# 33 A

MDP of God

Today’s gospel parable is one of my all time favorite gospels- and it’s one of my favorites because it gives a little summary of the Catholic faith on the issue of salvation

I want you to notice that the three servants couldn’t have done anything without what the master gave them

Without the talents the master gave them – they would have had nothing to invest

They could have given him nothing back

And that’s true of our salvation – without the grace that God gives to us – we could do nothing meritorious for our salvation

St Paul teaches in one passage – that when we want to do good – it’s because God gave us the grace to want to do good—when we accomplish good – God gave us the grace to accomplish good

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So we can never stand before God and say – “Look what I did, you owe me! I did all kinds of good things – you owe me for what I did!”

No – if we accomplish good things- it’s because God gave us the grace to do that—*He never owes us anything*

That’s not to say He won’t give us things [because everything we have and are is God’s gift to us]—*He just doesn’t owe us anything*

And so in this parable – all three men are given talents by the master- *without what he gave them they could not have accomplished anything*

The second thing this parable teaches us *– is that God expects us* **to do something** with what He gave us

Notice in this parable 2 of the three men traded with the talents they had been given and they multiplied them [2 did well]

The one servant buried his talent—*he didn’t loose it* – he didn’t throw it away- he didn’t squander it--- *he just didn’t do anything with it*

And notice the master’s reaction to him – the master doesn’t just say, “I’m really disappointed in what you did, but come in anyway – that doesn’t really matter”

The master doesn’t say – the way you handled things are perfectly acceptable to me – come on in and share your master’s joy”

**No – the master’s angry** – the master calls him a lazy worthless servant- the master has him thrown out where there’ll be wailing and grinding of teeth

That’s a way of the master saying, “Go to hell”

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This corresponds to our salvation – we can’t do anything without the grace that God has given us *– but when God has given grace*- **we better do something with it** – *we better work at it*

My friends there are a lot of people today who attack the Catholic Church because of our emphasis on good works – our teaching that we’re not saved by faith alone – but what we do also is important to our salvation---*the fact is our lives matter*---**what we do matters for our salvation**

There are some people who take certain passages out of context and argue that our actions – our good works – the things we do for God and others doesn’t affect our salvation one little bit

They argue that **Jesus did everything** – *and what we do doesn’t matter*

Now to be honest – they’ll say **we ought** to do good works – **we ought** to give of ourselves for God and others – **we ought** to obey the commandments --- but they’ll say it really doesn’t matter if we do

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But notice--*that’s not what this parable teaches*

It’s not what Jesus teaches in the parable of the sheep and goats either – when He says to the sheep – I was hungry and you gave me food – I was thirty and you gave me drink – I was ill or in prison and you came to visit me- come into heaven – and then when He says to those on His left – out of my sight you condemned – I was hungry and you gave me no food – I was thirty and you gave me no drink – I was ill or in prison and you didn’t come to visit me”

That idea of faith alone wasn’t what Jesus taught in Mathew 7 when He says, “None of those who say to me Lord Lord will be saved*, but only the one who does the will of my Father”*

Faith alone is not what Jesus taught when He was asked by the young man what he must do for eternal life and Jesus says to him “keep the commandments”- and when questioned He told the parable of the Good Samaritan and told the man to do likewise

*Jesus constantly makes it clear* that **our actions- our behavior** – our obedience to the commandments – our good works are an essential part of our personal salvation

Again, we can’t do anything without what God gave us – but having God’s grace *we can’t just bury it*- **we have to live the faith**

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## And finally – I want you to notice that this is a parable of judgment – and notice that those found worthy are given great responsibility

### They are given great responsibility

As Catholics we believe that the saints in heaven reign with Jesus – they share in His royal authority – in other words they’ve been given great responsibility

In Luke’s version of this parable – the master says to the one, “I will put you in charge of ten cities” – the second one hears the master say, “I will put you in charge of five cities”—and of course the third one was outside wailing and grinding his teeth – a way of saying he went to hell – because he didn’t do anything with what the master gave him.

So in these parables – which are parables of judgment – the worthy servants are put *in charge of things* – they are given great responsibility

*We as Catholics believe that we can turn to the saints in heaven* – because they do reign with Jesus – they do share His royal authority – they have been put in charge of things – just like Jesus said

When things appear hopeless we can turn to St Jude for help

When things are lost – we can turn to St Anthony [one of my favorites]

When we’re traveling we can turn to St Christopher

As a priest I can turn to St John Vianney

Dads can turn to St Joseph – those who are approaching death can turn to Joseph who is the patron of a happy death

Moms of course can turn to the Blessed Mother Mary

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*Why can we turn to the saints?* Because Jesus keeps His Word – those who are faithful have been given great responsibility – they have been put in charge of things- they can intercede on our behalf

Just a few weeks ago we celebrated All Saints Day- we celebrated those who have gone before us and who now reign with Jesus

This parable makes it clear that our practice of turning to the heroes of our faith- is very much in keeping with what Jesus taught

*Also this gives us hope for ourselves*---one day you and I can be saints—one day you and I can have people on earth ask us for help—because one day you and I can share in Jesus royal authority in heaven like the saints do now

So this is a summary of Catholic teaching on salvation – we can’t do anything without God’s grace – but having received God’s grace we better do something with it – we can’t just sit back and do nothing – we can’t claim Jesus did it all so we don’t have to do anything

No- Jesus makes it clear that we have to do good works – we have to obey His commandments – we need to put our faith into action

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And having been given God’s grace – having acted on God’s grace – the Lord in His love will allow us to share in His royal authority – He will put us in charge of things – so we can turn to our older brothers and sisters who now reign with Jesus- and ask them to help us—because they have been given great responsibility – and we can trust in their desire to help us on our journey