

Sunday, March 20, 2022 pm

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR TALENTS? Matthew 25:14-30

One of the more familiar parables of Jesus is the parable of the talents. In summary, a man going on a journey, calls his servants and entrusts them to manage his goods while he is gone. Each servant was given talents to manage “according to his ability” (15). One was given 5, another 2 and the last 1 talent (note – a talent was a large sum to manage – so even 1 talent was substantial). When he returns, he call for his servants and there is an accounting. The 5 and 2 talent servants each doubled that which they managed and were praised, “*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*” (vs.21, 23) But the 1 talent servant, came and returned the talent to his master having done nothing to increase. He had buried it. He made excuses. The master was angry, rebuked as a wicked and lazy servant, took away his talent and cast him into “outer darkness, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” And thus we have this familiar parable.

In 2 weeks, our spring gospel meeting is scheduled. As announced, this meeting will address the subject of evangelism. The title is, “21st Century Evangelism: Grounded in First Century Doctrines and Practices”. It is my hope that you will plan to be here for series of lessons and that it will be a boost to us as we move forward with the church here in Bellflower.

To prepare us for this effort, I would like to take this lesson to think a little about the talents we have been entrusted with, and remind us of some of the lessons associated with this parable.

I. Concerning talents

- a. As noted, the talents were sums of money to be managed. Interestingly, in our English language, the word “talent” has reference to our abilities, especially those abilities that are our strengths.
- b. We all have talents
 - i. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 – in speaking of the church as a body, Paul recognizes EVERY part and notes that we are all important and needed. That is true. So do NOT think that you cannot do anything.
 - ii. Our talents are different
 1. Sometimes it is natural – there are things we can do because of who we are, AND things we CANNOT do because of who we are. Men and women are different, and according to God we different abilities and responsibilities. In the church there are positions singles are not permitted to occupy (elders, deacons), but a single woman can still do something. We MUST respect God’s boundaries AND our limitations.
 2. Sometimes our talents are learned and developed –
 - a. I am convinced that most of us can do more than we do, if only we are willing to work at it. Cf. Hebrews 5:12ff
 - b. The question is: Are we willing to try and find out what we can do?
 - i. Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:24-26 – an athlete has to work at it to excel.
 - ii. 2 Peter 3:18 calls for us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - iii. 1 Peter 2:1-2 – as babe, we desire the sincere milk so that we can grow thereby.
 3. But even with this, there are some who just do NOT have the ability to do certain things – and that is ok. God does not expect any more from you than what you are capable of doing.
 - iii. We have different levels of ability - just like in the parable, some had more ability than others, so it is with us. Some have more ability than others

1. In our parable, each one was given talents to manage according to their ability.
 2. In the parable of the Sower, the good ground produced – some a hundred fold, some 30 and some 60 fold.
- c. Our talents are God given
- i. Romans 12:3-8, 1 Timothy 6:17-19 – those who are rich, ... Ephesians 4:11 – leaders – not all have same abilities. Concerning spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit gave as He will – different to different people.
 - ii. ***I am what I am*** –
 1. 1 Corinthians 15:10. Let me be content with that!
 2. Philippians 4:11 – content in whatever state I am in.
 3. BUT let me strive to be the BEST with what abilities I have. 1 Peter 4:11 – with the ability God supplies.
 4. I need to think properly about myself. Quit beating myself up because I do not have a certain talent others have. Remember, it is with the ability which God supplies
 - iii. ***I need to quit judging myself based upon others.*** The Bible talks about jealousy, envy. Spiritual gifts in Corinth. There was jealousy and competition – 1 Cor. 12-14. Paul had to deal with their ungodly attitude.
 - iv. ***I need to quit judging others based upon my talents*** –
 1. Romans 12:3, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think...
 2. Proverbs 16:18-19 - *Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.*
 3. Matthew 23:1-2, 2 Corinthians 10:12, *For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*

II. How am I using my talents?

- a. **2 Corinthians 13:5** – examine yourself, test yourselves... We know that from time to time we need to do that spiritual examination. This would apply to determining what my abilities are as well.
- b. ***Am I being a good steward?*** 1 Corinthians 4:2. The 5 and 2 talent servants were good stewards.
- c. ***Am I doing just enough to get by?*** God wants a people who are zealous for good works – Titus 2:14
- d. ***Am I developing my talents?*** We that as Christians we are to continually be growing – 2 Peter 3:18, 1:3-8, Hebrews 5:12-14, etc.
- e. ***Am I using my talents to support others?***
 - i. Ephesians 4:16. In addition to looking at our own personal situation, we need to step back and consider the congregation
 - ii. Hebrews 10:24 – to stir up good works. Hebrews 3:13 – we are exhorting one another daily.
 - iii. If we are going to grow, it is going to be together.
- f. ***How do we develop our talents?*** Just be reminded that we have already talked about this and I need to ask myself that question.
- g. ***How can I know what my talents are?*** Here are some suggestions.
 - i. ***There are something you are just naturally able to do.*** You know what they are – if you are honest with yourself. Maybe you are good at talking to people and/or starting conversations. You may be a good encourager. You may be good at maintenance or some physical thing. Use your natural abilities.
 - ii. ***There may be other things you WANT to do but you are unsure of them.*** TRY!!!!!!! If you do not try you will NEVER find out if you can do something. And be willing to REALLY try! Put forth the effort.
 - iii. ***Ask others*** – often others who are around you – you brethren who OUGHT TO know you as their family – know things that you are good at. They can tell you those things and that

might give you some direction. Proverbs 11:14, *Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.* Proverbs 12:15 *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.* Etc.

III. One day I will give an accounting for my talents.

- a. Back to the parable. The master returned and demanded an accounting.
- b. Romans 2:16 speaks of the day when God will judge the secrets of men according to the gospel.
- c. Revelation 20:12-14 – a day of judgment is coming.
- d. 2 Cor. 5:10; Matthew 25:31-46 – we will each be judged by the way we have lived our lives.

And thus we see the parable of the talents and make direct application to us. The Lord has gone on His journey, and He is coming back. When we stand before God, what will He say to you? Well done good and faithful servant, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:23, 34); OR, depart from me into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Just remember, what He says on that day is entirely up to you. Think about it!