

**Sunday November 15, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study – Matthew 25:14-30  
“Enter into the Joy”**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, discuss the following, “What is bringing you joy during this season?”

**Matthew 25: 14-30 Context:** This week’s reading, the parable of the talents, is the second of the last three parables/allegories with which Matthew concludes Jesus’ “judgment discourse.” Here again the focus is on the nature of Christian living until Christ comes again. A “talent” in biblical times was the equivalent of 15 years’ wages.

**Read Matthew 25:14-30**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

**Read Matthew 25:14-30 again**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

- Does the master in this parable seem fair? Or does he seem harsh? Why is that the case?
- Since wealth was not easily obtained in those days, people who did have wealth had an easier time making a profit. It would have been fairly easy to turn a profit even with small amounts of resources. Why do you think the last person portrays the master the way he does? [Notice the master is fairly generous by entrusting the slaves with lots of resources, and he invites them to enter his joy. The last slave is the only one who portrays the master as harsh.] Does this change your assumption about the fairness of the master in the parable? Why or why not?
- What might it mean to “enter into the joy of the master” in verses 21 and 23?
- How does this passage connect to last week’s passage? [Hint - Both are about acting wisely. Last week’s passage was about acting wisely with our time. This passage is about acting wisely with our stewardship.]
- It is an oversimplification to equate talents and money in this parable. Certainly, Jesus is not equating the amount of wealth one has or doesn’t have with being blessed. Why do you think we

often connect those? What do you think truly being blessed looks like? Is there a connection with relationships and fruit of the spirit?

- How does the world define joy? How would you define joy?
- Work as a group to list as many activities that bring joy as you can in five minutes (For example, going for a hike, calling a friend, reading Scripture, meditating, and so on.) Have each participant choose one new activity for the week to help bring joy.
- How might you be intentional in looking for joy this week? How can the group help?

### **Read Matthew 25:14-30 again**

#### **Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of joy, we confess the temptation to look first at what we are lacking instead of seeing your abundance. Help us to be more aware of how you have provided for us that we might experience joy in unexpected places. Guide our thoughts that we might focus on your grace, your beauty, and your mercy. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven  
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.