As an A-Type, neurotic overachiever I am tempted to be consoled by today’s readings. The industry of the “worthy wife” from Proverbs mirrors my own non-stop style. While I am not certain I always am ready for the “day of the Lord” that will come like “a thief in the night” warned about in 1 Thessalonians, I always am ready for guests, even ones that arrive in town without notice. And, of course, as one who intends to ace the test described in next Sunday’s Gospel (Matt 25:31-46), I want to be sure I will be one of the two who doubles their master’s talents as I want to be assured of his favor when he returns.

Of course, I am anything but consoled.

Anyone who wants to preach about the virtue of the two men who doubled their talents needs to answer questions how they did this. Did the one with five talents buy an apartment building in a marginal part of town, jack up the rents, empty it out, and sell them off as condos? Did the one with two talents buy a fleet of cars that had be submerged in a flood, freshen them up, and sell them to unsuspecting people? By the way, who did the “freshening up” of the cars? Were they justly payed?

Why are these questions important? Because the master in this parable cannot possibly be a stand-in for God! Is the God of our faith one who harvests without having planted or gathers without having scattered? Isn’t our God the one who scatters seeds even on footpaths and rocks?

The virtuous person in this passage is the one who buries the talent he was given, admits what he has done, and accepts the consequences since to have done otherwise would have been to participate in injustice. He is the one who will find company among those who have tended to Jesus in “the least of these” because he is one of them.

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