

A transcription of the sermon preached by Rev. Jack Belmont at All Saints' Church Princeton, NJ on September 11, 2022

Each week as I prepare to preach, I take a look at the propers, the ones assigned for the readings and I try to figure out how they relate to what might be happening in our common life together either during the week or wherever. I mean, that's the job of the preacher to relate the gospel to what's going on now.

Well, please forgive me for a little liturgical heresy. This morning, instead of preaching on the propers, I have decided to think about this passage that came to mind about the events of this week.

But before I do that, I think I'd be remiss in not saying our hearts go out to all the victims and the families of 9/11, even 21 years later. We still suffer with them and grieve with them and Lois will be praying for them in our intercessions this morning.

But anyhow, the proper that I have chosen, the scripture passage that I've chosen for the homily today is "well done, thou good and faithful servant. You have been trustworthy in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master."

Enter into the joy of your master.

How many of you are familiar with remember the Parable of the Talents? Just to recap it very quickly. King goes away and leaves three servants in charge of his property. One he gets five talents, which is a vast amount of money and resources, to another; two, not a paltry amount and to the third; one.

When he comes back. He wants to settle accounts with what He has given his service to use in His name.

The industrious nature of the first two come out. They were able to use his money wisely and bring forth amazing benefits.

And then there's this lack of ambition of the third who basically went and took the talent and buried it in the ground, because he was afraid that if he lost any of it, he'd be in deep doo doo.

That is the reaction of the king to all three of them to the first two, well done. You've been faithful over a little I will put you over much. And then to the other, you wicked and lazy servant. Look what I've given you, and you haven't done anything with it.

As I reflect on what has gone on this week, I thought of this passage. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

As I reflected on the life of Elizabeth II as she was born with five talents, as was her royal uncle Edward and what each of them did with them and what they were given. He went off as you remember, he abdicated because he needed to do his own thing which, let's not judge. But that's what he felt he needed to do.

Here she is a young woman, heir to the throne of England because her father George V now becomes the king.

Elizabeth served faithfully, as you well know, for 70 years of the queen of Great Britain.

And I really love English history and I love the people of England it's because of my British ancestry.

And that's why I'm so moved by this woman. Possibly you are for other reasons. As the princess she was about the King's business traveling in Kenya, visiting one of the parts of the British Empire at the time.

As you may recall, she was climbing in a tree to look over this vast expanse in front of her and at the age 25. Her father died leaving her as the queen.

She said "my life no matter how long or short, shall be dedicated to your service and our great country." She said that as a young woman and it's a promise that she faithfully kept as far as we know.

She had no formal education from Oxford or Cambridge or any of the other great universities, but rather was tutored privately.

She was a wise and insightful woman from an early age until the time she went to her great reward. She could hold her own with the great leaders of our time, including all of the Prime Minister's; Winston Churchill being her first.

She lived her life of dedication to her duty with noble dignity.

She was a humble person in spite of her royal title, and it was an outward sign of Christian love and compassion. Her generosity touched the poor, the sick, the needy. During World War II, she and her family remained in London in spite of the Nazi Blitz.

She served as an Army as an auto mechanic and driver and after the war, she enjoyed driving her Land Rover around her estate and probably even changing her own tires.

Elizabeth loved nature and all of God's creatures, especially her beloved little corgis and her horses.

She had a delightful sense of humor.

You could see it in the twinkle of her eyes as we have seen her over this past week on television.

The story is told by one of her gatekeeper at Balmoral about two American tourists who were out for a hike.

A walk about and encountered the Queen and her gamekeeper on the trail.

They did not recognize her.

They got into a conversation.

A wife handed the Queen a camera and asked if she would take their pictures, which she did.

And they parted. Still not recognizing her.

She said to her gamekeeper, "I wonder what the relatives are going to say when she gets home and she shows them those pictures."

she was and still will be loved and missed by the people of Great Britain and many of us.

She is the servant of the parable used her talents and gifts graciously in the service of her country in the service of others.

Did you know, possibly what many of you did? She was the head of the Church of England. Our sister church. Did you know that? The title of the crown bares as head of the Church of England, defender of the faith a title bestowed upon her ancestor Henry VIII, we won't go into him

but she was more than a defender.

She was a witness of God's love.

She was and is a role model of Christian virtue for all of us.

These words are attributed to St. Francis, but Karl will tell you he really didn't say them.

Preach the gospel at all times.

Use words if necessary.

That's the way her life was.

She preached the gospel with her life and what we saw and what we experienced.

The words of the king of the parable, deeply apply to the life of this wonderful, talented woman who was God's gift to all of us.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

May God save the Queen,

Amen.