

The Parable of The Talents

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Preacher: Gordon Stewart

[0 : 00] Again, it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.

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 man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 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. His master replied, well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things.

[1 : 11] I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness. The man with the two talents also came. Master, he said, you entrusted me with two talents.

See, I have gained two more. 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. 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.

So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here it is what belongs to you. 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. 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.

[2 : 18] Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more and he who will have an abundance and he will have an abundance.

Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Gordon, it's good to have you with us over the weekend and good to have you with us today.

Thanks. Well, good morning everyone.

It's been lovely to be down in Cork, this part of the world, over this weekend. I've really enjoyed being here since Thursday evening and sharing with the folks over this missionary weekend.

It's lovely to meet some of you and chat with some of you over the weekend as well. Well, I'm lovely to be in this church in Carrickgill. And I've heard about this church for many years. Johnny and I go back a long, long time.

[3 : 31] His father, way, way back, used to come up to the Baptist meetings that would have been held up in Belfast and used to stay in a lady's house just right across the street.

So I knew about this man, Michael Grant. And some people from the church would have come up as well. And then when I went to Bible college, I was wanting to come to the south of Ireland and work for a period of time to gain some experience.

So I came to Waterford Baptist and Johnny had the privilege of sharing a bedroom or I had a privilege of sharing a bedroom for a month with Johnny. And, oh, I could tell you some great stories, but I'm not going to do that.

And it's lovely to be here and to be part of their family this weekend. I've really appreciated, really enjoyed the fellowship with them. And what I want to do this morning is I want to just speak to you

for a little while on this passage that Johnny's read to us, Matthew chapter 25.

And then just a little bit about one aspect of the work that we're involved in across in Asia. I, as I said, work with David Quinn.

[4 : 40] And Johnny, is this tipping on me or am I leaning on it? He did tell me, don't touch the stand. So I've broken the rule already.

But I work with David Quinn. And I think most of you will probably know David. AsiaLink is a missionary organization. We work out in Asia. Our motto is to reach the unreached people of Asia. This is my family that I was talking about, my wife, Nolene, with three children. We're based in Ballyclare in County Andrum, just about 20 minutes north of Belfast. And from there, I travel all around, mainly in the north of Ireland, over into Wales and into England, and then travel out into Asia.

These are the countries that we work in, some of the most difficult places in the world to be a Christian. And as I said, what I want to do this morning is just to give you one aspect of our work, a little kind of glimpse, I suppose, of something of the work that we're involved in.

But before I do that, I want to think about Matthew chapter 25. This is a chapter that contains a number of parables where Jesus is trying to teach us spiritual lessons, lessons about the kingdom of God.

[6 : 07] And Matthew chapter 25, the story part of it is about a rich man who is going on a journey. He's going away for a period of time. And he needs someone to look after his business and his affairs.

So he puts his business in the hands of three of his servants, three people who are his employees. There is going to be the caretakers of the master's property and the master's affairs.

He gives one of these servants five talents, which is probably a significant amount of money, maybe gold, and places his finances in the hands of one of those servants, five talents.

To the other, he gives two talents, again, a significant amount of money, perhaps gold. And to the other, he gives one talent. Not all of the servants received the same, but each received something. And what they received didn't belong to them. It wasn't theirs. It was just given to them by their master.

[7 : 23] It was their master's that he had placed into their care. It didn't belong to them.

Nevertheless, these servants had to use what the master had given to them.

And when the master returned, he told the servants that he would call them to give an account. They had to use what they'd given and use it for the master. So the servant with five talents, he sets to work and he uses his five talents and he makes ten talents.

And when the master returns, it's time for him to give an account of what he's done. Then the master, the servant, who has two talents, he puts it to use and he works hard and he makes four talents.

And when the master returns, he has to give an account. And then the servant with one talent, as you've just read, he decides in his wisdom that he's going to bury it in the ground.

He's going to keep it safe. He's not going to use it. He's not going to do anything with it. He just returns the one talent when the master returns. And so when the master returns, the man with five talents is able to give him ten talents.

[8 : 36] He's accomplished something. He's done something for the master. And he's rewarded. And the man with two talents has now four talents.

He has done, accomplished something for the master in the master's absence. And he's rewarded. But the third servant has nothing to give, nothing to show, has accomplished nothing.

And he's described as a wicked servant. And the parable is there. That story part of the parable is there to remind us that there are only two kinds of people.

There are people that God has given things to and they use them for his glory. And there are those that are given things by God and do not use them and do nothing with them.

And when the Lord comes back, they will be empty handed. And it is the steward, it is the servant, it is the caretaker that uses his God-given gifts for God that will be congratulated and rewarded.

[9 : 52] It is the servant, the person, the caretaker who has been given much but does nothing with them that will be condemned by God.

And as we think about that parable, probably a very well-known passage in the Bible, I want to apply it to a number of areas of our lives.

I want to apply it, first of all, to the area of time. How much time does God place in our hands? He doesn't give some people five talents, 24 hours in a day, and some people two talents, 12 hours in a day, and some people one talent.

That's not what I mean by time. Every one of us has the same number of hours in the day. But when I say that God gives us different talents of time, what I mean by that is not hours, but seasons. [11:01] The passage, I think, is here to remind us, make the most of your time in this world. God has given each of us periods or seasons of time.

And the important thing is that we use those seasons for the glory of God. Now, although we all have the same number of hours in the day, not everyone has the same length of time or the same number of seasons.

For some people, God gives us five talents of time. He gives us a long life.

We live 80, 90, we might even live 100 years. God gives us a long period of time, five talents of time.

This parable reminds us to use whatever length of time God has given us for the absent master. For some people, God gives us two talents of time.

[12:22] We live an average length of time. We're here on this earth for 60 or 70 years. We're given that length of time.

Whatever length of time God gives us, we're to use it for the master. For some, God gives one talent of time.

Our lives are short. We're cut down early in life. We don't live as long, perhaps, as others.

These parables remind us that whatever length of time God gives us, we should use it for the master.

Different lifespans. Different talents of time. But God wants each of us to use our time to accomplish something for God.

[13:28] What is it that we're doing with our time? Are we using our seasons, our months, our years to accomplish something that when the master returns, we might hear those words, well done.

Or are we people that have seasons of time, months and years and spans of life, but we're burying them in the ground.

And when we meet the master, it will not be rewarded in commendation that we receive. Time. But I also want to apply it to money.

It's a touchy subject to be talking about money, but for some, God gives us five talents of money.

For some of us, we find ourselves in life with finances, and we don't have to worry about much, and our business, and our jobs are good, and in many ways, we have five talents of money.

We're relatively wealthy people. For some people, God gives two talents of money. We have an average amount. We don't have a lot to spare, but we have enough.

[15:01] And for some, God gives just one talent. Not a lot at the end of the month. A struggle at times of the year to pay the bills.

It's difficulty. But all of that has been given to us by God. All of the money that we have has been placed into our hands.

The ability to work is a gift from God. The ability to derive a business and to work is all from God.

And in the church, there are all kinds of people with all kinds of incomes.

We have different talents when it comes to finances and money. But God is not so concerned about how much we have, but what we do with what we have.

So what is it that we do with our money? Whether it is a small amount, whether you're a student on a grant, whether you're a young person at home with pocket money, it's not the amount of money that we have, but what we do with our money.

[16:16] what we accomplish with our money for the glory of God and the kingdom of God. What God will be asking us at the end of our lives is not how many millions or thousands we have given to the kingdom of God, but what we have done with what we have, whether it be five or two or one talent.

What is it that we're doing to bring the gospel to advance the kingdom of God around the world with our money? And thirdly, can I apply it not just to time and not just to money, but apply it to the gospel itself?

God has placed into our hands, to your hands and mine, the gospel, the greatest, most amazing message in all of the world.

God sending his Son into the world to be the only Savior. It's by faith, alone, in Jesus, alone, that rescues and saves the world and people around the world.

God has not called everyone to be a preacher, to stand at the front and declare to great numbers of people. He's not called everyone to be a Sunday school teacher with a little class.

[17 : 50] He's not called everyone to be up front, but He has called every Christian to spread the gospel. He has placed the great commission into our hands.

Some people have the gospel and are not afraid to tell people about it. Some people have the gospel and throughout this week, neighbors and friends and work colleagues and people will come across our paths and will not be afraid to speak it and to share it and to use it and to disperse it. For others, the gospel has been placed in our hands and God will place people in our paths and we will hide it.

We'll bury it. We'll do nothing with it. So the challenge for us is that God has placed things in our hands.

We have talents. We have the gospel. We have money. We have time. And we should do all that we can to use those things for the glory of God, for the advancement of the kingdom and to be assured that when that day comes and the master returns, we will receive those words well done, good and faithful servant.

[19 : 39] I wonder this morning are you like the man with the five talents, with the two talents, or are you someone who's more like that with the one talent.

I hope and pray that we might be those who God is pleased with when the master returns. When I think about taking the gospel around the world, I think that we have been entrusted with the greatest gift of all, the greatest gift and privilege of all, to take the message of Jesus Christ, of forgiveness of sins, of hope of heaven, to a world in need.

It's a very difficult task to share about the Lord Jesus unless we have a Bible. and the Bible therefore becomes a very precious gift.

And I was thinking about some of the great gifts that there have been given in the world. This lady is not a fan of, I'm not a fan of mine, she doesn't even know where I live, but I'm not a fan of hers, just in case, but apparently this is somebody called Beyonce and she has a husband or something like that called Jay-Z or something, I'm not really kind of into those things, but the crazy man decided that he would give her a gift a number of years ago, a 20 carat gold engagement ring that cost him five million dollars.

You wouldn't like to leave that somewhere in a public toilet or come home and tell him you've done that. Well, that's one gift. This is another gift I was thinking about.

[21 : 42] This is the Statue of Liberty, which is located in Liberty Island in New York Harbor. It was a gift to the people of the United States from the people of France, 300 and something feet tall, and it was a gift to commemorate the alliance between the French people and the Americans during the American Revolution.

And it cost the people of France a lot of money. They had to have a whip round. Literally, they were going round asking the people, can you give a wee bit if you want to give it to the Americans? Can you give us that? And it cost two and a quarter million French francs, which is 45 million dollars.

That's quite a gift, isn't it, to give from one country to the other. And this is the one that I like most of all. This is the Taj Mahal, this ivory white mausoleum in Agra near India, built by this emperor, Jahan, to house the tomb of his favorite wife.

He had a whole lot of them, but he had one favorite one. And it began in 1632, and it took 21 years to finish.

[23 : 00] And it was just built to put his favorite wife's body into. And it cost 32 million rupees, which in today's money is 827 million dollars.

What a gift to give to your favorite wife. But the greatest gift, one of the greatest gifts that we could possibly give to people does not break the bank.

In fact, maybe the greatest gift that we can give to people on a practical level, sharing the gospel with them, is to give them a copy of the Bible.

That will cost about a euro fifty to put a Bible into the hands of Christians across our world. world. And I just for a few moments want to show you one or two things.

Just to think about Bible translations, around about 6,900 languages in our world, and of those 6,900 languages, around about 600 of them have the complete Bible out of 6,000 languages.

[24 : 17] Of those other languages, there are around about another 1,400 that have the New Testament in their language, and then there are around about 1,000 languages that have a portion of the Bible in their language.

Books scattered, maybe not a complete New Testament. And that leaves us, in a world that leaves us with around about, see if I can move this on a little bit, there we go, of those 6,900 languages, probably 1,800 languages, a third almost, where there has been no translation started at all, and then around about another 2,000 odd languages where they are just in the process of Bible translation.

Around about 57% of the languages in our world this morning do not have a portion of God's Word. word. And added to that is the fact that in our world there will be people who even if you give them a copy of the Bible, they cannot read, they cannot write.

So you have to add on people that even those that have the Bible there are many of them that can't read and they can't write. And then you have to add into the whole equation that there are countries and religious systems in the world that won't allow Bibles to come into them.

Think about Muslim countries where to try and print Bibles and distribute them and put them into countries. it's very difficult. And then you have communist countries as well that are completely opposed to the Bible coming into them.

[26 : 09] And it makes the job, the task of taking God's Word into parts of the world extremely difficult. And I'm going to show you two little videos.

One now, this one is a video of ours called The Greatest Story Never Told Part One. And it just shows you something of the challenge of the Bible getting into the hands of people across our world.