

**Augustana College
Chapel of Reconciliation**

Well Done, Thou Good and Faithful Servant

The Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-28

Muriel Larson

9 May 2007

Hymn : Come thy Fount of Every Blessing. #807

Good morning! I am not sure if any one here is going to believe that I did not intentionally select this scripture and topic to coincide with my own retirement. It just turned out that Pastor Paul called me and asked me if this day was okay, and I said yes, and that was that! Simple as that. I might add that it might be more difficult to say “no” to God Himself than to Pastor Paul! But I have had this topic in mind for a long time! But in some ways, as much as I might want to hide how I really feel, it would be kind of nice to hear Margot say those words to me .. it sure beats being asked “how soon are you going to be out of my office,” or, “please leave your keys on the front desk on your way out!” I think most of us would prefer to hear “well done, thou good a faithful servant”

Before I say anything more about this scripture passage, I do want to take advantage of this moment and say that I think this place where we gather for worship is a Holy Place. Over the years at Augustana, it has been in this place where we have all been encouraged and challenged with words from Pastor Paul and others, and have been fed at this communion table, so that we might remember together as a community what Christ did for us all. This is a Holy Place. Almost twenty years ago, in this place, I was given my Augustana Nursing Pin – a wonderful milestone for this non-traditional student. How could I have ever known then that I would one day put those same pins on six years of wonderful students who would graduate from Augustana. Oh yes, I must also say that on two occasions, I was in this place as the mother of the bride, as our daughters began their married life. Indeed, this is a Holy Place. And here we are all together again to pray, to sing and to break bread, and in my case, with the usual trepidation.!

As I thought about how I wanted to put my thoughts into words this morning, I came up with the proverbial three point sermon. And it will be delivered in less than 10 minutes! The three points are The Problem, The Process and The Promise.

When I think about the verses in this parable, I immediately see a potential problem – that is almost nursing language, meaning, something could go wrong here. I was raised as a conservative evangelical – somewhere adopting the idea that if one expects to hear these words “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” - perhaps from the Lord upon our arrival at the pearly gates, one better do it right – nearly perfect. Now that is a problem! I am not mystified at why I would think that way – I am a woman, a nurse and

a Baptist – all three of those identities are overwhelmed with the idea of being perfect. It was not very far into my life – especially once I was married and became a mother, when I realized that I would not, could not do it perfect – to use the words of that great theologian, Dr. Suess. I knew and still know that I am prone to wander, maybe even neglect the God I love, at the very least be unkind and uncaring to those around me. Maybe, just maybe, I will miss hearing those coveted words.

Fortunately, I hope, I have changed abit in my thinking, and now it seems more likely to me that in the Parable of the Talents, the man was saying to his servants – you have gifts – and you are on a life long journey of learning how to use those gifts. It is a process, your do not have to be perfect, but you do need to participate in the process. You need to show up! Have you ever been afraid that if you use your talents, you will be critized or laughed at ...So, hide your gifts – hide them under a bushel – NO – remember that chorus from your childhood? And there is always the possibility that you might give all that you have, and God' s gift back to you isn' t what you thought it would be. A great philosopher who we all know recently reminded me that in this parable, there could be a fourth possibility – a servant who used his talents but did not get anything back. We are only told in this Scripture that if you give, you get more back. We all probably know that giving does not always mean receiving – sometimes just the giving of our talents is all we are asked to do. And in that process, the song writer reminds us that we are daily conformed to be like our master.

So, we are on a journey as servants of the master – how wonderful it is when we know that the master is saying:

Well done, thou good and faithful accountant
Well done, thou good and faithful administrator
Well done, thou good and faithful cook
Well done, thou good and faith professor,
Well, done, thou good and faithful staff member
Well done thou good and faithful President

And last but not least
Well, done, thy good and faithful student
Student of God' s good chemistry
Student of God' s good English
Student of God' s good history
Student of God' s good nursing
Student of God' s gift of learning and serving.

Well done, thou good and faith Freshman, you have finished your first year – hooray!,
Well done thou good and faithful Sophomore, you weren' t a freshman this year!
Well done thou good and faithful Junior, you were an upper classman!
and well done, thou good and faithful Senior- you have made it!
You have used the talent of your mind to learn new things
to scatter new seed
And you will harvest much.

This leaves only the third point –
How? How do we participate in this process?

The third point – we do it with a promise – God’s promise to be with us, to go before us, to enable us and strengthen us. He tells us in Jeremiah that he has good plans for our life-plans that will not harm us but are for our good. And most wonderful of all, to forgive us over and over – We were encouraged last week by Brennan Manning that we will never be all that we can be; we will never get it all right. But the Corinthians encourages us by reminding us that His grace is sufficient for us, His power is made perfect in our weakness. Daily I am conformed to be more like Him. So, today at this Communion table we remembered together once again of the most wonderful gift of all – the gift of the Eternal Life through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

“Take my heart, Oh, take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above”

HOLY COMMUNION
Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Prelude

“Land of Rest” Gerald
Near

Welcome/Announcements

L: Christ is risen

C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia

Invocation

Confession/Absolution

p. 212

Scripture

Matthew 25:14-28

Sermon

“Well done, thy good and faithful servant”

Muriel Larson, Nursing Dept.

Hymn of the Day
Fount”

“Come Thou

ELW 807

ASA Inauguration

Jesson Vogt, Pres.

John Maisenbach, Vice Pres.

Jenni Andersen, Treas.

Holy Communion

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts

C: We lift them to the Lord.

Blessing

Benediction

Postlude

“Toccata in Seven”

John Rutter

John Wilkening, organ

CAMPUS MINISTRY
ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENIOR SPEAKERS 07-08 - The calendar for next year's senior sermons is in the narthex. Juniors, please choose a date and sign up this spring!

3rd ANNUAL VIKING/COUGAR 1K RUN - Meet at the Christ the King parking lot at **4 pm on May 16th - Reading Day** - and participate in this "challenging" event! T-shirts are \$10 and, as Fr. Mike has assured us - **THEY ARE AN AWESOME DESIGN THIS YEAR** - and **EVERYBODY** will want one! Ice cream, water, fellowship!!! Its an event you won't want to miss. Sign-up is on the Narthex table.

SEMESTER OF PEACE TIP FOR THE WEEK - Pass on Your PC - When you upgrade, donate your retiring computer to the Computers for Schools Program. They'll screen it for eligibility and quality; refurbish it through programs at correctional facilities, vocation centers, and community colleges; then place it with either a school you stipulate or another one in need. Visit pcsforschools.org or contact: Computers for Schools Program, 3350 N. Kedzie Ave., Chicago, IL 50518 (800-939-6000)

MIDNIGHT MADNESS - Our Savior's Lutheran is once again hosting a Finals Week study break for Augie students. **Sun., May 13 and Mon., May 14 from 6 pm to 2 am.** there will be munchies, fruit and soda, as well as tables and chairs and study corners of the church building for YOU. At 11 pm they will serve free comfort food (BBQ's on Sunday and pizza on Monday!) Finals don't have to be a drag. Cross the street and be good to yourself.

CHAPEL CALENDAR

Fri. (11 th)	Worship, 10 am - Celebration of Intern Chris
Sun. (13 th)	Worship, 11 am - Chris Matson, Intern Pastor <i>14th - 18th - FINALS WEEK - no chapel</i>
Sun. (20 th)	Baccalaureate, 10 am - Commencement, 2 pm