

Beware of Inaction and Be a Faithful Steward

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Date: 24 May 2020

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[0:00] I still feel so discombobulated doing everything from the front like this.

I feel so out of sorts. I'm not used to this. When you do something for 13 years and you have to change, it's like trying to brush your teeth with your left hand. I'm sorry, Kalen, Craig.

You guys are lefties. Trying to do it with your right hand. Is that better? Take your Bibles and go to Matthew's Gospel if you would, please.

Matthew chapter 25. Matthew chapter 25. And we're gonna study verses 14 through 30, probably a very well-known parable, parable of the talents.

Matthew chapter 25. In that black Bible in the chair in front of you, you'll find on page 21, 21, 22.

Matthew chapter 25.

[1: 15] I'll read verses 14 through 30 and then we will jump in and do our study. Matthew chapter 25, verse 14.

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Excellent, good and faithful slave. Upon a few things you were faithful. Upon many things I will appoint you.

[2:34] Enter into the joy of your Lord. The one also with two talents coming up, he said, Master, you entrusted to me two talents. Look, I've gained two more talents.

His master said to him, Excellent, good and faithful slave. Upon a few things you were faithful. Upon many things I will appoint you. Enter into the joy of your master.

24. And the one who also had received the one talent coming up, he said, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, gathering where you did not scatter.

And I was afraid, going out, I hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have what is yours. But answering, the Lord said to him, Wicked and lazy slave, you knew that I reap what I did not sow, and gather what I did not scatter.

Then you ought to have put my money with the money changers. And on my arrival, I would have received it back with interest. Therefore, take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.

[3:39] For to everyone who has shall be given, and he shall have an abundance. But from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. And throw out the worthless slave into the farthest darkness in that place.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. I remember reading this, or at least hearing about this when I was a kid, this story of talents.

I mean, it's very well known. One of the, probably maybe even, the top 25 most well known stories of the Bible. I mean, I didn't Google that or anything like that, but just, you know, it's familiar.

People are familiar with this. When I was a kid, though, I remember reading this story, hearing about this story. You know, I felt bad for the third guy. He kind of got a bad rap.

I mean, kind of a bummer. And yet nobody explained to me what was really going on with this guy. Plus, I had no idea that a big portion, almost half, of this passage deals with him.

[4:55] Which, actually, if you include the other verses, it would be about half. And it had no idea that not only to deal, a big portion deals with him, but also his wicked, lazy outlook on life.

His erroneous worldview. And I didn't understand the context of Jesus telling this story in the first place.

Which is so key to understanding why he told this parable in the first place. As we're looking at Matthew's gospel, again, the driving theme, bow down and worship Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel.

Today, we'll see this. Beware of inaction. And then, in a positive way, be a faithful steward. Or you could say, be a good and faithful steward.

Beware of inaction. Or positive, be a good and faithful steward.

[6:07] Or servant, if you want to put that in. Put in a statement for you, Jesus calls us to faithful stewardship.

Value God's kingdom and take advantage of the abilities and opportunities given to you. And when we're talking about the kingdom, we know, we've said in the past, just in context, we're talking about, in our context, the local church.

That's what we mean by the kingdom. That's what Jesus meant when he says the kingdom. He was going to establish his church. Matthew chapter 16.

So Jesus calls us to faithful stewardship. Value God's kingdom. Take advantage of the abilities.

Take advantage of the opportunities that are given to you.

Another way to put this, Jesus warns us against inaction, being slothful, lazy, and wicked when it comes to valuing him and his kingdom. Christian, beware.

[7:19] Beware. Devaluing God's kingdom may be a sign of your eternal destiny. This is heavy.

When you look at this parable that Jesus gives, it's a heavy parable. It's a heavy warning. We talked about this last week.

There's two different groups that Jesus begins to unfold for us, which started in chapter 25, excuse me, chapter 24, verse 36. Two groups, the saved and the lost, the prepared and the unprepared, the responsible, faithful, wise slave, which Ward read from this morning, and the irresponsible, faithless, wicked slave, the wise, prepared virgins, and the unprepared, moronic virgins, and now we see the good, faithful, stewarding slaves, and the wicked, lazy slave.

Jesus continues this theme. And as a matter of fact, this is for free, it's not in my notes, he will continue that theme again even for next week. On judgment day, you will still have the two groups, the sheep and the goats.

Hypocrisy with this evil slave, from chapter 24, hypocrisy with the moronic virgins, first part of chapter 25, and now, you see hypocrisy with this one slave, given one talent.

[9:03] Because being alert, equals being faithful. Get on with the task, your Lord has graciously entrusted to you. Christian, church member, get on with the task, that the Lord has entrusted to you.

If you are a person, if you are a Christian, you say, I'm alert, and I'm ready, I'm prepared for the return of Jesus, then get to work.

That's what Jesus is saying. I said this last week, as we looked at the ten virgins, and then these two slaves, and then the thief.

I said this last week, and I thought it would be appropriate to say again, if we do not practice alertness, we may be jeopardizing not only present opportunities for service and obedience to Jesus, but even our eternal destiny.

Are you taking advantage of the opportunities that God has laid before you? What's the result of a Jesus follower being always alert and ready for his return?

[10:21] Good, faithful stewardship. A wise, faithful steward who gets on with the job Jesus has given to him, gets on with the job Jesus has given to her.

See, it's not about if you're gonna be surprised when he comes. Here's the real question to ask ourselves. Here's the real question to ask yourself.

Will you be dependable in using the resources he entrusted to you according to your abilities? And he's not looking for you to do more than other followers, more than this person, more than that gal, more than that guy.

No, no, no. He's asking for you to be faithful to that. Are you alert for the return of Jesus? How do you know?

You exercise your gifts, abilities, opportunities for mission and service for Jesus and his kingdom. In the context that we're talking about, the Jesus is specified within the local church.

[11:27] this is most important to you. Or, put it, how William Carey put it, quote, attempt great things for God, expect great things from God.

God. these three slaves stand for the church, or rather those that profess to be a part of God's church, God's assembly.

two are legit. One is a hypocrite. And as I said earlier, a big part of this parable has to do with this third slave.

I mean, just in the conversation, in verse, what, 24 to 30, I think that's like seven verses. If you add the other verses to that, literally, this third slave takes about almost half of this whole parable.

So this stands as a warning of irresponsibility as a professed follower of Jesus. Are you seeking other things and no action in God's kingdom?

[12:39] There are so many other things that we can busy ourselves with. It's true. And this slave, or this hypocrite, if I may call him, thought his task would be harder than what his Lord had said.

It's the true, faithful disciple of Jesus who will be a good steward with the opportunities and abilities he has entrusted to him or has entrusted to her. It's the false faker, the hoaxing hypocrite who believed his Lord was a hard taskmaster.

And if you think that way about God, it's going to be hard for you to respond to God's kind graciousness and generosity by being a faithful, good, wise steward.

So that's all introduction to this, okay? Now I have disclaimers for you. As I was studying, I'm like, I probably need to put some disclaimers. Yeah, yeah. Just to kind of balance this out.

Disclaimer number one, I think I have two, maybe three, two at least. Disclaimer number one, we're looking at this passage in its context. We started in Matthew chapter one to chapter two, chapter 24, now we're into chapter 25, 14 to 30.

[14:01] So don't think I'm attacking you of what I'm about to say. I'm not trying to do that. I'm not, I don't have an agenda in other words. I'm just working through the text. Second disclaimer, there are times when we're not faithful.

There's times where we fall short. Understand, this speaks about a person's life or lifestyle, if I may say.

The slave had always thought this about his master. And we'll look at that more in depth in a few moments. It reminds me of, what is it, 2 Timothy chapter two, when we are faithless, he remains faithful because he cannot deny himself.

So, as you come before the Lord in humility, confessing your faithlessness, remind yourself of the gospel. That's why Jesus had to die. And his perfect sacrifice has a tone for my screw-ups and yours.

For the times that I've been faithless and the times that you've been faithless. Because it happens. And yet, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[15:25] So we, we admit that. Lord, I've been faithless. I repent of that and I put my trust in you because Jesus, you're the only person who can save me. My faithfulness doesn't save me. Jesus saves me, right?

There's no hements to that. Where's my mother when I need her? Just kidding. We, we, we rest in the death of Christ in our place.

If my mom could, she would probably write amen on the screen. Anyway, we rest in the death of Christ. We rest in him in these times. So those are my disclaimers. Keep that in mind as we work through this tough, weighty passage about stewardship.

So, I think there's four different main points I got, okay? So, just walking through the text. Point number one, Jesus entrusts us with his resources.

Jesus represents the master. Or I would go back and forth between master and lord because it's kurios is the Greek word. So it's lord. Kurios, master, lord. And obviously, he's the one who's represented here, Jesus.

[16:30] So, he entrusts us with his resources. Notice verse 14 and 15. For as a man, and Jesus does that because he started this process in chapter 25, verse 1.

For the kingdom of heaven will be compared. And then he continues. For it's like ten virgins. And it's also like a man going on a journey. He called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.

So it seems like, and rightly so, this guy had some serious bling bling. He had some serious dough. He was rich.

He owned a lot of money. He entrusted to each slave according to his ability that says here in verse 15, five and then two and then one, each according to his own ability. Now, a talent, it's hard to really accurately nail down how much a talent was.

But we've got kind of a good idea. It's around 50 to 75 pounds. Just one talent. It was a large sum around 6,000 silver denarii.

[17 : 40] So, it probably was equal, equivalent to about 19 years of labor. 19 years of labor.

So this is a pretty big deal. If you've got one talent, I mean, that's just a lot of money. And then you think about the guy who got two. And then the guy who got five. I mean, so they got quite a bit of money, right?

So again, it seems like this lord, this man, in the story, he had money and notice how he entrusted them with his possessions. So he comes, he's here, he entrusts them with his possessions and then notice the end of verse 15, he went on his journey.

He left, immediately he was gone. So this depicts Jesus. That's what he does. He comes and then he entrusts us with his disciples and he leaves. Jesus entrusts us with his resources.

And then notice point number two. Be a faithful steward versus a faithless steward. Verse 16 to 18, it explains what each one did. 16, want to receive the five, going out, traded with them, gained five more.

[18 : 56] Likewise, want to gain two more. Verse 18, but when we receive the one, going away, he dug in the ground and hid the money of his Lord.

So explains what each one did with which the Lord entrusted to them. 100% profit for the first two. The third one dug a hole. He hid his talent.

Here you see the beginnings of faithlessness and then also, you also see faithfulness. Point number three, the story moves on.

How faithfulness is rewarded. 19 to 23, notice in verse 19, the master's long time reminds us of Jesus' earlier teaching in this chapter 24 about how his return would take time.

it would be unexpected, but he finally comes and it says, he came and settled accounts with them.

[20 : 02] They're at the end of verse 19. What does this depict? It depicts or this portrays the final judgment when we will all give an account.

That's what this portrays. This depicts this time, a final judgment. And then continues on Jesus' parable.

The one received five, saying, master, have you entrusted me five? Look, I've gained five more. It happens the same thing in verse 22 with one has two.

Master, you trust me two, I gained two more. So the first two slaves were rewarded for their faithfulness. They brought a hundred percent profit to their Lord.

Notice he commended them. Our version says, well done, or you can even translate it like this, excellent, excellent, excellent, good, and faithful slave.

[21 : 00] He characterized them. First he commended them, and he characterized them. And then notice the phrase that's given here with the one with five talents at the end of verse 21, and then the one with two talents at the end of verse 23, literally verbatim, upon a few things you were faithful, upon many things I will appoint you.

So they were good stewards of little things, and then the Lord would appoint them to many things, or greater things.

So the question, are you faithful in just the little things of God's kingdom? What are those little things about God's kingdom that you just don't think matter, but yet they do?

And then the next phrase, which is also verbatim for each one, the end of verse 21, the end of verse 23, enter into the joy of your master, or the joy of your Lord.

This would be the eschatological feast with their Lord and master, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their joy would come from their Lord, and in reality, would be located in their Lord.

[22 : 26] He would be their joy. He approved. He was pleased. Their future was joy.

prominent forever with their Lord. So both received the same reward because it wasn't about numerical success, but fidelity with the entrustment from their master.

What's not important is the actual size. Notice he didn't say, well, how come you didn't do three instead of two more? Say that to the guy who had two. What was vital was faithful stewardship with

the little things.

Interesting. You know, talk about the little things. One talent was about 19 years worth of labor.

That's a little thing? You know, put that equivalent to today's money.

What's 19 years, almost 20 years of a salary for you? And you get that all in one shot. That's a little thing? To God it is. So here you see the faithfulness is rewarded.

[23 : 44] Jesus entrusts us with this. You see the faithfulness, you see faithlessness, and then you see how faithfulness is rewarded. And then the story turns here where the focus, you have seven verses from verse 24 to verse 30.

You see this warning to beware. Truth is exposed. Faithlessness is punished.

And first inaction and faithlessness is admitted and confessed starting in verse 24. When also received the one coming up he said, Master or Lord I need to be hard man.

I knew you were a hard man. Reaping where you did not sow, gathering where you did not winnow. Being afraid I went away. I hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have what is yours.

He gave his explanation of what he thought was reality and what he really believed about his Lord.

And notice how he tried to persuade his master that his caution should be commended.

[25 : 04] he admitted his inaction. He admitted his faithlessness with the resources that were entrusted to him from his Lord.

He admitted his true character. Who you truly are will come out on judgment day. You can't, well you can do that now, you can try and fake people out, thinking of fake God out even, but on judgment day, it all comes out.

Because notice what happens with this next point. Truth and presumption is exposed. Verse 26, but answering the Lord said to him, wicked, lazy slave.

Notice this. It's exactly what Jesus did in chapter 24 with that other slave, verse 48, but if that evil slave, Jesus is already calling that, from chapter 24, verse 48, already calling that slave evil.

Who he is comes out. And it happens here. The truth is exposed. His action was senseless, useless.

[26 : 27] His belief about his master should have had the opposite results. You knew I reap where I did not so gather, where I did not scatter.

Then you ought to put my money, with the money changes, and on my arrival would have received it back with some interest, at least. If he thought he was so harsh, and so cunning, then at least deposit my money.

money. But then you have not just the truth being exposed of who this slave, who he really was, but also his presumption upon his master.

See, this slave put himself in the position where he was the master, and his master was the slave.

You shouldn't be like that, master.

You shouldn't act like that. So I took it upon myself to help you. Notice how he was presuming upon his master.

[27 : 35] What nerve this guy had. Since when is it up to a slave to make a judgment call on his Lord about how he makes his money?

Since when is it up to us to question how God does the way he does things? Since when should we question who God is and why he does the things that he does?

It's none of your business. He's a slave. The Lord hired him. Who made him the boss?

Who made him the boss? Listen. What we truly believe about God comes out in how we live. What you really believe about God comes out in how you live and in the things and the people that you invest.

What's important to you? What we value? What we value? God and when he says this in verse 26 he wasn't necessarily agreeing that he was like this.

[28 : 55] Again he's saying if you truly thought this about me then you would have acted differently. unfortunately he bought into a lie about his Lord.

His lack of action was slothful and lazy not wisdom. Who he really was was being exposed.

And that's what God's going to do. On judgment day nobody can hide from God. You can't. You won't.

He thought it was his job to make his Lord right. Who in the world did he think he was? Friends you're just a slave. This Lord was being gracious to him to even make him a slave.

and then entrusted him with such a large sum of money. How are we presuming upon God?

[30:15] We think trivial things in this life are way more valuable than the kingdom of God. And I say we on purpose. I do this.

we get sidetracked so easily. It's ridiculous. It's just lazy.

Well he you see the inaction. The truth is exposed. Again we're still under this main point for beware. But then you see a third aspect to this fourth point.

You see the consequences of his faithlessness. In verse 28 to 30. He gave two orders to the slave. Verse 28 therefore take away the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten.

Why? Verse 29 for to everyone who has shall be given and he shall have an abundance but from the one who does not have even what he does have shall be taken away.

[31:28] Jesus said this earlier in Matthew's gospel Matthew chapter 13 verse 12. So it's going to relate here just as well and just as much.

To the ones given they'll be given more to those who don't have they'll lose what little they already have. In other words this slave willfully rejected his Lord. willfully was in rebellion against his Lord. There's no neutrality with God. There's no neutrality amongst us as humans. God graciously gave to this slave it's not our right to know God it's a privilege it is grace because God is never obligated to us.

he's not obligated that you don't get this virus and die. He's not obligated to you in any way shape or form.

all of this shows what truly was in the heart of this slave it was rejection. That's what's in our hearts.

[32:44] That's where we start. That's where we begin. We begin with rejection of God. as in the case of the evil slave of chapter 24 as in the case of the five moronic virgins of chapter 25 likewise with this third slave.

His true colors came out on judgment day. Our response to Christ to Christ now determines later destiny.

Are you valuing God's kingdom? Are you a good faithful steward? The second action takes place in verse 30.

And throughout or cast out notice the worthless slave he's wicked he's lazy and he's worthless useless into the farthest darkness to put himself as a slave in the place of his master was unjust and wrong.

he took advantage of his privilege by his very actions that he was no true slave of his master he was a hypocrite like the others so he admitted his lord's disposition so guess what he'll face the full brunt of that disposition you say I'm harsh so be it but in actuality our lord is gracious and generous is he not our lord is good and kind is he not and the slave in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth you see that throughout Matthew's gospel more specifically in chapter 25 verse 51 that's where the evil slave went that's how's he call them hypocrites the place where the hypocrites go chapter 24 verse 51 he proved who he truly was an apathetic imposter one writer said said this about this passage quote the swift justice meted out to the lazy servant puts a merciful end to any notion that the disobedient and the dishonest will be able to blackmail their way into the kingdom of heaven by manipulating the goodness of

[35:51] God or playing on divine pity end quote that's a heavy statement are you trying to blackmail God thinking you've got one up on him Christian he's given you so much why are you continuing to be apathetic lazy slothful and unconcerned for God's kingdom why true followers of Jesus are equipped to serve him with their abilities with their talents and with the resources to further the kingdom of God and when I say kingdom again we're not talking about social justice we're not talking about that it's in the context of how Matthew defines it how Jesus defined it in Matthew gospel which is within the local church and the preaching of the gospel we are called our primary responsibility as

Christians is to use these resources to extend God's rule and reign that people will say thy will be done thy kingdom come there there is no excuse for God's people to display inactivity for his kingdom there's no excuse we should not be inactive which comes from fear or laziness possibly even hypocrisy and what do you invest in who do you invest if we do not practice constant alertness we may be jeopardizing not only present opportunities for service and obedience to Jesus but even our eternal destiny see this is a heavy message huh it's heavy

Jesus isn't he's not messing around that's why I gave those disclaimers Jesus calls us to faithful stewardship value God's kingdom oh church take advantage of the abilities and opportunities that

are given to you they're there seek them out value the kingdom value his church and Jesus warns us I said this earlier Jesus warns us against an action being slothful lazy and wicked when it comes to valuing him and his kingdom beware devaluing God's kingdom may be a sign of your eternal destiny beware beware would you pray with me our father we admit the times the seasons maybe where we have been faithless we have not been invested in your kingdom and we thank you that you bring forgiveness we thank you that you bring mercy and so we humble ourselves and we ask we ask for your help we ask for your grace yes we know Lord you've already given us grace so please be generous again and you are generous you're willing to help us you command us to be faithful so give us the power to be faithful you give us a command so give us the power to obey your command and we thank you as we fail which we do in so many ways you pick us up you remind us of the gospel you remind us that's why Jesus had to die and we respond with repentant faith we trust

Jesus he's the only one who can save us and we keep going forward to be faithful stewards so Father we also pray those watching and those who are watching the future and maybe those that are here we pray as your heart excuse me as their hearts have been pricked by your spirit to respond to Jesus today I pray that they would repent they would see the the futility of this life they would turn from sin and put all their hope in you Jesus Messiah they would trust in you you had to die in their stead in their place and when they put their trust in you alone you will save them from their sin you'll save them from the judgment of condemnation and you'll change them to reflect more of your own image by the power of the spirit we pray that for them help us as a church to make your church so important vital not that we throw aside everything else not to that extreme but may we value your kingdom even more so and may begin today thank you

Jesus in your name we pray amen I thought a song most appropriate for you you you you you you you you you you you