

There's two pieces of advice I gift to people considering Marriage. The first is, find out what kind of a son or daughter is the person you wish to marry. Find out what kind of brother or sister they are; what kind of a grandchild, nephew, and friend they are. It will tell you a lot about the kind of husband or wife, you can expect on your investment in Marriage. The second thing I do is point them to Proverbs, Chapter 31. We live in a world that often, mistakenly confuses glamour with beauty. Proverbs tells, of the beauty, we find in a godly wife. "She is far more precious than jewels". Gentlemen, when was the last time you thought, then said, that to your wife? And Married Ladies, do you give your husbands cause to say that about you. Of course, you do Right? Remember folks, Mary of Nazareth was also married woman. Sisters and Brothers, scripture present marital images throughout because they are sacred and beautiful. A man and woman in Holy Marriage share God's love in perhaps the most intimate way two people physically can. God presides at the first Marriage and Jesus performs his first public miracle at a Marriage feast.

And so, Mother Church is very comfortable having upon herself, the image of Christ's bride. In Ephesians Chapter 5: the analogy is given, that just as husband and wife are to be "one flesh", so too, can we describe the relationship of Christ and His Church. Our responsibility as Church is then to remain faithful to Christ the bridegroom for all eternity.

Now, in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, he seems also, to be telling us, to remain vigilant and faithful. Were people at risk of not recognizing the Day of the Lord? For children of baptismal grace and light, this day and in fact every moment is occupied in anticipation of recognizing the presence of God among us. Even as the sun sinks lower in the sky, we walk always as children of the light. It is, so we see, where we are going, and who might be approaching. The enemy's great cover is always blown in the light of the Gospel!

And so, when the light of the moon strengthens in the heavens, and the sun begins to dim, Mother earth whispers to all creation, the time has come to rest.

She tells the mountains to crawl beneath a blanket of snow. The great Bear is full. And the river is told to go slowly to the sea. It is time to take our rest. Yet, Christians transcending the natural, are instructed to be vigilant and on guard. As we near the final days of this liturgical calendar, Believers direct our thoughts to watchfulness and remembrance. **A People who fail to remember, who they are, and where they come from, soon afterwards, lose connection with their identity and sight of their destiny.** Therefore, Jesus says in confidence, “In as often as you eat my body and drink my blood, you do so in memory of me”.

And so, what happens today in Jesus’ economic parable, that begins with a man going on a journey? Three slaves have their lives invested in and each choose a course of action. The first two elect, as did their Master, to invest. The third however, believes the Master is a tough dude and simply doesn’t want to take any chances losing the little they are given. They know the Master reaps where he doesn’t sow and gathers where he has not planted.

The third slave's judgment is perhaps more fittingly an assessment of themselves. Still, it doesn't sound like the Master response upon his return is very gracious, or even fair. The third slave didn't lose anything. He or She just didn't put to service, that which they were given. **Never waste your time, trying to figure out Jesus, is perhaps the point of this and many of Our Lord's difficult parables.** As soon as you think you have things figured out, like the third slave, please inform me, because as I understand the passage, the first two slaves didn't **know** as much as the third, they simply set about in faith investing in what had been given them, to advance the Master's portfolio.

Much was returned to the first and second slaves, whereas the third who thought they knew so much, was as it turns, out not very enlightened at all. Weak faith, even after they had been appropriately gifted. An opportunity squandered for that slave, but a lesson for us today. Trust and remain faithful to Jesus our Christ and his Gospel message. Invest in the hope and expectation of returning to our king all **we are**. Bury no treasure. Attend to our Marriages and families with fidelity and generosity. Attend to our single state with honesty and devotion. Attend to our studies and vocation with commitment and alertness and **Attend to our God with hearts of love and peace.**

Amen