Rector's Essay

Stewardship of our Souls: Turn, Turn, Turn

By Jarrett Kerbel (10/30/26)

At the last Great Wednesday we had a lively and sometimes hilarious exploration of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids. If you recall, this parable contrasts five bridesmaids who brought enough oil and so are prepared with the Groom comes (i.e. Jesus), and those bridesmaids who are unprepared due to lack of oil. The parable frustrates faithful Christian readers who are adamant that those with oil should share with those without oil. After all, sharing is caring.

Following a wise teacher, I asked the simple question, "What if this oil represents something we cannot share?" In other words, what if this oil represents the spiritual resources we have cultivated over a lifetime, a deposit of grace that we cannot simply transfer to another who has not prepared themselves. As frustrating as it is, we cannot do spiritual growth for another person. Our inner life with God is something for us to expand in an intimate one to one relationship.

We grow spiritually by turning to God. How many times a day do you turn your soul toward God? Perhaps you pray once a day before bedtime. Excellent start. Can you add another time in the morning or at midday? The more we turn our souls to God - who is always waiting and welcoming us with love, patience and kindness - the more we develop our inner reservoir of spiritual resources; gifts of the Holy Spirit, cardinal virtues, ears to hear God's voice, eyes to see God at work, creativity, flexibility, courage, serenity, etc. Our with-God life becomes more lively, active and accessible.

We relate to our souls as stewards of a gift that God has given us. A soul is simply the imprint of God within us, the image of God we are given, the light of Christ within us, our unbreakable connection with God through the Holy Spirit. Our soul is our place

of inner communion, permanent permeability to God. We are called to steward our souls on God's grace so that our souls flourish, unfold, blossom, become fruitful under the care of God's loving kindness.

During stewardship season, give some thought to how you are stewarding your soul and how you want to steward your soul. Are the roots of your soul well connected to the stream of living water which is our God through prayer, meditation, study of the Bible, worship, exposure to all that is beautiful, noble and good? Or, is your soul turned toward the poisonous water our culture provides?

God gives us a million moments every day to turn toward God. This is God's merciful posture toward us. Taking those opportunities is how we steward our souls.