

## Taking risks

Today's gospel is full of risk taking. We see this when the first two slaves went out and doubled the talents for their master. They did not know if they were going to make more or if they were going to lose everything, but they still went out and doubled what they were given. And then there is the third slave who was given one talent. Knowing his master was harsh, he was afraid of what the master would do if he lost his talent, and took no risk.

Taking risks is part of everyday life. You never know what is going to happen throughout the day, no matter much you try to plan every detail. We take risks all the time, we invest in the stock, we take that job that requires us to relocate, we change careers to find our calling. Life is full of taking risks.

Being a disciple is about making risks too. I remember one time a while ago, I was talking with a friend. She had made mention before about how her faith had been rocky because she had gone through some tough times, but in the end she came back and how her faith helped her grow. During this conversation, she had mentioned how when she was back at home, in Colorado, she had gone on a retreat and how she had been involved with the program. But since she had moved to Jersey, she had lost touch and was feeling slightly disconnected. I had asked her what the retreat she went on was, and to my surprise, I knew exactly what she was talking about. I had explained to her that there was the same thing here in Jersey and she got very excited and asked if there was any way I could give her any information I had so she could get involved with the program again.

During this interaction, My friend took a risk and opened up to me about her faith and what she had been through. In doing so she trusted me to give her some advice and see if I could help her. As a disciple, I listened to her story and gave her what I knew. She was glad that I could help and was very appreciative. Being a disciple is taking risks all the time.

**You never know what is going to happen when you go out and interact with people, especially these days. When we go out, we talk to people, and those conversations can go many ways, but we take the risk and see where they go. It could go to politics, or religion, family life or simply the weather. You never know. But being a disciple means being prepared, no matter how it goes.**

**More often than not, we have conversations with our friends that start small and grow as time goes on. When the comfort level grows, so do the conversations. The conversations can go any way, but when people feel comfortable with you, they tend to open up more, and that's when the risks come out. People take risks and open up about things that they wouldn't normally with someone they just met,**

**Those conversations can go to what they are afraid about and how they see things, or even about their faith, like my conversation with my friend. And that's a risk. But as disciples, we have to go with the flow and see where it goes and try to use that to our advantage to get people to open up about the topic. Discipleship is getting into these conversations and listening to what others have to say. It's not just about trying to get people to change their ways of thinking and see things your ways and to convert. Being a disciple is more than that. It means listening to people and meeting them where they are. And you get to know that through conversations.**

**When we get into these tough conversations, we have two options. We could be like the first two slaves, and just go out and have faith that we can double the talents we were given. Alternatively, we could be like the third slave, who was afraid, and buried the one talent. It's okay to be afraid to take risks, everyone is. But with God on our side, we can have faith that we can do well and come out on top, like the first two slaves.**

**We know that as long as we have faith, and trust God, we can overcome the risks. God is always with us and he always helps us through our fears. Fear of risk is just another trial we face. But knowing that God helps us through it makes it a little easier.**

*Veronica Meyer*