

Rev. Dr. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

10/03/10 **Why Was the Third Servant Scolded? Matthew 25: 14-30**

Every year, JAUC emphasizes the importance of Christian stewardship in the month of October. Today is the first Stewardship Sunday.

Let us understand afresh the meaning of Christian stewardship through Jesus' parable of three servants.

A master takes a long trip. He entrusts his three servants large sums of money: five thousand talents to the first servant, two thousands talents to the second servant, and one thousand talents to the third servant. Then the master tells them to multiply what they are given while he is away.

Several weeks later, the master comes home. The time of accounting has come.

The first servant says to the master that he has multiplied his talents to ten thousand. The second servant reports that he has multiplied his talents to four thousand. The master rejoices and praises them for their faithfulness.

However, the third servant sheepishly tells the master that he has not done anything with what the master entrusted him. He buried the money in the ground. The master scolds him harshly for his indolence and lack of ingenuity.

What this parable makes clear is this: The first and second servants were faithful to God. But the third servant was not. Which one are you? This was the question Jesus was asking then. This is the question he is asking us today through the parable.

We are entrusted with such talents as time, money, ability, and aptitude. We are to put our talents to good use in the service of God.

We may say, "I would really like to. But my talents are too meager." We are often like the third servant. We are to be reminded of the story of Jesus feeding five thousand reported in the Gospel of John.

A young boy offers his lunch to Jesus to feed five thousand people. His lunch consists of five pieces of bread and two fish.

We can almost hear the crowd snickering in derision, "Come on. Get serious. There are 5000 of us here."

But Jesus graciously accepts the boy's lunch. In his hands, five pieces of bread and two fish continue to multiply to feed the entire crowd. Not only that, the leftovers fill twelve baskets.

Jesus is asking us today, "Are you willing to offer your talents, however meager, for God and neighbor?" Here the parable of three servants and the story of feeding 5000 come together.

Let us answer him joyfully and lovingly, "Yes, we are willing. Yes, we are willing." The rest belongs to God. God will take care of the rest.

Thanks be to God.