to the land owner, we do have a more explicit description of the third servant's relationship with the property owner. His relationship is one of fear. Don't upset the owner. Specifically the servant states, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground."

Is our relationship with God one of fear? Is our relationship with God one of trust? Is our relationship with God one of acceptance? What words would we use to describe our relationship with

God? How we answer this question greatly impacts our lives.

Imagine a relationship of trust? Such a relationship starts not with us but with God. We enter into this world with absolutely nothing. We enter into this world helpless and totally dependent upon the care of another.

By the grace of God people are placed in our lives who through their love provide for our every need. We are wrapped in blankets, dressed in clothing we did not make or purchase. We are fed with food we did not grow or purchase.

Yes, some of you may be thinking, “Hey Pastor, how could an infant be expected to provide those things for themselves?” In our own arrogance of growing up and learning, we often forget that the grace with which God lavishes upon us through loved ones is the same grace that God lavishes upon us in our adulthood.

The life of grace is the trust that God is going to do great things through us, things that may seem ordinary and common sense stuff, but great things nonetheless. A relationship of trust with God is one that reveals the specifics of how we live with him and among the

rest of God's people a little at a time. Such revelation is not always when it is convenient and definitely not always on our schedule. Often times God asks us to be patient as he reveals the specifics of what we are to do or be in various circumstances.

A relationship of trust allows us to see possibilities and opens the door to try new things. A relationship of trust is a freeing relationship and one that does not tie our hands.

The fear side of the relationship asks, but what if we mess up. Rest assured friends, we will mess up. We are sinners. We don't always stand up against injustices. We don't always see into the future but at times act cautiously to a fault. We sometimes move too quickly when patience is a more appropriate act.

It should come as no surprise to us that God already knows this about us. The surprise is that God continues to provide us his grace, for that is the relationship God decides to have with us. In the moments we do fail to envision what God is doing among us, God stops us and leads us back along the path.

This relationship is one of trust and grace. God's relationship with us is built on his love, the depth of

which is so great that his only Son has died for you. Such is the depth of God's love for us that we are given the promise of life.

The great treasure we have is a loving relationship from God. The freedom of such a relationship is simple, it allows us to be bold in how we live, showing that same love, grace and generosity to the weak, the vulnerable and those most in need in our community and beyond. In this relationship we share and feast on the joy and security of God which endures this day and forever. AMEN.