**You have been faithful in managing small amounts … come on in and share my happiness**(Matthew 25.21)

This parable sounds like a capitalist’s dream – God favours those who make money and is hard on the poor. Surely that can’t be right! This story is often called the Parable of the Talents, talents being a weight of metal; probably this parable led to using the word talent to mean skill or ability; thus ‘use your talents’!

Begins with “[the Kingdom of Heaven] is like”. Not that it is about money, but God will judge how we use what is entrusted to us. TEXT. These might be talents, or money, but could be so much more.

As a parish, and as individuals, we have been given so much, and still have so much. But it is easy to focus on what we have not got – young families, sporting clubs, money to employ several workers, people eager to take on significant roles, etc. This could get us down, and does many smaller churches around NZ.

How often do we consider what we *do* have? Great well-kept, well-used premises; enough income to pay for a presbyter; fellowship groups, and outreach initiatives; a great atmosphere; a talented and varied musical tradition; caring and welcoming attitude. All this is a lot better than many Methodist parishes in NZ. NB The ‘talents’ may also be opportunities – for outreach, encouraging conversation, acts of sacrificial service.

This is not a cause for complacency. Ultimately God will say, “What did you do with those opportunities I gave you, those skills I gave you, that money, time and energy you were given?” There are still areas of life that need strengthening, there is progress to be made. The parable encourages us to use what we have while we have it – use it or lose it! Hence the Mission Statement meeting this afternoon. I gave you all a $10 challenge earlier to try and double it; this challenge is really not just about money, but for all areas of our common life. TEXT. If each of us does not use well what we have been given we will be that third man, burying what we have been given. Is that want you want?