**Notes for Next Sunday**

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Zephaniah 1:7-16

**7﻿ Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near. The LORD has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited. ﻿8﻿ On the day of the LORD’s sacrifice I will punish the princes and the king’s sons and all those clad in foreign clothes. ﻿9﻿ On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold,who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit. ﻿10﻿ “On that day,” declares the LORD, “a cry will go up from the Fish Gate, wailing from the New Quarter, and a loud crash from the hills. ﻿11﻿ Wail, you who live in the market district, all your merchants will be wiped out, all who trade with silver will be ruined. ﻿12﻿ At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, ‘The LORD will do nothing, either good or bad.’ ﻿13﻿ Their wealth will be plundered, their houses demolished. They will build houses but not live in them; they will plant vineyards but not drink the wine. 14﻿ “The great day of the LORD is near— near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. ﻿15﻿ That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, ﻿16﻿ a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers**

Zephaniah prophesied the future storm of God’s wrath as a day without light. Though the world has witnessed God’s judgment on Judah and its enemies, Zephaniah’s darkest prophecy remains unfulfilled, pointing still forward to earth’s end: the great day of the Lord. (TLSB)

*V. 7 Be silent.* The word Zephaniah uses to command silence is the same as our word “hush!” It is a strong command, calling for immediate and absolute compliance. The reasons are given: The people of Judah are standing before the Sovereign Lord and He is lord and master of the whole earth.

*V. 7 sacrifice*. The guests whom the Lord has designated to share in the eating of the sacrifice are the invading troops, probably Babylonians, whom God invites to share in the plundering of Judah. What irony! A sacrifice which normally express Israel’s covenant relationship with God and which was meant to proclaim forgiveness, joy, and peace now becomes a picture of God’s judgment.

*V. 8 foreign clothes.* The point is that wearing foreign styles displayed a certain mindset. It showed that the members of the royal family admired and were influenced by the customs and beliefs they found in the heathen cultures.

*V. 9* *avoid stepping on the threshold.* Possibly refers to the superstitious practice of Philistine priests, who did not dare to step on the threshold of Dagon’s temple. (TLSB)

V. 10 *Fish Gate.* It was in Jerusalem’s north wall. Discovery of fish bones has confirmed that a fish market was here, likely stocked with dried or salted fish, since the Jordan and Great Sea were too far away to provide fresh fish. (TLSB)

*V 14* *great day of the Lord* *is near*. Some things Zephaniah prophesied took place at the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC. Other details would be fulfilled later. The ultimate fulfillment will be on Judgment Day.

*V. 16 against the fortified cities.* The day of the Lord’s judgment will be unstoppable. It will roll forward like the mightiest army the world has ever seen. No walls or towers of human construction will be able to prevent it from happening or will protect people from its destructive power.

GOSPEL – Matthew 25:14-30

**14﻿ “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ﻿15﻿ To one he gave five talents﻿a﻿ of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ﻿16﻿ The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. ﻿17﻿ So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. ﻿18﻿ But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ﻿19﻿ “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ﻿20﻿ The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’ ﻿21﻿ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ ﻿22﻿ “The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ ﻿23﻿ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ ﻿24﻿ “Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ﻿25﻿ So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ ﻿26﻿ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ﻿27﻿ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ﻿28﻿ ”‘Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. ﻿29﻿ 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. ﻿30﻿ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

This is another parable about the end times. It is not difficult to see that Jesus is telling His disciples that before long He will be leaving them. He will suffer and die and rise again and ascend into heaven. But that will not mean the work of His kingdom will stop in this world. No, He will rather provide His disciples with everything they need in order to continue that work.

The talents that Jesus gives us include all the intellectual and physical abilities we are born with and those we develop as we mature. Our talents include all the material passions that rightfully come into our hands. And they include the many opportunities God provides us for using our talents to serve Him and our neighbor.

The first two servants use their talent to utmost of their ability. They receive the same reward because it is not the amount of talents given, but the faithful use of them, that Christ regards.

In this parable the third servant hid his master’s money (v. 18) where he would have no trouble in taking care of it, while he ought to have traded with it for his lord’s profit. His behavior shows a failure to live out a life of faith to serve God.

*V. 30 weeping and gnashing of teeth*. Describes hell as a place of torment and eternal regret (13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51). (TLSB)