

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Stewardship of Life: Talents – ‘I got nothing’**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - October 21, 2012**

Stewardship of Life:

It begins by giving God your life  
Then we learned last week that our time is His

Can I just say that every moment you live you live for one of three entities:  
The False King - Satan  
Yourself  
The True King

The profit of the time that you spend will go somewhere, to an account. To redeem the time moment by moment is not done by performing for God but by loving Him and knowing Him and following Him. Every moment can have a kingdom impact if that moment lives and breathes for the Kingdom. Every mundane task is now transformed (brushing your teeth, playing with the dog, working overtime, studying for a test, shopping for your family, paying the taxes) and all can have a Kingdom profit! It is about having a Kingdom Heart and Mind.

Let's look at a famous passage together. It takes us to a new stewardship place.

**Matthew 25:14-23**

“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup> He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup> So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup> But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>22</sup> And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

First from a big picture perspective:

“Talent” happens to be a bit of an unfortunate word here. A “talent” in new testament time was equal to 75 lbs. of precious metal. It is a lot of money. But for English speaking people the parable takes on double meaning. It maybe shouldn't but on the other hand, in God's economy, the skills and talents and gifts that we carry as part of our personality and nature are also all part of the Kingdom equation. If we can be sure that God has given us a gift then must also be sure that God will expect us to use this character trait for His glory.

Let's look at what we know about this story before we try to answer that unsettling question.

Here we see some interesting truths:

The Master has gone and he has entrusted them to his property  
Who is the Master in this story? (Jesus Christ)  
Who are the servants? (Those who truly call him Master and false servants too)  
What is the role/job of the trustees? (It is not to simply watch over the property, it is to invest the property; Luke story “do business”)

How many of his servants got property to invest? (All)

Why didn't everyone get the same amount to invest?

How did a servant qualify for a reward? Was the amount of the reward based on how much they earned?

So far we know that the Master is gone for now, but will return and is expecting the servants he leaves behind to attend to His purposes and to make a profit.

**Matthew 25:24-30**

<sup>24</sup> He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup> But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

It is a simple story that our Lord tells here. A man who is preparing to leave on a journey entrusts his possessions to his servants. He distributes his wealth among three servants, apportioned to them on the basis of their abilities. To the first he entrusted five talents, to the second two talents, and to the third one talent. The first two servants quickly set to work with their master's money. The third servant did not invest his master's money at all; he dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money. When the master returned, the first two eagerly met their master, apparently delighted in the opportunity to multiply their master's money. Both were commended as "good and faithful servants"; both were rewarded with increased responsibilities in their master's service; both were invited to share in their master's joy.

The master's dealings with the third servant are a very different matter. This servant came to his master with only the talent his master had originally entrusted to him. He did not increase his master's money at all. In fact, if this were to take place today, that money would likely be worth less, due to inflation. This servant offered a feeble excuse for his conduct. He told his master that he was a harsh and cruel man, a man who was demanding, and who expected gain where he had not labored. He contended that this is why he was afraid to take a risk with any kind of investment. And so he simply hid the money, and now he returned it, without any gain. The master rebuked this slave for being evil and lazy. He took his talent from him, gave it to the one who earned ten, and cast this fellow into outer darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We should carefully note the outcome of faithful service, and of unfaithful service, in this parable. Faithful service led to increased responsibilities in the kingdom of heaven, and eternal joy in the presence of the Master, Jesus Christ. Unfaithful service led to condemnation, the removal of one's stewardship, and an eternity of weeping and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness, away from the presence of our Lord.

One must surely conclude that this parable is not just an interesting story, but a message of eternal significance. Let us listen carefully then, looking to God's Spirit to enlighten our hearts and minds, and to empower our service, to the glory of God and our eternal good.

Let me confront a couple of ideas here, especially as it applies to our church.

**'I Got Nothing'**

This is how some of us feel. God has left us short. It feels like I have nothing of significance to add to the work of the church or for that matter, much that seems useful to the world either.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-7**

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Maybe we have a modest gift of mercy or a hint of the gift of hospitality, but nothing like what some people have. And really in this hard driving world, what good are compassion and mercy and hospitality? In the hands of Jesus a little boy's lunch fed 500 adults. We have much to offer God.

***Nobody's got nothing . . .***

You have been saved for a purpose and you are vital to the purposes of God, whether you feel like it or not!

**1 Corinthians 12:8-11**

<sup>8</sup> For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

***Join us on this adventure! You are what I am not – you have what I do not have.***

Now here is the real reason for this parable – to be in a place of readiness for the most important moment of future history; Jesus' return. Jesus does not want you to be uninformed when it comes to His return. He is coming soon and we need to be ready. In the context of this parable – it is obedience that makes us ready. It is our heart and our love. We cannot perform our way into His heart or His good graces. But we can be a good follower and that means paying attention to the signs!

***We need to be ready: This is about the Second Advent!***

**Matthew 24:44**

<sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

**Matthew 24:24-30**

<sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup> See, I have told you beforehand. <sup>26</sup> So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. <sup>27</sup> For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup> Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. <sup>29</sup> "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

***Join us on this adventure – because the day is drawing near!***

***We need to be resourceful: This is about justice!***

In our text, the "**good**" slave is the useful or beneficial slave, for he has gained a profit for his master. He is also "**faithful**" because he has been at work with his master's money from the time he left until the time he returned. The third slave is just the opposite. He is "**evil**" in the sense that he is "useless," or "unprofitable." Notice how this same word is used in Matthew 7:

"In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad [literally rotten] tree bears **bad** fruit" (Matthew 7:17, emphasis mine).

This story tells us that God intends us to be actively about the Kingdom and to turn a profit! More on this in a bit; this is very important!

The third slave is lazy, and thus useless, as opposed to being hard-working, and therefore useful. He does not “go to work” with his master’s money, over a lengthy period of time, and thus make a profit. He does no work for a lengthy period of time and thus is useless.

What, then, is the root of this third slave’s problem? I believe it is his view of his master, and thus the work his master has assigned.

“Then the one who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Sir, ***I knew that you were a hard man,*** harvesting where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed” (Matthew 25:24, emphasis mine).

The word “***hard***,” which this slave used to characterize his master, is far from flattering. In other words, the third slave looks upon his master as wicked, harsh, and impossible. This is his excuse for doing nothing. It is as though he had said, “I knew you were unreasonable, and that there was no way to please you, and so I decided not even to try.”

So let’s talk one more time about this profit motive as you may be disquieted by this. Profit in God’s eyes is a very different thing than profit in our culture. We see it outlined if we read just a little further:

**Matthew 25:34-48**

<sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’ <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ <sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

***We need to have our eyes on Eternity: This is about forever***

This parable focuses on four major themes: resources, work, time and profit. If we were to make an equation of this parable, it would probably go like this:  
Resources (talents) + Labor (work) + Time = Profit (notice that the profit is not a building!)

**Galatians 6:9**

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

This church is about profit and really is nothing about a building. It is about having a place to do works of eternity in and to do works of eternity from. So in that sense a building is everything!

***Good tools are clean, sharp and close!***

Your investment in the building isn't just an investment in brick and mortar; it is an investment in the Kingdom of God and in generations to come.