



## *Nurturing Faith... Every Day in Every Way*

November 16, 2014

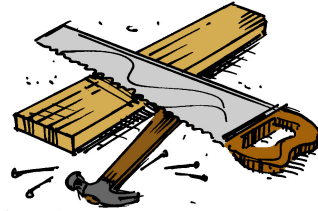
Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

**Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18**

**Psalms 90:1-8 [9-11] 12**

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

**Matthew 25:14-30**



**The Three Toolboxes.** *Object:* A toolbox full of tools.

Jesus once told a story called the Parable of the Talents. In Jesus' story, a man was going away on a trip so he called his servants together and gave each some of his money to use while he was gone. You will find that story in chapter twenty-five of the Gospel of Matthew. I don't think Jesus will mind if I change the parable a little bit and tell you a story that I call, "The Parable of the Three Tool Boxes."

Once upon a time there was a man who had a construction business. The man had to go away on a long trip and so he called his three employees together and said, "I have to go on a long trip and so I am leaving you three in charge. I have put together a tool box for each of you to use to keep the business going while I am gone."

The man then gave each of his employees a tool box. The tool boxes contained all the tools the employees needed to do what the man expected of them, but since the three employees didn't all have the same abilities, each toolbox was different. To the first employee, he gave a very large tool box filled with every tool that you can imagine. To the second employee, he gave a smaller toolbox, but one that still had a very good assortment of tools. To the third employee, he gave a very small tool box with just a few tools, but enough tools for the employee to do what was expected of him.

The man then left to go on his trip. When he returned, he called his employees together to see what they had done while he was gone.

The first employee said, "I knew that you had a great love for the homeless people of the world, so I used the toolbox that you gave me to build homes for the homeless."

"That is great!" said the employer. "You have done so well that I am going to put you in charge of all new construction for the entire company."

The second employee said, "I knew that you had a great love for the elderly, so I used the toolbox you gave me to fix up the homes of elderly people who can no longer do the work themselves."

"That is wonderful!" said the employer. "You have done such a good job, that I am putting you in charge of all the repair and maintenance work for the entire company."

Then he turned to the third employee and asked, "What did you do with the tools that I left for you?"

"I knew that you are a very demanding boss and that you expect a lot from your employees. I was afraid that if I used the tools you gave me that one of them might get broken or that I might lose one of them and make you angry. I put the tools in a very safe place. They were there all the time you were gone. Look, here they are, just like new."

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia. Abide in me as I abide in you; those who abide in me bear much fruit. Alleluia (John 15:4, 5)

"What a worthless employee you are! I didn't give you the tools for safekeeping, I gave them to you to use in my business. You are fired!" Since they had proven that they would make good use of them, he took the man's toolbox and divided the tools between the other two employees.

I think this story is a good picture of what God has done in us. He has given each of us tools to use in building His kingdom. We don't all have the same tools, but God expects us to use whatever tools He has given to us. If we do, He will give us even more, but if we don't, He may take them away and give them to someone who will use them. Listen to the words of Jesus, "For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

Dear Lord, help us to be faithful in using the gifts that you have given to us to help others and to build up the kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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## *Word Search Puzzle*

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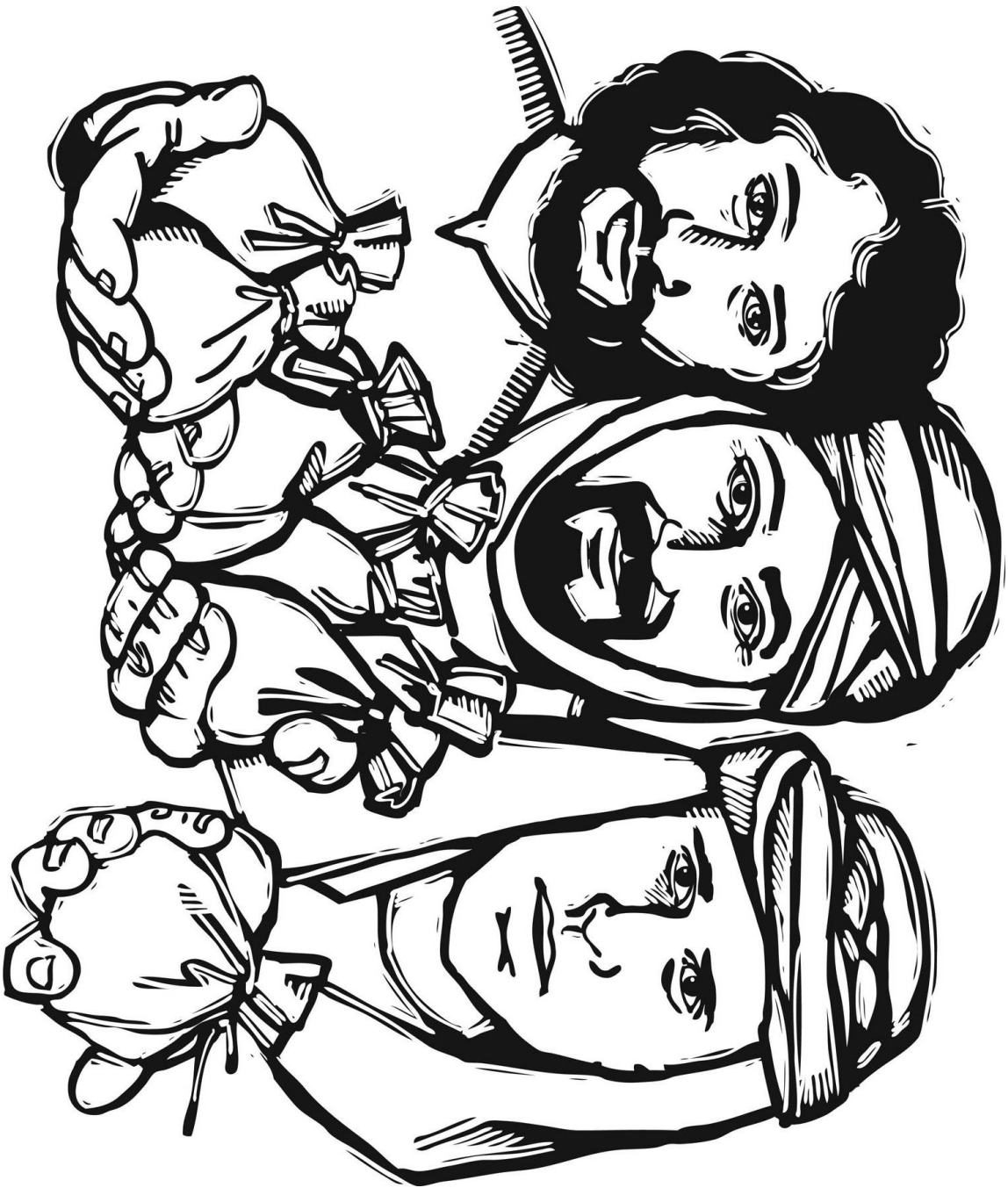
W O R T H L E S S T R E S N R
W I C K E D U J R E M N X N U
K G O S C E M J T S H T Q F A
T A Z I L H Z S P H A R E Q X
F I Q S W K A F P I P U F I L
A N M B E M A H E P P S Q F A
I E O J E R A B I L I T Y J Z
T D N I P C V U Y K N E S Q Y
H R E P I L S A Y P E D N E T
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U Q C J G W A Y Q T S R E O X
L Z G Z G N R C J N U L Q M D
R Z D M E F E N E O A T W S K
P R O P E R T Y J T W G F X K
W G L E U E H I K B G N R Y U
  
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JOURNEY	WORTHLESS	TALENT	MASTER
SERVANT	PROPERTY	SHARE	MONEY
ABILITY	WICKED	FAITHFUL	WEEPING
GAINED	HAPPINESS	LAZY	ENTRUSTED

**GATHERING TOOLS:** Let children find items around the room (that the teacher has placed ahead of class time), that would help them in a profession that the teacher tells them, such as a nurse or doctor, a fireman, a policeman, a carpenter, a mom, or a school teacher. Tell today's story about the tools that GOD gives us to BUILD His Kingdom!

# THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

MATTHEW 25:14-30



Help us to be faithful in using the gifts that you have given to us to help others and to build up the kingdom!

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