

## **Faithful or Worthless 3-12-06** (remind about baptisms, Seder,)

Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'<sup>21</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'<sup>22</sup> "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'<sup>23</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'<sup>24</sup> "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'<sup>26</sup> "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup> Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. <sup>28</sup> "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Jesus spoke with various metaphors that everyone in every walk of life could relate to. To those familiar with farming, He told the parable of the seed that fell on different soils. (Matthew 13:3) To the fisherman, He spoke of separating the good fish from the bad after a catch. (Matthew 13:47) To the merchant, He spoke of finding and buying a highly valued treasure. (Matthew 13:45) In this parable, Jesus spoke to the money manager. Of course, we can relate to all of the parables, but those in specific occupations should be captured by His heart to speak to them in a way that they can personally relate. We have a number of people who manage money, and, this morning, we may have guests that do that as well. In this affluent community, nearly all of us manage money to some extent. Consider the heart of Jesus that desires to speak to you in a way that you can relate. This gives us some insight into His heart of love and understanding for each of us as individuals. He wants to take the physical things of which we are familiar and relate them to eternal things so that we can learn the mindset of heaven. He wants us to understand eternal truths that are so much more important than temporal issues of making a living. (Matthew 6:19-21)

<sup>14</sup> "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. The first parable in the chapter, the parable of the ten virgins, is

**Commented [notes1]:** 3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. Matthew 13:3 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 47 "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. Matthew 13:47 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. Matthew 13:45 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV)

about the kingdom of heaven. In the previous chapter, Jesus had been addressing His return and the end of the world. That is when the kingdom is to be fully established. Jesus' frequent warning in the end of that chapter was to watch, be ready, and remain faithful. (Matthew 24:44) That is the theme that continues through chapter 25. We saw in the parable of the ten virgins the importance of waiting in readiness. So when Jesus began with, "It will be like", He is referring to the Kingdom and the time leading up to the Second Coming. This parable emphasizes serving faithfully until He comes.

**Commented [notes5]:** 44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.  
Matthew 24:44 (NIV)

<sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The problem we often have with this parable is the use of the word talent. A talent was a measure of weight of a metal coinage. It may have been gold, silver, copper, or bronze. The exact value is irrelevant. What is important to see is that each servant was given an amount according to their ability. (Ephesians 4:7) In this way, the talent of money is a picture of our abilities and gifts that God has entrusted us with.

**Commented [notes6]:** 7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.  
Ephesians 4:7 (NIV)

Some are gifted by God in so many areas that you wonder why God did not spread out those gifts a little more. Others seem to be very limited in their gifts. God invests the gifts according to the ability in the individual to use the gift. God uniquely designs each of us. The gifts you have are in proportion to your design. He does not give you an abundance of gifts you are incapable of using, nor does He give you less gifts than you are capable of using. He gave you the exact proportion you are able to use. (1 Corinthians 12:11) It is not about what you have, it is about what you do with what you have.

**Commented [notes7]:** 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.  
1 Corinthians 12:11 (NIV)

<sup>16</sup> The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. We can see that the first two invested the finances entrusted to them in an equally effective way. They both earned 100% interest. We would call them superstar investors, except we do not know the period of time the master was gone. We saw from this and other passages that it was a long time, so this is more likely to be faithful and diligent steady investing in sound investments.

The last servant, however, simply found a way to be sure that the money was returned. If he was as faithful as the other two, he would have gained another talent. He did nothing. Burying money was a common thing in that day. It was a way to hide your savings from thieves. That is why Jesus told the story of a man who found treasure in a field. (Matthew 13:44) This man only did what was normal for people of his day. There was one problem. In a similar parable in Luke, the men were told to put the money to work for their master. (Luke 19:13) Though Matthew did not relay that, it would have been expected. That is why a wealthy person would entrust his money to servants, so that they would make wise investments. It is an obligation not a choice.

**Commented [notes8]:** 44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.  
Matthew 13:44 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 13 So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'  
Luke 19:13 (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The day is coming when God will settle accounts. (Romans 14:12) In verse 5 of this chapter, the bridegroom was a long time in coming back for his bride. This should have indicated to them that there would be a long period from the ascension of Christ to the Second Coming. Today we can see that more clearly. In Luke 20:9, Jesus told a similar

**Commented [notes10]:** 12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.  
Romans 14:12 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 9 He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time.  
Luke 20:9 (NIV)

parable in which the landowner went away for a long time. This parable is addressing what we are to be doing while His physical presence is away. The day of accounting for what we did with what we are given is coming. There is no avoiding it. (1 Peter 4:5)

I have always had this sense of urgency. I do not know if it is just my nature or if it is because I came to Christ at a young age, but I have always had a sense that I must be about my Father's business. My wife can tell you that it is everything I can do to slow down and just relax. I have learned that relaxing can also be doing what is most fruitful for the Kingdom, so I make myself do it. I just can not understand people that want to live for leisure. I enjoy serving the Lord, and it earns dividends that are unlike anything in this world. Why would anyone waste their time amusing themselves with some worthless thing? The origin of the word "amuse" is "not thinking". Why would you not want to think? Life is flying by and will be over before we know it. What are you investing in? If it is for here and now, let me say bluntly, that is just plain foolish. (Luke 12:20-21) Of course you should be a good steward of the things that you have to provide your basic needs and to be able to give, but I am talking about the reason you live. What motivates you each day? Why do you get up in the morning? The day of accounting is coming.

*<sup>20</sup> The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' <sup>21</sup> 'His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Someday you will stand before your Master and say, "Master you entrusted me with this and this and this, and here is what I have done with them." If you were faithful with the few things He has given you in this life, you will hear the same response that two of these servants heard. 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

That expression sends chills up my spine. I long for the day when I hear that my life, imperfect as it is, is pleasing to my Master. I know it is pleasing because of what Christ has done, and that is first and foremost. But there is also what we did with the salvation so graciously given to us. How did I respond to all His goodness toward me? I long to hear that I did my assignment well, that I was a good servant, a faithful one. I do not long for that because of the many things I will be put in charge of, though that will be an added bonus. I long to hear it because I will then know without a doubt that I pleased my dear Savior's heart with my service. That is why I live. That, I trust, is why you live. If it is not, will you ask Him to give you a greater revelation of His love for you? Then I believe your heart will be filled with the same burning desire. I want to be good and faithful in His eyes, because He has been so very good and faithful to me. (1 John 4:19)

Consider for a moment that final word of reward. *Come and share your master's happiness!* How happy is God? Surely His heart aches for the lost, for sin in the world, but that will all come to an end one day. His sons and daughters will be like Jesus in holiness. He sees the final result of His magnificent plan. He knows He cannot fail, for He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever present throughout time and space. What He determines will forever be. How happy is our Master? Joy is a fruit of His Spirit. (Galatians 5:22) It is a part of His very nature. But contemplate as we may, I do not think we get but a tiny glimpse of what that means to "*Come, share your master's happiness!*"

**Commented [notes12]:** But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.  
1 Peter 4:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** <sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'  
<sup>21</sup> "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."  
Luke 12:20-21 (NIV)

**Commented [notes14]:** <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us.  
1 John 4:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
Galatians 5:22 (NIV)

The second servant was identical to the first, except that he had two talents to work with, same 100% return, same expression from the Lord. These men maximized their opportunities. (Ephesians 5:16) It does not matter what you have; it is what you do with what you have! You get the same wonderful reward as the person that had five talents and doubled them. Do not be concerned if your talents are few. We are not in a talent show, pardon the pun, to see who will be the big winner. Every good and faithful servant is a winner beyond imagination. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

**Commented [notes16]:** 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 9 However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" -- 1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV)

<sup>24</sup> "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'" It will not matter how we embellish what we did, the bottom line is this man did nothing. He buried the money. God will get back what He has given regardless of what you do or do not do. The expectation is that you invest wisely your gift so that you can give Him what should be His. We get more insight into the servant's error by the master's answer.

<sup>26</sup> "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?' <sup>27</sup> Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. The excuse the servant gave was his own condemnation. If the master harvests where he did not sow seed, why would this servant think just giving back the seed was sufficient? The problem was two-fold. First, he was wicked. To refuse to do the work God has blessed you with is rebellion against your loving Creator. (Ephesians 2:10) He gave you the work to bless you and advance His kingdom. If you turn your back to that, you are wicked. Jesus said the work of God is to believe on the One He sent. (John 6:29) In other words, the first work is to invest the drawing of the Spirit in you to belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Everything else flows out of that. This man had not even done that. He buried the moving of the Spirit in His heart.

**Commented [notes18]:** 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes19]:** 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." John 6:29 (NIV)

I want to remind you of something I have said before. It can not be said enough. Just because you recall a powerful move of the Spirit of God on your life, does not mean you were born again. To be born again is to become a new creation in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Many look back with a sense of security to a time when they had an encounter with God. Since then they have gone on living in selfish pursuit of pleasure, but they believe they are destined for heaven. The old never left. There is nothing new about their life. They have no hunger for the word or fellowship. That is not the fruit of salvation. That is burying the first gift of the Holy Spirit, burying the drawing of your heart to genuine repentance (a change of mindset). (Romans 12:1-2) If you give that back to God on the Day of Reckoning, what should He say to you?

**Commented [notes20]:** 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes21]:** 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

The second indictment is laziness. Not only was he wicked, but he was lazy. That is why some never enter the kingdom. They do not want to die to themselves and get to work for goodness sake, literally. The banking system of Rome was much like ours today. You could earn a maximum of 12% interest, but more commonly around 6%. This man was so lazy he did not even do that. Laziness was a problem in the Thessalonian church, and it is a problem today. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12) There is a great Wednesday evening opportunity to be challenged to learn and grow in Christ, the DVD, *Walk as Jesus*

**Commented [notes22]:** 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 (NIV)

*Walked.* There is Sunday morning Bible study to learn more about last week's message. There is the men's breakfast. There are numerous opportunities to serve the family of believers, Young Life, Potter's Hand, the needy among us, After the Storm, but many are just lazy or have other priorities. They would rather sleep in. You say, "Pastor, you're being too hard on us." Am I? Then what will you say on the day of accountability when you stand before Almighty God that filled your life with opportunities? One thing you can not say is that I did not warn you. If you do not want to be challenged to serve and glorify the Lord with your life, you are probably in the wrong church.

<sup>28</sup> *"Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.* This is a kingdom principle. The one that has will be given more. Isn't that what a good business manager does? If you are faithful, God will bless you with more to do. Those who love the Lord want to do more for Him. Now he has 11 talents to invest, and he loves doing it because he is sharing in his Master's happiness. You will find this is true in daily life. If you invest what God has given you faithfully, you will be given more. (Luke 17:10)

Some people complain of burn out in serving the Lord. Either they refused to take their Sabbath rest, or they were relying on their own strength. Either is doomed. The more you have to do, the more faithful you must be about your rest. The more you must rely upon God's strength. That was the life of Jesus. (John 14:10) That is what He modeled for us. He always depended on the Father and did only what He saw the Father doing. He did not take on anything and everything. I might give you too much to do, but Jesus never does. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

<sup>30</sup> *And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* 'What kind of a servant is he? Worthless! There are two kinds of servants in this parable. There are two kinds in this world. There are worthless ones, and there are faithful ones. Jesus does not mince words. People love to hear all the wonderful things He does, healing, blessing children, and telling us how to have a blessed life, but they do not want to hear what He warned our fate would be should we refuse the truth. Jesus spoke more about the horror of hell than any other prophet. That is because He loves us and was providing a way for us to be saved from that destiny.

If today was the Day of Reckoning, would Jesus find you a good and faithful servant or a worthless one? What have you done with the work of the Spirit in your life? Are you investing it wisely and faithfully with a sense of urgency, or wickedly and lazily leaving it buried? Have you noticed how Jesus never mentions a middle ground? We have seen that again and again. It is all or nothing. He can not "kind of" be your Lord, sometimes. He is your Lord or He is not. You are a new creation or you habitually live in your old nature. Come to Jesus. Turn your life over to Him and find the joy of serving as you were created to serve. Be a faithful servant, not a worthless one.

**Commented [notes23]:** 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'" Luke 17:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes24]:** 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. John 14:10 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)