



#15 In the Story to Tell Series

# Buried?

Forest Park Church

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## 1. Parables about God's Mercy and Grace

- Certain parables illustrate the grace and mercy of God, in forgiving us when we did not deserve it, and when we could not make amends for our sins.
- God shows a Fatherly love for us, and is patient toward us, even though we may be erring children.

## 2. The Seriousness of God

On the other hand, the parables often illustrate the severity and wrath of God in the coming judgment, at which all who have not responded to his mercy will be cast out from his presence.

- The parable of the unforgiving slave illustrates the mercy and severity of God (Matthew 18:23-35).

## 3. The Importance of Obedience

- Obedience to God is important, indeed essential,
- God requires obedience of us, and repentance from disobedience.
- **The parable of the two sons illustrates the importance of obedience rather than lip service** (Matthew 21:28-32).

## 4. God's focus in on our Heart

- Several parables show that God is not interested in outward show, but in the quality of a person's spirit.
- Humility, mercy, compassion, sincerity of heart, these are the things that matter.
- The parable of the whited tombs illustrates the way God looks on the hidden inner person, not the outward (Matthew 23:27-28).

## 5. The Great Value of the Kingdom



- The parables often point out the great value of the kingdom of God and of membership in it.
- The parables show that the kingdom of God should hold first place in our lives (Matthew 6:33).

## **6. In Christs' Kingdom the Weak are Strong**

- God's kingdom cannot be understood in terms of material things.
- The most important persons in God's kingdom may seem to be least important in the eyes of the world.
- What may seem small and weak to the world, God can make great and powerful (Matthew 11:11).

## **7. 2 undeniable realities: You will stand before God and answer two questions:**

1. What did you do with my Son? (Question of heaven or hell)
2. What did you do with what you were given?

**Ultimate point of parables - get ready - I'm returning. Be about your master's business.**

- **What are we saved by**
- **What are we saved from,**
- **What are we saved for?**
- **God's love is a righteous love;**
- **God's anger is a righteous anger.**
- **There is no more evil in God's wrath than there is in his love.**

Imagine you are sitting around a campfire with Jesus

**In Matthew, chapters 24 and 25 Jesus is personally answering questions from his apostles about the destruction of Jerusalem and the last days.**

- He gives solemn warnings about the last days.
- They will be perilous times.
- Filled with danger and woe.



But as he continues teaching Jesus changes his tone and begins to relate one parable after another.

These stories are well known:  
The parable of the wise and foolish virgins;  
The parable of the sheep and the goats  
The parable of the talents.

If we're not careful In our familiarity with these stories we might miss the importance of their setting.

- **Jesus is teaching us how to prepare for an uncertain future.**

### **Matthew 25:14-30**

*"For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants[a] and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents,[b] to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 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.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.[c] You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 22 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.' 23 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.' 24 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, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' 26 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? 27 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. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 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. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

## I. We all are Gifted.

The story begins with these simple words,

### **Matthew 25:14**



*“It will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.”*

Even as he sets the stage, Jesus is telling us something important: we have an entrustment.

- Everything we have is given to us by God.
- Do we see ourselves as stewards or owners?
- The answer makes all the difference.

**1. A steward lives for the day he will return the Master’s goods to Him.**

**2. An owner believes his possessions are his to spend in any way he sees fit.**

All we have—our material goods, our abilities, and even our very lives—belong to someone else. We are merely holding them for the return day.

**The money that is given to the servants is not their own.**

- The money they earn with the capital is not theirs to keep.
- The servants are only stewards of the master’s investment, and it is the quality of their stewardship that the master seeks to measure.

We should maximize the use of our talents not for our own selfish purposes, but to honor God.

- We know that we work in a fallen world.
- Because of the curse of sin, our work will be difficult.
- But we should feel satisfaction and joy from doing our best with what God has given us in the place where his providence puts us
- **Seeking to succeed in order to honor him.**
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## II. Success occurs when we take action.

In the book of Genesis we see that God placed Adam in the garden to work it and take care of it.

- We were made to work.
- As Christians we have a mission that our Lord expects us to accomplish in the here and now.



Many Christians today see their salvation as simply a “bus ticket to heaven.”

- They seem to believe it doesn’t matter what they do while they “wait for the bus.”
- The Parable of the Talents teaches us what we are supposed to do while we await the return of our King.

We are to work, using our talents to glorify God, serve the common good, and further God’s kingdom. **Biblical success is working diligently in the here and now using all the talents God has given us to produce the return expected by the Master.**

### **Genesis 1:28**

*“And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

This passage is sometimes called the Cultural Mandate because it tells us that our original purpose was to create cultures, build civilizations—nothing less.”

**The introduction of sin has corrupted all areas of culture.**

**But one thing is clear, we are told to make disciples of all nations, and, we are not here to merely wait for our fire insurance to kick in.**

- We are here as ambassadors of the Creator
- We are created beings, placed into God’s created world
- We work at the pleasure of our Lord and our work is to be driven by our love of our master
- Our only desire should be to hear Him say, when He returns, “well done my good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the master”

The most successful college basketball coach in history, the late John Wooden, when asked how he defined success, said this:

**“Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable”**



### III. God equips us to do what He's called us to do.

In the New Testament a talent indicates a large sum of money, maybe even as much as a million dollars in today's currency.

**The servants were given enough to produce more** – it is the same with the gifts God has given us. The Apostle Paul writes

**Ephesians 2:10:**

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

HOWEVER OUR TASKS ARE NOT EQUAL.....

The most overlooked part of this parable is the second half of verse fifteen:

**Matthew 25:15**

*"Each according to his ability."*

We want to protest this as unfair.

- Yet we know this is true from our own experience.
- Diversity is woven into the fabric of creation.

The master understood that the one-talent servant was not capable of producing as much as the five-talent servant.

We are tempted to feel sorry for the servant who received only one talent, but in reality he received as much as a million dollars from the master and buried it in his back yard.

**He was given more than enough to meet the master's expectations.**

In our day and age it is tempting to complain that we have not received as much as someone else, but we can be sure that God Himself has given us the ability to care for what we have.

- **We are responsible, and we are able!**



It takes just as much work for the five-talent servant to produce five more talents as it does the two-talent servant to produce two more talents.

**This is why the reward given by the master is the same. The master measures success differently than we do.**

## IV. Jesus reminds us that we will be held accountable.

The Parable of the Talents is about whole-life stewardship.

The unfaithful steward in this parable didn't so much waste the master's money – he wasted an opportunity.

- As a result, he was judged wicked and lazy.
- We are responsible for what we do for God with what we have been given.
- And the opportunities that are presented to us.
- One day we will be held responsible.

**Perhaps our view of God will determine the choices we make.**

A: Do we see Christ as “a hard man” with unfair and unrealistic expectations of us? (Matthew 25: 24)

- If we do, it will cause us to live our current days in fear, with unprofitable results.

B: Or do we eagerly look forward to the return of Christ finding the freedom in the Grace of God to live with confidence now.

- The Apostle Paul came to understand the freedom we can experience through the grace of God when he recounted God's words,

### **II Corinthians 12:9**

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”*

Paul loved that phrase: “the grace given.”



*“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you . . . ”* (Romans 12:3).

- Here Paul recognized God had entrusted to him unique authority as an apostle.

*“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation”* (1 Corinthians 3:10).

- God had entrusted to him unique abilities (talents) to plant churches among the unreached and lay the theological foundation for the Christian church.

*“I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me”* (**1 Corinthians 15:10**).

- God had entrusted to him unique capabilities (dunamis) to exercise his unique authority and employ his unique abilities.

In these parables of the second coming each story contains a depth of teaching regarding how we can prepare for his return **in the everyday choices we make now.**

When he returns he will look for those to whom he can extend the invitation, “Come, share in My happiness!”

## CONCLUSION:

Each servant in the parable presents the master with the results of their stewardship.

They tell their own story first as the Master listens, but the Master has the final word.

When the first servant demonstrates that he has managed his affairs well, the Master speaks. This is perhaps the most surprising aspect of Jesus’ story: the **Master invites the faithful servant to share in the master’s happiness** (Matthew 25: 21).



Sometimes our view of the Second Coming is so centered on the Judgment of God that we have overlooked the joyful nature of his return for those who are prepared.

- This is why the Old Testament prophets referred to Christ's return as the "great and glorious day of the Lord." (Joel 2:31)

On his return, Jesus will look for those whom he can invite into his joy.

- There will be judgment,
- But the Master's motivation is to share his happiness with all those who have longed for his coming.

Of course, Jesus also tells us about a third servant who presented the Master only the single coin he received at the beginning.

- Even here we can learn something about how to prepare for Christ's return.
- The last servant viewed the Master as a harsh and unrelenting taskmaster,
- The servant's fear caused him to make unwise choices as he prepared for the day of return.

