

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

September 28, 2025

The Gospels

“The Pathway to Abundance”

Matthew 25:14-30

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Robby Robins was an Air Force pilot during the first Iraq war. After his 300th mission, he was surprised to be given permission to immediately pull his crew together and fly his plane home. They flew across the ocean to Massachusetts and then had a long drive to western Pennsylvania. They drove all night, and when his buddies dropped him off at his driveway just after sun-up, there was a big banner across the garage—“Welcome Home Dad!” How did they know? No one had called, and the crew themselves hadn't expected to leave so quickly. Robins relates, “When I walked into the house, the kids, about half dressed for school, screamed, ‘Daddy!’ Susan came running down the hall—she looked terrific—hair fixed, make-up on, and a crisp yellow dress. ‘How did you know?’ I asked. ‘I didn’t,’ she answered through tears of joy. ‘Once we knew the war was over, we knew you’d be home one of these days. We knew you’d try to surprise us, so we were ready every day.’” In *Matthew 25*, Jesus shares a couple of parables to make the point that while Jesus will have to leave them, He will one day return and when He returns, He expects that we will be ready and waiting. Here in this Parable of the Three Servants, Jesus points us to how He expects us to prepare for His homecoming. How then can we get ready for Jesus’ return? If Jesus returned right now, would we be ready?

Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴ “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. ¹⁵ He gave five bags of silver^[a] to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.

¹⁶ “The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. ¹⁷ The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. ¹⁸ But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master’s money.

¹⁹ “After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. ²⁰ The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and

said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.'

²¹ "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

²² "The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.'

²³ "The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

²⁴ "Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. ²⁵ I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.'

²⁶ "But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate, ²⁷ why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.'

²⁸ "Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. ²⁹ To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. ³⁰ Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

GOD-GIVEN RESOURCES

First, Jesus refers to our **God-Given Resources** which are to be invested until He returns. In this parable Jesus tells the story of a businessman who is getting ready to go away for a long time. He calls together three of His employees. The businessman gave these employees a considerable amount of responsibility and authority. If they were diligent in their work and the business prospered, they would also prosper. With this in mind, Jesus says the businessman gives one of the employees five, 75-pound bags of silver to invest in the business while He is away. As a master storyteller, Jesus often used hyperbole, or exaggeration, to get people's attention, pull them into the story, and interact with the story as if they were in the story. One of these bags of silver in the ancient world of this time was equivalent to twenty years' worth of a day laborers'

salary. Jesus gave this first man 100 years' worth of salary. The second man, received two bags and the third servant, one bag.

S.H.A.P.E.

In this story, Jesus is the businessman and the employees are us, His followers. Jesus has left this world after His death, resurrection, and ascension and has given us resources which He expects us to invest in His Kingdom until the day comes that He returns. Jesus doesn't specify what these resources are so that they cannot be narrowed down to just one aspect of our lives. These bags of silver represent all the resources God has given to us to be invested in His Kingdom work in this world while we wait for His return. One of the resources is our **Time**. Every day that we have to live is a gift from God. God doesn't owe us another day of life; He gives it to us as a gift. We all get only one life to live; one that's very short when compared to eternity. God expects us to use our time wisely and to make the most of every moment of our lives. The next category of resources God has given us can be called **Talents**. Our talents can be understood as our own unique God-given **S.H.A.P.E.** We have a S.H.A.P.E. class we are offering at Killearn that can help you discover what your God-given S.H.A.P.E. is. The **S** in S.H.A.P.E. stands for your **Spiritual Gifts** and there are many of them in the Bible which the Holy Spirit gives us. **H** refers to our **Heart**, or our passions or interests that we have in life. **A** in S.H.A.P.E. stands for our **Abilities**, whether they are natural abilities we are born with or those that we have learned in school, in life, or on the job. The **P** in S.H.A.P.E. refers to your unique **Personality**. Finally, the **E** in S.H.A.P.E. are your **Experiences** in life that have served to further mold who you are today.

God has also given us our **Treasures**, which are our finances and material possessions. We are not to hold too tightly to our finances but freely and generously use them in the work of the Kingdom of God through our tithing to the church we call home, and in giving further generous gifts to other outreach ministries that are making a difference for God's Kingdom in this world. The final God-given resource we often overlook is that of our **Temple**. *1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body."* The Holy Spirit makes His home in us, in our bodies, which makes our bodies God's temple or God's home. Therefore, God has given us these bodies to be used in His Kingdom work. That means we need to take special care of these bodies through what we eat, drink, exercise, sleep, and how we use these bodies in this world.

FAITHFULLY INVEST OUR GOD-GIVEN RESOURCES

Not only does Jesus point out in this parable that God has given us resources for His Kingdom work until He returns but Jesus also makes the point that His expectation is we are to **Faithfully Invest Our God-Given Resources**. It is important to note again that the businessman didn't give the three men all the same number of resources. Each

one was given a different amount according to His abilities. God knows us better than we know ourselves. God also has a special plan for each one of our lives and gives us our own unique amount of Time, Talents, Treasures, and Temple. Some have more and some have less. As we mentioned earlier, we also all have our own unique S.H.A.P.E. given to us out of God's wisdom according to God's plan for our lives. Therefore, God has different expectations as to the results of investing our God-given resources in His Kingdom work in this world. The one identical expectation God has for all of us is simply that we will be faithful with whatever resources He has given us. Andrew Murray was right when he said, "The world asks, 'What does a man own?'; Christ asks, 'How does he use it?'"

The employees who were given five and two bags of silver were faithful in how they handled them by immediately investing them in the business. On the other hand, the employee who received one bag kept his coins safe and buried them in the ground until the businessman returned. He was unfaithful! He did not obediently invest the little bit he was given. Why is it those of us who call ourselves followers of Jesus are not investing our God-given resources in God's Kingdom? Some may not because they feel insecure, or don't think they are good enough, talented enough, or have anything to offer. Others keep procrastinating, saying that they are too busy to invest their resources in God's Kingdom and say they will do so when life slows down or when they can afford to invest in God's Kingdom. Others use the excuse of being too old to invest their resources. Some do not because they are lazy, as Jesus stated here in the parable. Still there are others who do not because they selfishly cling so tightly to their time, talent, treasures, and temple that they only use it selfishly on themselves.

I love this cute poem that says, "There's a clever young guy named Somebody Else, / There's nothing this guy can't do. / He is busy from morning till way late at night, / Just substituting for you. / You're asked to do this or you're asked to do that / And what is your ready reply? / Get Somebody Else to do that job, / He'll do it much better than I. / So much to do in this weary old world— / So much and workers so few. / And Somebody Else, all weary and worn, / Is still substituting for you. / The next time you're asked to do something worthwhile, / Just give this ready reply: / If Somebody Else can give time and support, / My goodness, so can I!"

Most churches operate under the 80-20 rule where 20% of the people do 80% of the work. God's Kingdom will advance through His church only when each one of us faithfully invests our own unique God-given resources in God's Kingdom. A church will not be able to do the work God expects if each individual is not faithful to do what he or she is called to do. The Bible tells us in *Galatians 6:9*, "*So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.*" The Bible also says in *1 Corinthians 15:58*, "*So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.*"

JESUS WILL SETTLE HIS ACCOUNTS WITH US

Jesus also points out in this parable that when Jesus does return, **Jesus Will Settle His Accounts with Us**. Jesus says when the businessman finally returned after a long time away, He called together His employees to find out what they had done with His resources. Notice that it wasn't *their* money, but the businessman's money that was meant to be wisely invested in His business. When the two employees stood before the businessman showed that they faithfully invested their bags of silver and doubled their money, the response of the businessman in *Matthew 25:21* was, *"The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'"* There was great joy in their faithfulness! On the other hand, the employee who hid and didn't use his bag of silver was fired and what little he had was taken away from him and wisely given to the one who faithfully used His resources. Jesus is referring to the day when He will finally return after being away a long time. When Jesus returns, all we Christians will stand before Him to be judged. Thankfully, we have all been forgiven of our sins and so all our past will be behind us, and we will be welcomed into eternity with God and all of heaven. At the same time, though, Jesus will review our lives and have us give an accounting for how we've invested our God-given resources in His kingdom work in this world. Jesus is so serious about this that those who do not invest their God-given resources were condemned as having never been His servants and as a result they have no share in the joy of eternity with God.

When Missy and I were in England a few weeks ago with the Global Methodist Church Wesley Heritage Tour, something we saw in just about every area we visited were cemeteries with graves dating as far back as over 1,000 years ago during the 11th century. We saw graves of John Wesley, his mother, Susannah Wesley, C. S. Lewis, the Puritan writer of the classic *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan, William Shakespeare, his wife, Anne Hathaway and their family. One late afternoon we went to Westminster Abbey for a worship service they called, Evensong. We were in a long line of people who were escorted into the Abbey to quickly be seated for the short worship service. As we were walking in line I saw the name of the Sir Isaac Newton on a tomb. I had no idea that he was interred there in 1727 in the area of the Abbey known as Scientist's Corner along with Charles Darwin. I was in awe! They also have in the Abbey, Poets Corner with the tombs of Chaucer, Dickens, Kipling, Tennyson. In addition they have many monarchs, royalty, as well other notables such as the great explorer and missionary, David Livingstone and also the one-time member of Parliament who fought for the abolition of slavery, William Wilberforce. One thing most of these tombs had inscribed upon them was the date of the individual's birth, death, and in between them a small, short dash. What does that dash represent in the middle of their date of birth and death? Of course, it represents their lives, what they have done with their one and only one shot at their temporary lives. There is a poem by Linda Ellis that is called, **The Dash**. It says, *"I read of a man who stood to speak at a funeral of a friend. / He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning...to the end. / He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, / but said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years. / For that dash represents all the time*

they spent alive on earth, / and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth. / For it matters not, how much we own, the cars...the house...the cash. / What matters is how we lived and loved and how we spend our dash. / So, think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change? / For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged. / To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more, / and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before. / If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile, / ...remembering that this special dash might only last a little while. / So, when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash, / would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?"

Are you ready for Jesus' return? He promises to return and when He does there will be an accounting for how we have invested what unique resources He has given each one of us. Are you living your life excited for the day that you will hear *"Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!"* If not, I invite you to surrender your life over to Jesus to be used for His Kingdom work until Jesus returns.

"²⁴ Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. ²⁵ All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen."

SUGGESTED RESOURCES: (Books marked with * are available to be checked-out in the Asbury Discipleship Resource Center)

- *The Holy Bible* (Several FREE copies are available in the DRC)
- *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
- *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts*, Jerry Bridges
- *Your Church is Too Safe*, Mark Buchanan
- *Running Scared: Fear, Worry, and the God of Rest*, Edward T. Welch
- *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, Ken Sande
- *Resolving Everyday Conflict*, Ken Sande & Kevin Johnson
- *The Treasure Principle*, Randy Alcorn
- *Don't Waste Your Life*, John Piper

Icebreaker I – Can you share a time when you prepared for something important and it paid off? (a test, a trip, or even a surprise visit).

Icebreaker II – If Jesus returned today, what would you be most excited for Him to see in your life?

1. The parable highlights that the master entrusted resources “according to their abilities.” How does that encourage or challenge you in light of your own S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences)?
2. Why do you think Jesus emphasized *faithfulness* over *amount* in the parable? How does this shape our view of success in the Christian life?
3. In what practical ways can we invest our **time, talents, treasures, and temple (body)** for Kingdom purposes? In which of these four is easiest for you to invest? Which is hardest?
4. The unfaithful servant’s excuse was fear. What kinds of fears keep us from using our God-given resources fully, and how can faith help us overcome them?
5. The master’s words, “Well done, my good and faithful servant,” are a goal for every believer. What steps can we take in daily life to prepare ourselves to hear those words when Jesus returns?
6. What impacted you most from the sermon? How might you apply this week’s sermon to your life?
7. How might this group pray for you this week?