

# Well Done Good and Faithful Servant- BCA Sunday

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 11 October 2026

Preacher: Paul Sampson (BCA)

[0:00] If you're going overseas for some time, one of the things you have to do before you go is to get someone to look after your valuable possessions. A number of years ago, my brother and his family were going overseas for a time and they asked us to look after their dog.

They had a Labrador, Rufus, his name was, a lovely dog. We didn't have a dog at the time, so we gladly agreed that we'd look after their dog while they're on holidays. So Rufus came to our place and all went well for a couple of days.

Then I came home on the third day and I noticed that the side gate was open, which was a little bit unusual. So I went inside to my wife, Cathy, and said, hey, have you got Rufus with you?

And she said, no. The dog had gone. Cathy then called upstairs. Kids, come down now.

Rufus is gone. Now, the timing was pretty bad because at that moment, my daughter was on a call to her niece, her cousin, I should say, my niece, who was in Germany.

[1:09] And she heard Cathy shout upstairs, the dog is gone. Her dog is gone. She went into a panic. She called her mother, who was in another part of Germany at the time.

She called her dad, who was in the US at the time. Called her brother, who was in Japan at the time. It seemed within 10 minutes, the world knew that we were incompetent dog minders.

I said to my daughter, quick, can we put up an ad on Facebook? Rufus, Labrador, gone missing. And she did.

And then we stopped and prayed. Maybe we should have done the other way around. But we stopped. We prayed. Five minutes later, a message came up. Rufus is down the street, 200 metres, sitting watching television with one of our neighbours.

All right. All is well. The point is, if you're going away, it's important to entrust your valuable possessions to someone reliable.

[2:07] Someone who would take care of them in the way that you intend. As an aside, two days later, I was going for a walk with Rufus around the blocks. And this random person came up to me.

I've never met. And they said, is that Rufus? So the dog had become more well-known in the community than I was. Anyway, put that aside. Matthew 25 tells this story similarly, that a man is going away on a journey.

And he called his servants and trusted his wealth to them. An enormous amount of wealth. Verse 15, in some translations of the Bible, it says, to the one he gave five talents.

The word talents is a bit misleading for us. When we hear the word talents, we think of gifts or abilities and that sort of thing. So it's not that. A talent was a measure of weight. So in English, we have the word pound.

Initially, that was a measure of weight, but then became a large unit of money. The commentaries tell us that one talent was about 20 years of a labourer's wages.

[3:16] About 20 years of a labourer's wages. So let me give you some kind of relativities. I looked this up during the week. The national minimum wage in Australia from 1st of July this year, \$26.44 an hour, which is about \$1,000 a week, which is about \$52,000 per annum.

So 20 years of a labourer's wage is about a million dollars in today's term. A million dollars. One talent, a million dollars.

Two talents is what a labourer would earn in an entire lifetime. A huge amount of money. So I think the more recent translation of bags of gold is probably much better.

See, what's on view is that the Lord gives his people responsibilities in the light of their abilities. He entrusts enormous responsibilities to his servants.

He wants to be able to rely on his servants. Now, at this point, I need three volunteers. Can I ask three volunteers to come up the front here? You won't be harmed in this process.

[4:31] Three volunteers. Otherwise, oh, I saw them. Yes, come on up. Come on up. Fantastic. That's one. Two. I see a volunteer down here. And I see another volunteer, sir.

And that's right. Could you come up here? Thank you very much. Thank you. That was a volunteer right there, I saw. Oh, yes. Come on up. And can we welcome our volunteers here, right? Okay. All right. So we've been listening to the story. Let's hear it again, though, the first part. Thank you. You can be going to do it. Okay. And he entrusted his wealth to them.

To one he gave five bags of gold. To another two bags. And to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

Okay. So to one he gave five bags of gold. Oh, just a second. To one he gave two bags of gold.

[5:29] And to one he gave one bag of gold. Okay. And then we read that they were sent off. So I'm going to send them off over here.

You guys go over there. That'll be good. Just over there. That'll be terrific. And then we'll see what happened next. For a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

The man who had given five bags of gold brought the other five. Master, he said, you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more. Okay. We'll just pause there.

Come on back here. Come on back. Come on back. Okay. So you were given five. How many have you got now?

Five more. Five more. And you were given two. And how many have you got now? Two more. And you were given one.

[6:25] And how many have you got now? I know. I know. There's you. You've got five more. You've got two more.

And you've got no more. No more. Okay. Let's read what happens here then. 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. The man with two bags of gold also came. Master, he said, you entrusted me with two bags of gold.

See, I have gained two more. Okay. And notice what the master said to this one who came back with two. He said, his master replied, well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful with a few things. I'll put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness. Okay. But then the third man came back who'd been entrusted with one bag of gold.

[7:22] What did we read? Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. His master, he said, master, I knew that you're a hard man harvesting where you've not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you. Notice what the master said to this servant.

His master replied, you wicked, lazy servant. So you knew that I harvested where I've not sown and gathered where I've 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. So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has 10 bags.

For whoever has will be given more and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them and throw that worthless servant outside into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[8:37] Can we thank our servants here? Hold on, you guys. It's all yours. I get to keep it? Yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah. Okay.

What we see is a very vivid, it's a dramatic story. But what is the point? What is the point? The point is faithfulness.

The faithfulness of the servants. The faithfulness of the servants towards the absent master who will one day return and who will want to know what business the servants have conducted.

Notice the key word is faithful. It's used twice in verse 21 and twice in verse 23. Two servants are described as faithful.

But the point is that all the servants are called to be faithful. One servant receives five bags of gold, another two bags of gold, and another one bag of gold.

[9:49] Then the master went away. The one who received five gained another five. The one who received two gained another two. But the one who had received one didn't do anything with it.

We read in verse 18, But the man who had received one bag dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. How should we assess what he did?

You think, wasn't that the safe option, right? He put it in the ground where it would be safe as long as it could be found. That would be a safe option. But notice what the master said when he came back.

He didn't say, well done, good and faithful servant. No, no, no. He called him a wicked, lazy servant. In economics, there's a thing called the rule of 72.

This number 72, if you take the number 72, you divide it by the rate of compound interest, you get the number of years it takes for your money to double. So if you invest at the rate of 7%, it'll take 10 years for your money to double.

[10:54] 72 divided by 7 is 10. If the rate of return is 10%, the money doubles every seven years. And people in real estate in this part of the world and all around Sydney have seen this, of course, in action.

We read that the master returned after a long period of time. We need to note this. So even if the servant was getting a really low rate of interest, just a couple of percents on deposit with the bankers, as he said, it would have been worth significantly more than the original amount.

The master didn't have unrealistically high expectations, but he absolutely expected that it would be invested wisely and generate a return on his investment.

Remember, of course, that even when we're thinking about the third servant, he was given an enormous amount of money. In today's terms, about a million dollars. 20 years of wages to be wise with.

He did nothing with his bag of gold. He hid it in the ground. It was considered a safe place in the ancient world. But what's the point? What is Jesus saying?

[12:06] Well, firstly, the Pharisees are being called out. They had effectively buried their opportunities, their responsibilities, and they're called worthless servants.

Wicked. Lazy. You can't put a positive spin on that. Jesus is rebuking them. What they have will be taken away from them.

Worse still, see the language there. They will find themselves outside of the kingdom, in the darkness. And Jesus uses these words here. It paints a truly gruesome picture.

Verse 30. A place where there'll be weeping and gnashing teeth. Now, we need to note that the implications go much wider than the Pharisees.

It applies to all who refuse to act on the responsibilities and the opportunities that the Master has provided for them. So, friends, be aware this may well be us.

[13:09] For we have been given so much to use for God's kingdom. You've been given the good news of the gospel, the forgiveness of sins by faith in Jesus, reconciliation with God.

By faith, you've been given God's Holy Spirit. And you have received extraordinary ministry training through your church. If you've been part of this church or like a similar church in Sydney for a while, you've had systematically been taught well the Bible.

We had to notice a similarity between a spiritual and natural phenomenon. I want you to think about muscles for a moment. When it comes to muscles, the axiom is clear.

Use it or lose it. If you develop our muscles, then we can lift heavier weights more easily and still feel good and not injure ourselves.

Jesus reminds us, to those who have, more is given. But if you lie in bed and do nothing, atrophy takes over.

[14:19] The muscles you have deteriorate. We can do less and less. How far can you run? If you train regularly, you can run further and further.

But if you just sit and watch Netflix, you'll be able to run less next time than you did last time.

Recently, our son and his wife did the Mudgee Marathon.

42 K's. But they didn't just get up that morning and say, let's give this a crack. We'll knock out 42 K's. No, you see, they trained, gradually increasing the distance they could run each time.

It is like this in the spiritual realm as well. When we act faithfully, using the responsibilities and taking the opportunities that the Lord gives us, our capacities will grow.

But if we do nothing with them, our ability to respond will diminish. We need to hear this message.

[15 : 23] There's a potent challenge for all of us to respond in the service of the Master. Regardless of our physical capabilities, that's not what's on view here.

But it's a warning against being slack. It's a warning against being unwilling to take risks. Notice the response that the five bags of gold and the two bags of gold servants received. Identical commendations. Verse 21, 23. His master replied, Both used what had been given to them.

They both used it wisely. It is how we use what we have given that is important. Friends, you've been given the gift of salvation.

Through faith in Jesus. We haven't earned it. And it's an extraordinary, extravagant gift from God. Through his son, the Lord Jesus. Begiven and set free by faith in Jesus.

[16 : 39] That is indeed an extraordinary gift. And we are to use the gift. So the question is, what might that look like for you? Well, it'll depend on your individual circumstances, of course.

But see what verse 29 says. The point of the parable is that we all need to be ready for Christ's return. All his servants understood that the master would return.

We're reminded in Jesus' parable in the first half of the master's return. We are to be ready. Where can we invest now?

Our time. And our money. And our abilities. In a way that we believe is most in accord with God's desire to make disciples of all people.

So we need to ask ourselves, yes, certainly, where is our potential for numerical and spiritual growth? And we can look to the low-hanging fruit. But our mission field, as has been highlighted already this morning, is beyond the kind of comfort circle of where we live here.

[17 : 47] It includes the hard, rocky ground. Ministers with BCA are ministering in those sort of places. The under-resourced regional, rural, and remote parts of this country.

Places like Lightning Ridge and Cobar and Broken Hill and Walgett and Colorado Bryant. Sydney churches and, indeed, BCA are in many real senses like the first two servants who have just been blessed abundantly.

Compared to most churches in the world, we have enormous amount of resources. The language of Matthew 25, we have been entrusted with many bags of gold.

And we must continue to think through and pray through carefully how we use those abundant resources. That remains our responsibility. But it remains our responsibility to seek to gain more, to use wisely and courageously the riches that we've been given.

So that might continue to grow, to support kingdom growth here and further afield. Now, I can assure you that in many churches I'm familiar with, the application of this passage would be to give more money.

[18 : 54] But that is not what Jesus is saying here. This is not a call to give, but to use. This is not a call to give, but to use.

Reminder is that Jesus is coming back. And when he returns, none of us will hear from him. None of us will hear from him. Well done, good and successful servant.

What we hope to hear is, well done, good and faithful servant. So what is God calling you to do? He's calling us to be wise. Not act in faith. Not act in fear. But in faith. Use what we've been given for his kingdom.

Jesus teaches that readiness for his return involves active faithful service, not passive waiting. He calls his servants to courageously invest their lives in ways that honour him.

[20 : 24] Trusting that one day Jesus is coming back and will one day be rewarded for our faithfulness. It's said sometimes that we overestimate what we can do in a year and underestimate what we can do in five.

In just a moment's time, I'm going to lead us in prayer. But before I do that, I want to invite you to take a moment, literally take a moment now, to crystallise your thinking.

We have been given much. Take a moment to make a plan. What is one concrete thing that you can do with what God has given you?

What's one concrete thing you can do for the purpose of his kingdom? Is it to use your knowledge to lead and teach others? Maybe scripture in schools or maybe leading ministries here, teaching kids here at church on Sunday morning?

Is it to use your wealth to support a ministry? The Fergusons in Walcott, perhaps. Is it to use your time and energy to support others on a service roster here at St. Paul's, maybe?

[ 21 : 43 ] So now take a moment to plan over time what might you do that could make a huge difference.

Take a moment now. Think of that one thing that the Lord is prompting you to act on. One thing you'll take away to look to implement as a result of hearing God's word this morning. Let's do that. Thank you.