

11-15-20

Sermon- "Don't Quit!"

Scripture- Matthew 25:14-30, CTW Ps 123

Hymns- 17, 65, 529

Theme- Jesus is coming back- we know this is true in our hearts. In reality, that means we are to use whatever time, talents, and treasures He gives us in order to serve God diligently in whatever we do. What would we have to do so that one day we might hear the words "well done, good and faithful servant?"

I. Introduction: Now Therefore...

In the previous chapter, **Matthew 24:42** Jesus states "**Therefore**, keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour". Remember to follow the "**therefores**" in the Bible!

When we dwell on the promise that Jesus will one day return does that unshakeable truth instill **hope** or **fear** within our hearts as Christians? While part of us wants to jump up in pure joy and say "YES LORD JESUS COME," is there not another part of us that is a little fearful that upon judgment the Master will be less than impressed with how little we did to serve Him while here on this earth?

A. Upon our conversion we were not only adopted and sealed by the Holy Spirit as God's children but we were also given spiritual gifts or talents that are necessary to ACTUALLY DO His divine will. To our shame, often when Christ came knocking on the doors of our hearts to serve in His kingdom, we refused His request on the grounds that the service was either too easy and without public glory, or too difficult, or we felt unworthy or that it was just not the right fit for our self-absorbed living!

B. Do we realize that living a complacent, lazy life that lacks fruits and good deeds is damning proof that we have never truly been born again?

After all, surely those who were bought at the price and have received every perfect gift and spiritual blessing would see serving God not as drudgery but as an honor, for He alone is our portion ... **correct?**

II. In verses 14-18, Jesus Reminds Us That Everyone is Given an Incredible Talent.

A. The first thing that I want to point out from these verses is that each of the servants were given talents according to their abilities.

1 Corinthians 12 states that upon conversion the Holy Spirit gives the born-again child of God at least one spiritual gift that is to be used to accomplish divine tasks within His kingdom.

Matthew 5:16 says that we are to let our good works shine for others to see and glorify God. We are not to see the service we are called to do as being too great because it is by the power of the Spirit that we can do miracles in His kingdom.

Likewise, we are not to see the service we are called to do as being too small for it is in the **"little spheres of service"** and in **our weakness** that God's glory shines the brightest.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reminds us that God's expectation for those who were purchased by the atoning sacrifice of Christ is that they might **glorify His name** not just with words but also with deeds in keeping with His will. See also **James 2:14-26** about faith and works. **"faith without works is dead"**.

B. The second point that I want to make from these verses is that the talents given are of enormous value! In the parable one man was given five talents, another 2 and one a single talent. While the NIV translates "talents" as "bags of gold" the Greek word used here is "tananton" which means a unit of weight.

The bags given could have been filled with copper, silver or gold. If it was silver in the bags then they would have contained 6,000 coins weighing a half a million pounds. This would have been the equivalent of twenty years of wages in today's dollars or about $\frac{3}{4}$ a million dollars!

The servants took this enormous amount of money, took a risk by starting up new businesses and worked incredibly hard to earn more money for their master.

Likewise, upon our conversion we have been given talents in the form of spiritual gifting that our master expects us to use by serving in His kingdom. We must remember that whoever believes and asks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will do miracles greater than what Jesus did while on this earth **John 14:12-14.**

Also we must realize that the rewards for serving in His kingdom is not just storing treasures in heaven Matthew 6:19-21 but also the opportunity to serve in a greater capacity in His kingdom.

Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us what an honor it is to be entrusted with so much when we are but sinners saved by grace through faith!

We also must accept the fact that serving the Master is not an option but a daily requirement! In the parable the master went on his journey but gave the slaves no idea when he would return but merely that upon his arrival, he expected to receive a return on the monies he entrusted to them.

Likewise, **John 14:3-4** tells us that Jesus who has gone to prepare a place for us will one day return and evaluate what we have done with our spiritual gifting.

It is not enough for Christians to merely "hang in there" and idly wait for their Master's return. By building their own kingdom they prove they were never really Jesus' disciples in the first place!

III. Next, in Verses 19-23, Jesus Reminds Us That Only Some Will Be Found To Be Faithful.

The identical words of praise and commendation for both the servants who got five and two talents accentuates the truth that:

A. It is not the total amount earned but the faithful obedience in "living up to one's potential and giftedness" that our Master seeks and rewards us for.

We all have differences in gifting and roles to perform in God's kingdom!

Since the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts and it is through His power that one serves, to hear the words “good and faithful servant” is not the result of the “greatness of the goods with which one was entrusted” but one’s obedience and faith that through God all things are possible!

When God asks one to serve, no matter how small or big the task, one is to receive such a request with pure joy.

To God, there is no such thing as a **“too small”** a service because He rewards based on obedience and faith, not size of divine assignment.

Likewise, we should not see any service as **“too big”** for us to accomplish because in seeing it this way we falsely assume it is through our own might and power that success in service happens.

Since rewards for service are not based on the “law of works but according to the law of grace,” with thanksgiving in our hearts and overwhelming enthusiasm we are to approach our loving Master with confidence that our small “might” of service when presented with obedience and faith will be rewarded in same manner as bigger acts of service!

B. Another thing that should be pointed out is that we are to see our service through the eyes of Christ! The master in this parable did not say “well done brilliant or distinguished servant” **but well-done faithful servant.**

When God enables His own to accomplish great things in His kingdom often the praise from others inflates our ego and such and we could fall into a great pit of pride in which ministry success becomes a product of our own effort and management style.

No matter how successful we are, we must not forget “we are His workmanship, created by Him, and therefore to ourselves we dare not take a particle of praise.”

Notice also that the master did not say to the servant with two talents **“well done with what little I gave you.”**

When God asks us to do what we consider “minor” things sometimes out of pride we refuse to do such “menial” tasks.

Foolishly we might say that with our extensive abilities we can be the greatest in our church and community! What we often forget is that those “with little influence and a narrow sphere” are often the ones who are called to do great things in His kingdom.

IV. Finally in verses 24-30 We Are Reminded That Some will be Found to be Wicked.

A. From these final verses of the parable we learn about a great principle of spiritual life: while using one’s spiritual gifts leads to ministry development and growth, refusing to do so proves that such a person is not part of God’s kingdom.

Fearing that his failure would incur his master’s wrath he chose to overlook his responsibility to his master by burying his talent in the earth where it would be unproductive but safe.

The master called the servant who had one talent wicked because of his unjustified slander, laziness, and lack of desire to serve.

From this wicked servant we learn that “receiving God-given abilities is a responsibility that accompanies a right relationship with God.” **Matthew 6:1** talks about doing your good deeds in righteousness.

This parable concludes with a dire warning that half-hearted, double minded attempts to appear to love and serve God will lead to many on the day of the Lord to hearing the phrase “go away I never knew you” (**Matthew 7:22-23**)!

B. Therefore, if you are wondering if you are the wicked servant in this parable then ask the Holy Spirit and review the evidence: are you faithfully using your God-given gifts to build up the body of Christ and advance His kingdom?

If you are serving that way, then you are one of the good and faithful servants in this parable and you will receive even greater responsibility in heaven.

However if you are the wicked servant all shall be taken from you and you will spend an eternity in hell where there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (**verse 28**)!

V. Conclusion:

A. Our hearts should leap in pure joy that our Lord is going to return to judge us for the way in which we served Him while on this earth. We have all been given at least one spiritual gift so that we might be able through the power of the Spirit to accomplish our assigned kingdom goals and tasks.

By the Way, When was the last time you took inventory of your spiritual gifts?

Those who have been born-again are not to become licensed loiterers whose lives lack fruits and good deeds.

To reject service on the grounds that it is too easy and without public glory or too difficult and seemingly impossible is a sin against He who is sovereign and sees all service equally valuable and rewards based on faith and obedience,

B. The gifts we have received are of enormous value, because with them and through the power of the Holy Spirit we as His ambassadors and royal priests are expected to perform miracles greater than Jesus did while here on earth. WOW! Think about that!

This parable finished with a dire warning: refusing to use the talent one has received is evidence that one is not saved and therefore will spend an eternity in hell weeping and gnashing one’s teeth! **OUCH!**

I Pray that we take this warning to heart and that we serve our God with thanksgiving in our hearts... that He has found us to be worthy to serve and will speak the following words to us, “Well done, My good and faithful servant!”

Amen? Let Us Pray...