

Talking Points Delivered 02-07-21

Preparation for the Coming Kingdom of God - Part 2 of The Kingdom of God Series

Psalm 93, Luke 12:22-34; Psalm 37:23-40; Matthew 25:14-30 (Sermon)

Last week we began a discussion on the Kingdom of God.

It's an important discussion to revisit and have from time to time

As Matthew says From that time on Jesus (the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry..Jesus) began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Matthew 4:17

The concept of the kingdom of God was central to the teaching of Jesus, and therefore it is critical to our understanding of what it is to believe in and follow after Christ.

The scriptures also makes it clear that our enemy satan will do all that he can to confuse and dilute the message of God, and the message about the kingdom of God, so it is important that we from time to time re-visit and familiarize ourselves with this basic message that Christ preached of the Kingdom of God.

In our readings today we see Jesus' having a discourse that includes several parables that emphasize preparation for the master's (Jesus') return.

The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30), is our reading for this morning, where readiness consists of faithful stewardship over that which the master has provided.

This is not so much a “stewardship or a giving” parable as it is a “Let’s get ready for Jesus’ coming” parable.

And the faithful stewardship of money, time and our talent is part of getting ready, and we should see explicitly the link between stewardship and being prepared for Jesus’ coming.

Jesus tells us of a Kingdom of Heaven whose arrival is marked by the Master’s preparation of his talents.

This “man or master, going on a journey” has taken what he feels to be valuable, his talents, and has distributed them among his servants the scripture tells us “according to their abilities” to care for the talents in a manner befitting a successful outcome during his absence.

When we hear the word, talent, today, in our modern day era, we think of a special ability, such as musical talent.

In Jesus’ day, however, a talent was a measure of weight—and later of money.

The Parable of the Talents is found only in Matthew.

It is similar to The Parable of the Ten Pounds in Luke 19:11-27, but there are significant differences.

In Luke, there are ten servants, each of whom receives the same amount—a *mina*—each *mina* amounting to only a small fraction of a talent.

And it’s important to note that a talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer’s wage in today’s currency.

Imagine being entrusted to 20 years of a day laborer's wage.
Or 10 times that amount. Or 5 times that amount.

This was an amount of money that each servant received that would be difficult for most people to even begin to comprehend that level of wealth.

And the master exercised enough trust in their abilities that he entrusted them with that much money.

But here Jesus is specific to let us know that each servant here received a different amount or portion.

Again, that portion was in according to the abilities that the servant had.

These were servants that the master felt were quite capable money managers. Probably as good or better an investor as we could find on Wall Street or our banking institutions today.

In Jesus' parable, the master is showing great faith in each of the servants, that he felt they had the ability to do the job that was before them.

In this parable of Christ explaining what the Kingdom of Heaven will be like it's important to note that:

- The man going on a journey represents Jesus.
- His going on a journey represents Jesus' ascension after His death and resurrection.
- The servants represent Christians who are awaiting His return, known as the Second Coming.
- The talents represent the blessings (financial, social, intellectual, athletic, etc.) with which God has bestowed us.
- The man's return represents Jesus' Second Coming.
- The master's assessment of the faithfulness of the servants represents Jesus' judgment of us on Judgment Day.

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When we take a look at the servants, some important things emerge.

There are three servants identified by the number of talents they had received.

One who received 5 bags of gold.

The second who had received two bags.

And the third who had only received one bag.

The master felt each had some ability to manage and grow his wealth.

And indeed, Mr 5 bags goes at once and puts his money to work and gains 5 bags more.

Mr 2 bags has done the same and increases the wealth by 2 bags more.

Mr 1 bag, however, even though the master clearly states that he has the ability to at least grow it a little, goes off, digs a whole in the ground and hides his master's money.

He literally buries the talent in the ground, where not even the sunshine can touch it.

To Mr 5 bags and Mr 2 bags who doubled their master's money, the master says what all good and earnest Christians want to hear at the end of their journey upon this earth.

We want to hear the Lord greet us with the words "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!" Matthew 25:21, 23.

But alas, poor Mr 1 bag.

Mr 1 bag doesn't receive the joyous welcome of the master.

Instead Mr 1 bag receives rebuke in Matthew 25:24-27

²⁴ "Then the man who had received one bag of gold 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. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

²⁶ "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? ²⁷ 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.'

Mr 1 bag, the "wicked lazy servant" as named by the master, accepts no blame for himself but has blamed his actions on the behavior of the master.

Matthew 25:28-30

²⁸ "So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Even the one talent that was received is stripped away from the man and given to those who had done what the master had depended on them to do.

And then saddest of all, he is cast outside of the protection and joy of the master's kingdom, the master who respected him enough to trust him with his valuable wealth, into a land that is referred to as 'darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'

So what does this parable say to us today?

It says to us as it has to servants of The King of Kings, that we have been entrusted with the greatest of all wealth.

We have been entrusted to grow the Kingdom of God.

To grow the Kingdom and to know the God of that kingdom.

How do we grow the Kingdom?

We take the talents that we have been gifted with.

We recognize that God has in faith, entrusted us these gifts.

Despite what our current society may say, our talents, abilities, even the time that we get to live upon this earth, come from God.

Even our health, and life itself and every second of every day is a gift from our loving God.

God orders the steps of the righteous, and sets us up for Godly success

How do we prepare for the coming Kingdom of Heaven?

First recognizing how awesome and wonderful our God is. It is He who made heaven and earth and all that is within.

The psalmist says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by a wonderful God.

We delight in Him who made us.

Psalm 37:23-24

²³ The Lord makes firm the steps
of the one who delights in him;
²⁴ though he may stumble, he will not fall,
for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

Beloved of God, Jesus the Great Master of the Kingdom is going to return. When He returns we want to be found by Him in such a way that we have used our time, our abilities, our treasures, for the benefit of His kingdom and for the joy of His heart.

Psalm 37:34

³⁴ Hope in the Lord and keep his way.

Hope in the Lord. Keep His ways even when it is difficult to do.

There is indeed a reward that God has in store for us.

He says that we shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

That the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who serve Him and love Him.

To those who have trusted souls to Him.

Ultimately, we are to act and move like we are the Children of The King and partakers in His Kingdom.

Psalm 37:37

³⁷ Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace.

Do we really act as though we have given God our all in all?

Do we use every thing that God has given to us.

These gifts, talents/abilities, treasures, etc. were not intended for the sinful world, but were intended to be used for our benefit and for the benefit of the Kingdom of God, for God's glory, and the Church, which is the body of Christ.

Beloved of God, we have to live like heirs to the Kingdom.

Amen.

Challenge

PASTORAL PRAYER 02-07-21

We are blessed that we serve a God who sits on high, but looks down low to where His people are. With thanksgiving in our minds and hearts, Let us go to the throne of grace.

Heavenly Father, we come this morning to adore, worship, and exalt you in our worship and in every place that this service is seen.

We ask now that you send your Holy Spirit to come and dwell richly in this service and in each place that this broadcast is seen and heard. As we come before you and your holiness we are aware of our own sinfulness and our own sinful deeds. Forgive us oh Lord and set our feet upon a path that will lead to you and your righteousness.

We thank you that you are a prayer answering God and a forgiver. And now we come lifting up our intentions before you.

Father, you know the things that your children are struggling with in this moment.

Where there is grief from loss, send your comfort,

Where there is hurt and illness of mind body and spirit, send your love and healing

In those places where we ache in mourning for those whom we have lost, fill our empty places with joy and your comfort

The world struggles each day in the midst of this global pandemic. Please

move swiftly to wipe it from the earth and to control the spread of disease.

We pray that as your church is face to face with this pandemic you would show us how we can be of help to those who are hurting, hungry, destitute, impoverished and wanting because of Covid's effect on our already marginalized communities.

We pray for our dedicated health care workers and essential workers. God give them the strength to continue in the performance of their heroic job and

please protect them all from all hurt
harm and danger.

Finally Lord, we pray for all in our lives
who do not know you as their Lord and
Savior. Prepare their hearts to receive
you and use us if you choose to deliver
the message of salvation.

Lord, put someone in our path who
needs your love that we may be your
instruments.

In Jesus' matchless and mighty name we
pray

