

# The Smestow Vale Team Ministry

St Benedict Biscop and the Venerable Bede

Keeping in Touch with our Church Family

Sunday 15th November

Second Sunday before Advent



## Paul encourages his friends.

Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

*1 Thessalonians 5.1-11*

## Jesus' parable on responsibility and trust

Jesus said to his disciples, 'The kingdom of heaven is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the

Heavenly Lord,  
you long for the world's salvation:  
Stir us from apathy  
restrain us from excess  
and revive in us new hope  
that all creation will one day be healed  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

*Matthew 25:14-30*

## **A Reflection for the Second Sunday before Advent from the Revd Preb Paul Brown**

Although it is now in its 15th series Lord Sugar's "the apprentice" has lost none of its fascination for me. Up to 20 young hopefuls are selected, each with significant gifts and talents. Fans of the series know that the candidates are divided into two teams, given a scenario and then asked with making as much profit as possible. Sometimes the profits are spectacular and the candidates are bathed in success. At other times the profits can even be negative and gloom descends as they consider their mistakes. One by one the contestants fall by the wayside as tasks take them out of their comfort zones until at last one individual is told "you are hired".

Jesus parable of the talents many different facets, but one in particular jumped out at me as I read it. The master distributed the money to his slaves, ten, five and a single talent "according to their ability" I am unsure how much a talent was, but in the New Testament it indicates a large sum of money. It is easy to feel a little sorry for the servant who was given only one talent, with a smaller amount of money was there as much potential for profit? Of course we don't know, but remember that the master gave out the cash "according to their ability" he had no expectation of a spectacular return. But the poor chap seems overwhelmed by the challenge. Perhaps he was frightened of his master? Perhaps he was risk averse? We don't know, but to simply bury it in the earth did no more than keep it safe. Burying it missed an opportunity, even if he had placed it in the safest of investments there would have been some profit and so when the master asks him to account for his actions. There are no congratulations. Simply a rather harsh "you're fired." As he is thrown into "the outer darkness".

Jesus' last words to his disciples in St Matthew's Gospel include the instruction to "Go", they were not to be passive, they were tasked with spreading the good news that is at the heart of our faith. That task is still part of our own personal discipleship and one of the great temptations is to look at other people and think that they could do it so much better than me and do nothing. Or even worse to criticise and then do nothing, refusing to invest our own gifts and talents. God has no unreal expectations of us, we are not called to be clones of St Paul, Billy Graham or Mother Teresa, but we are all called to do something that is commensurate with what God has given us. Yes that involves risk and yes, sometimes we will mess up, but God isn't Lord Sugar and there will be no "you're fired" simply a welcome into his kingdom.

*Paul*

## **Please remember those who have asked for our prayers**

Lisa, Morgan, Margaret Ward, Joy Waistell, Monika, Michael Concannon, Sarah Aldridge, Jane, Delma Scriven, George Moorehouse and Carl Baker.

### **Those who have died**

Kath Humpheson, Jean Porter, Brian Wheway, Brian Williams and Andrew Glazzard

Please send requests for prayers to the Parish Office.

### **Prayers During the Week**

#### **Sunday**

Pray that we may all discover our talents and use them in God's service in our world.

#### **Monday**

Please pray for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, President and Vice President-elect of the USA.

#### **Tuesday**

Pray that this lockdown will be effective in restraining the spread of the Coronavirus.

#### **Wednesday**

Pray for a good conclusion to the Brexit talks.

#### **Thursday**

Pray for our hospitals, as risk of being overwhelmed.

#### **Friday**

Pray that for the safety of those who have to work during the lockdown.

#### **Saturday**

Pray for all who have had to cancel plans and celebrations because of Covid 19.

### **National Lockdown**

St Benedict's will be open for private prayer throughout the lockdown. Sadly there will be no services in church (except funerals.) until the 6th of December (St Nicholas' Day)

### **Pew**

We still have one pew for sale £80, please contact Paul if you are interested.

### **Prayer Meeting**

I'm hoping to hold the next Prayer meeting on 24th Nov on ZOOM! If you would like to be included, please email me on [suewatson@telecomplus.org.uk](mailto:suewatson@telecomplus.org.uk) and I will send you a link and an explanation of how to join. If you haven't used ZOOM before, it's quite easy - you will need a device with a camera - smartphones, laptops and i-pad all have them built in, so no problem.

Do give it a go...!

