

## **Third Sunday in Lent** **The Gifts of the Spirit**

### **1 Corinthians 12: 4-11**

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

1. Do you think of your gifts as God-given, or a natural part of you, or 'just there?' What does Paul teach about it?
2. Why does Paul think we are given gifts?

### **Luke 19: 11-26**

<sup>11</sup> As they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. <sup>12</sup> So he said, 'A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. <sup>13</sup> He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, "Do business with these until I come back." <sup>14</sup> But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this man to rule over us." <sup>15</sup> When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. <sup>16</sup> The first came forward and said, "Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds." <sup>17</sup> He said to him, "Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities." <sup>18</sup> Then the second came, saying, "Lord, your pound has made five pounds." <sup>19</sup> He said to him, "And you, rule over five cities." <sup>20</sup> Then the other came, saying, "Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, <sup>21</sup> for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow." <sup>22</sup> He said to him, "I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? <sup>23</sup> Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest." <sup>24</sup> He said to the bystanders, "Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds." <sup>25</sup> (And they said to him, "Lord, he has ten pounds!") <sup>26</sup> "I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.

3. Read the parable of the talents over to yourself. Which character do you most associate with? Why?
4. Why does the slave not do anything with his pound/talent?
5. Do you think the King justified in condemning the slave?

6. Activity: write down on the left hand side any gifts you think you have. As a variant of this, get other people to say what gifts you have. Then, on the right hand side, write down some situations or activities that your gifts could help improve, maybe even using lines to connect the gift with the situation or activity. Then pray about these gifts and ask God to not only improve your spiritual gifts but bring them to the places they need to be used.