



FIRST WORDS

OCTOBER - 2023



Loving God.
Loving our neighbors.
Because Christ loves us first.



THE EXPERIMENT OF THE TALENTS

It's stewardship season, that time of year when we talk about money, a thing that seems to touch every aspect of how we think about the world and make our way through it, and yet also a thing we're not particularly eager to talk about in church. Since money can be a touchy subject, I thought this year, we'd think about one of the hardest and most confusing parables of Jesus, the parable of the talents.

Read now the Message translation of this story Jesus tells in Matthew 25:14-30. As you read, it's appropriate, I think, to think of the master as God and the three servants as us:

14-18 "The kingdom of God is also like a man going off on an extended trip. He called his servants together and delegated responsibilities. To one, he gave five thousand dollars; to another, two thousand; to a third, one thousand, depending on their abilities. Then he left. Right off, the first servant went to work and doubled his master's investment. The second did the same. But the man with the single thousand dug a hole and carefully buried his master's money.

19-21 “After a long absence, the master of those three servants came back and settled up with them. The one given five thousand dollars showed him how he had doubled his investment. His master commended him: ‘Good work! You did your job well. From now on, be my partner.’

22-23 “The servant with the two thousand showed how he also had doubled his master’s investment. His master commended him: ‘Good work! You did your job well. From now on, be my partner.’

24-25 “The servant was given one thousand and said, ‘Master, I know you have high standards and hate careless ways, that you demand the best and make no allowances for error. I was afraid I might disappoint you, so I found a good hiding place and secured your money. Here it is, safe and sound down to the last cent.’

26-27 “The master was furious. ‘That’s a terrible way to live! It’s criminal to live cautiously like that! If you knew I was after the best, why did you do less than the least? The least you could have done would have been to invest the sum with the bankers, where at least I would have gotten a little interest.’

Here’s why this story might be confusing: usually, when Jesus talks about money, he seems pretty disinterested. He says things like, “It’s easier for the camel to make it through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to make it into heaven.” And when he does show interest in money, it’s usually the person with *the least* who turns out to be the hero, like, for example, the story of the widow’s mite. But here, Jesus turns everything upside down. The servant who makes the most money is lauded as the hero, and the financial failure ends up condemned. What are we to make of this uncharacteristic lesson of Jesus?

This year, for stewardship, we decided to turn this parable into an experiment. Earlier this year, we entrusted four teams of members of our congregation with *your money*. Or, to be more precise, we entrusted them with *God’s money*, the money you have given to the glory of God through our church. We gave each between \$20 - \$100 from our church’s general fund and asked them to find ways to faithfully put it to use on your behalf, on God’s behalf.

So far, we’ve heard about two efforts. On September 24th, we heard from Carter, Reece & Kole Daughtry, who used their funds to purchase and sell aloe plants to the benefit of the DUMA Food Pantry. Last Sunday, we heard from Olivia Godwin, who used her funds to bake and sell cookies to benefit the Ronald McDonald House.

It has been such a joy to hear about these projects. As we continue to reflect in the coming weeks, consider these three takeaways from the parable of the talents:

1. We believe that everything we have in life— our skills, our talents, our wealth— are gifts from God entrusted to our care. God intends for us to use what has been entrusted to us for the glory of God and the good of our neighbors.
2. Nevertheless, we believe in a God of grace and mercy, and the value of our lives is not dependent on what we do with them.
3. The third servant’s problem, then, is not that he was *unproductive* with what was given to him but rather that he was *fearful* of his master. He did not believe in a merciful master but rather that if he were to risk and lose what was entrusted to him, his master would have been angry. In reality, his master was angry because he *didn’t* risk it.
4. If God is forgiving, **we have nothing to gain, nothing to earn, nothing to fear, nothing to lose.** So, we should be willing to take risks that have been entrusted to us in gratitude.

Let us prayerfully consider the risk we take together as a church family.



Last month, we kicked off a new season of Christian Education ministry and y'all did not disappoint. So many men, women, youth, and children showed up to fellowship together, eat together, sing together, play handbells together, and study God's word together.

In the midst of our usually scheduled CE opportunities, we have a couple of special events coming up this month:

First, our children who come to Bible Club on Sunday evenings will be **singing in worship on Sunday, October 8th**. Those who will be singing need to be in the sanctuary by 9:30 am that morning to rehearse. It's also pretty important that they are able to make it to Bible Club on Sunday evenings at 5:15 pm so they can get as much time with Ms. Kristen as possible.

They will be singing the song, "God of the Stars," one of the songs from VBS this past summer (it is probably my favorite :-)) If you don't have a VBS CD, there are still some copies on the table outside the church office if you want to pick one up for some extra practice in the car or at home. You can also look it up on YouTube.

Second, our annual Church-wide Fall Festival and Chili Cookoff is scheduled for October 29th. Festivities will begin at 4 pm. The chili cookoff should start around 5:30 pm. We'll have tons of games, prizes, and a costume contest as well. I hope to see everyone there!!

Don't forget all of these ongoing monthly opportunities:

Women's Circles:

- The Day Circle meets on 10/2 at 1 pm in the Parlor
- The Evening Circle meets on 10/16 at 5:30 at Simple Twist

Women's Bible Journaling:

-bring your Bible (one you're willing to draw in) on 10/26 and meet in \ the library

Men's Breakfast:

-8:30am on 10/1 in the Fellowship Hall

Sunday school, all starting at 9:30 am every Sunday morning:

- Covenant Class in the library
- Bible Basics in the parlor
- K-5th grade class in the corner classroom across from the library

Bible Club, K-5th Graders, every Sunday night, 5:15-6:30 pm

-an evening of choir, handbells, and Bible study

Youth Fellowship and Confirmation, every Sunday night 5:15-6:30 pm

-study and fellowship upstairs in the youth rooms

See y'all soon!

Pastor Elizabeth



Perhaps he should have been happy on the evening of his sister's wedding. His family was in town and all were busy with details and the usual merry-making. George, the eldest of eight children, was very close to his oldest sister. Amid the clamor of the celebration, George wrote these words,

*O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

*O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.*

The first stanza sounds as if George is writing this love poem to commemorate the wedding. George Matheson was nearly 40 years old and had become a well-known preacher in Scotland. It was fitting that he, the philosopher and pastor, write a hymn about love on this day.

But it wasn't out of piety that he penned these words, it was actually the result of "severe mental suffering" as he himself described. He dictated the verses as Divine inspiration drove him to write. He admitted to having no talent or inclination to write verses. He wrote the stanzas quickly with no revision.

All his life, George Matheson had suffered poor eyesight. He had fallen in love with a young woman who decided not to marry him because of his blindness at the age of 20. His sister had stepped in to be his eyes and hands. She assisted him with daily activities as well as with his pastoral responsibilities. Not only was he losing her now, but he was reminded of the lover he had lost about twenty years prior. She had, in fact, let him go.

But George knew the love of His heavenly Father, and was losing himself totally in this love that was ever clinging to him. Being mindful of the Father's deep, abiding love does not eliminate the sting of rejection, but it does give a place to land. And there he was resting.

Elaine Hagenberg has taken these verses written in 1882 and given them new harmonies that will be gripping—even to a calloused heart. The choir will debut this anthem on Sunday, October 22nd, Consecration Sunday.

Other musical events for October are listed below.

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|----------------------------|---|
| Sun. Oct. 1st | World Communion Sunday
"You Are the Bread" (Schram) |
| Sun. Oct. 8 th | K-5 Kids on Chimes and Handbells
K-5 Choir |
| Sun. Oct. 22 nd | Consecration Sunday
"O Love" (Elaine Hagenberg) |
| Sun. Oct. 29 th | Guest Organist, Tommy Hawley
Toccatina and Fugue in D minor (Bach) |
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News From the 3-Day Class

We are off to a great start here in 3 Day! In our first month, we have been learning about our five senses, apples, fall, and leaves. We have been able to paint and even make mini apple pies! We are working on recognizing our names and cutting with scissors.

In October, we are going to learn about fire safety, pumpkins, transportation, and creepy things. The Dunn Fire Department will also be visiting us to teach us about fire safety. We are also super excited for our first field trip to Tarts Corn Maze! We will also be getting ready for our Halloween party.

Thank you for the support from the members of First Presbyterian Church and our Preschool families.

Love,
Mrs. Ana And Mrs. Lisa



Men of the Church Mulching the Playground



Progress on the Columbarium!



Montreat and Massanetta Sunday



Announcements

Upcoming Sundays

1

MEN OF THE CHURCH BREAKFAST
TWO CENTS A MEAL
COMMUNION

8

KIDS CHOIR SINGING

15

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

22

COMMITMENT SUNDAY

29

COMMUNION
FALL FESTIVAL



Dunn Community Blood Drive

Held at First Presbyterian Church

In the Banquet Hall
901 N Park Ave
Dunn, NC 28334

Tuesday, October 17, 2023
12:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.



FALL FESTIVAL 2023



Costumes
Music
Games & Booths
Treats & Prizes
The Annual Church Chili Cookoff!

October 29, 2023

4:00 pm Activities

5:30 pm Chili Cookoff

Deacon Shoe Project

The Deacons will be working with the Dunn schools for our annual Fall Shoe Project in October. Children from the local schools will be getting a new pair of shoes and socks that day.

If you would like to make a donation to this project, you can donate online, write a check (*reference line to reflect 2023 Fall Shoe Project*) and either drop off your check by the church office, mail it, or use the envelope that is in the Sunday morning bulletin for the next four Sundays (October 1, 8, 15, and 22).

Donations in any amount are welcomed!!

Thank you for giving to this special project!!
FPC Board of Deacons

Give to the Fall Shoe Project
Here

STEWARDSHIP 2024

Prayerfully consider what you can give to First
Presbyterian Church over the course of 2024



Submit your 2024 Estimate of Giving Here

DEBT FREE IN 2023

Prayerfully consider a one-time gift by the end of the year over and above your 2023 pledge to eliminate our church's debt.



Submit your "Debt Free in 2023" Commitment Here

Columbarium and Prayer Garden

The Columbarium and Prayer Garden Council has plans for the continued purchase of Columbarium niches and for Memorial Gifts and Honorariums. If you would like to Memorialize someone with a gift or honor someone with an Honorarium some of the options are:

Benches
Lighting
Fountain
Prayer Garden Landscaping
Perpetual Maintenance
General Donations.



You can make your donations in memory or honor of a loved one online by [clicking here](#).

If you have any questions please contact a member of the Columbarium and Prayer Garden Council.

Linda Hayes linda@harnettlaw.com
Jane Tart janeatart@me.com
Clem & Kathy Medley clemmedley@yahoo.com
Robbie Tart Robbiet.rethouse@gmail.com
Billy & Patsy Powell dunndealmaker@gmail.com
Andrew McLean Agmclean81@icloud.com



THANK YOU!

Nursery Attendants

October 1 - Ligon Holder
 October 8 - Rob & Stephanie Wood
 October 15 - Ryan & Trina Brackman
 October 22 - Courtney & Meda Williams
 October 29 - Andy & Meredith Wermel

Acolytes

October 1 - Story Wermel
 October 8 - John Howell McGuire
 October 15 - Lindsay Dudley
 October 22 - Emma Kate Arnn
 October 29 - Mia Walker

Broadcast & Sound Team

October 1 - Cole Stevens & Bryant Pope
 October 8 - Andy Wermel & Bryant Pope
 October 15 - Blair Chance & Bryant Pope
 October 22 - Jason Colmenero & Bryant Pope
 October 29 - Wesley Johnson & Bryant Pope

Ushers

October 1
 A.C. Williams
 Eugene Chance

October 8
 Chris Smith
 Cindy Smith

October 15
 Si Harrington
 Helen Harrington

October 22
 Kevin Allen
 Will Gage

October 29
 Lynda Turner
 Brian Foster



IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Shirley Ammons
 Cliff & Ruby Artis
 Bryan Avery
 Hilda Bannerman
 Stephen Bath
 Gary Brown
 Katie Dickens
 Joyce Dorman
 Arlene Duff
 Nell Frank
 Wayne Franklin
 Phillip Gaines
 Barbara Godwin

Rodney Godwin
 T.C. Godwin
 Susan Grissom
 Nick Harmon
 Paula Harmon
 Becky Hartley
 Eliese Hodges
 Justin Johnston
 Dave Mason
 Mitch Mason
 Joe Miriello
 Linda Overby

Becky Peele
 Roger Pierce
 Will Pope
 Mary Alice Reece
 Kenneth Rosenquest
 Sarah Shields
 Wayne Smith
 Melissa Stevens
 Steve Turnage
 Steve Watson
 Donna Williams
 Garrett Winder

October Birthdays

Travis Strickland	1	Deborah Warren	13	Susan Pope-Opton	20
Curtis Godwin	2	Gina Warren	13	Meredith Wermel	20
Charlene Lee	2	Patsy Powell	14	John Willoughby	23
Jack Jackson	3	Jennifer Frick	17	Amanda Strickland	25
Russ Warren	4	Mark Sasser	17	Chris Goff	26
Lillianna Graham	5	Kyle Glover	18	Cora Sue Beasley	27
Brooke Wilson	9	Mia Alvarez	19	Raymon Hamilton	27
Sophie Alvarez	10	Anne Johnson	19	West Stanley	27
Rob Wood	11	Chuck Robinson	19	Clem Medley	29
Kathy Hatley	12	Lorelei Graham	20	Daniel Goff	31

First Presbyterian Church | 910-892-4121 | fpcdunnoffice@gmail.com | www.fpcdunn.org

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