

Homily – 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time 2020

As we get closer to the great season of Advent, Our Lord teaches us this weekend that we must live our earthly life in such a way so as to gain Heaven.

In today's **Parable of the Talents**, Jesus compares our time on earth to a long-term leasing agreement. The man in the story goes on a journey and entrusts His money to 3 of his servants. A "talent" was a large sum of money. Now the first servant traded the 5 talents and came back with 5 more. The second servant traded 2 talents and made 2 more, and the third who received 1 talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

You can say that the first and second servants invested their master's money and got a good return, whereas the third was cautious, and buried his talent but didn't gain anything. Now, why was the master angry with the third servant? It's because the third servant wasted the talent, and so his money did not grow.

Now, from a business or financial point of view, **INVESTMENT, RISK AND RETURN** can also work as a model for the spiritual life. For example, when we invest our money, we expect some benefit in the future. Now, when it comes to the spiritual life, if we **INVEST** in our relationship with God through prayer and charity towards others, we will receive benefits from the Lord and live in His Grace.

Now when it comes to RISK in financing, there is a possibility that our investment will lose money. Risk factors include market volatility, inflation and deteriorating business fundamentals. The financial market can affect asset prices, even if the fundamentals remain sound.

Now, this is similar to the spiritual life; for example, when we commit a sin, or fail to follow the Commandments, we **RISK** losing our relationship with God. Also, world influences and temptations can affect our thoughts, opinions and ideas, even if we know the fundamentals of our faith.

Lastly, when it comes to a return on our investment, profits include income and capital gains. In simplest terms, a financial return is the money made or lost on an investment over some period of time.* Again, when it comes to the spiritual life, we expect a **RETURN** from God' never-ending mercy and forgiveness. And if we stay faithful to the Lord in this life, we will gain all the benefits of heaven in the next!

And so, **how have we invested our time to the Lord?** This can range from daily prayer and daily mass either at church or online; we can invest our time by volunteering, donating, and serving the parish community; and we can invest our time by sharing the Gospel with others. God has given us all an opportunity to invest in our spiritual life during this Pandemic.

Now, **do we risk losing our relationship with God?** Like I said earlier, this can happen when we fall into certain vices and habitual sins and

temptations. Many of us are spending a lot of time at home right now, and so are we distracted by spending too much time online? Are we neglecting our prayer life?

And lastly, **do we desire a good return from the Lord?** Just remember, we will never lose anything if we invest in God.

Lastly, some people might think that the third servant was “playing it safe” by not investing in the talent. Nowadays, when it comes to our faith, we like to “play it safe” by not sharing our faith with others, and we don’t want to risk losing our relationships. And it’s understandable because we live in a culture where everything gets recorded and goes viral. Everything Pope Francis says is recorded and then either misunderstood or misrepresented. That’s why we need to be prudent and respectful, but FIRM when we preach the Gospel.

And so, as we prepare for the great season of Advent, find ways to invest in your relationship with the Lord. Try to avoid running the risk of damaging your relationship with God and others. And if we invest in what the Lord gave us, there will be a great pay off, and our talents will reach a hundredfold!

*Excerpts taken from: <https://finance.zacks.com/concepts-return-investment-risk-3049.html>