

Connecting to Jesus the Storyteller...“The Talents”

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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Pastor Michael McCall

Air Show, Hood to Coast, PGA tournament...what a busy and fun weekend. We have spent the summer hearing stories Jesus told called “parables”. Jesus told these parables because we do remember them and because they get through to us deep truths about the kingdom of heaven. Every parable has an “aha” – where we discover what the story is about. This “aha” is always followed by an “uh-oh” – when we realize the story is about us.

In **Matthew 25:14-30**, Jesus told a story called **THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS** where Jesus taught about life...and how we are to invest our life. Most people in life have absolutely no idea what life is all about. There are three things you can do with your life: you can waste it, you can spend it, you can invest it. You can waste it - and there are plenty of things to waste it on. You can spend it - on your career, on your hobby, on acquiring certain possessions. Or you can invest it in that which outlasts you. Let's learn from Jesus, **seven principles for investing our life**.

PRINCIPLE 1 - OWNERSHIP: Everything we have belongs to God.

Matthew 25:14 *“(The kingdom of heaven) will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.”*

God made it all. We didn't come into this world with anything and you're not going to take anything out of this world. What we have we simply get to use for 50, 70, 90 years. It all belongs to God. We get to use it. Part of the reason God made us was to manage His resources.

PRINCIPLE 2 - ALLOCATION: God has given me some talents.

Matthew 25:15 *“To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability.”*

In Jesus' day, talent simply meant an amount of money. About \$1,000. The master gives \$5k to one, \$2k to another, and \$1k to another. Now each of you have some talents...resources, skills, abilities, traits, opportunities...all of the things that God has given. Anything that God has trusted you with -- your children, your job, anything God has trusted you with can be considered a talent.

The amount differs but everybody gets something. **Romans 12:6** says *“We have been given different gifts, according to the grace God's given us.”* You are unique. God has given you gifts, abilities, experiences, personality traits, temperaments, relationships -- all to make you, *you*. There is nobody else like you. God made us for a purpose and gave us what we have.

PRINCIPLE 3 - ACCOUNTABILITY: God expects me to use them.

Matthew 25:19 *“After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.”*

The master made an investment and he wanted a return. God has made an investment in your life and He wants a return. The Bible says that one day you're going to have a life audit. God is going to ask each of us, “What did you do with what I gave you?”

PRINCIPLE 4 - UTILIZATION: It's wrong to bury what God gave me.

Matthew 25: 26-27 *“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant...you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that I would have received...interest.’”*

The first man took his \$5k and doubled it...a wise investor. The second took his \$2k and doubled it...again wise. The point of the story is the third person who buries his \$1k in a hole. What was his master's reaction? His master was ticked at his sin of inactivity...the sin of passivity.

The point is we cannot please God by playing it safe. Why? Because *“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”*(**Hebrews 11:6**) If it's all safe you don't need any faith! Doing nothing is inexcusable. God would rather have you try to serve him and totally blow it, than do nothing. What matters is the effort! Trying to make your life count, trying to make an impact with your life, trying to do something significant that is going to outlast you. It's not whether you reach it or not, it's the effort that counts. Doing nothing is inexcusable.

PRINCIPLE 5 - MOTIVATION: Fear keeps us from developing our talents.

Matthew 25:25 *“I was afraid and went out and hid your talent...”*

Why do we play it safe? Fear...primarily 3 kinds: self doubt, self pity, and self consciousness.

Self doubt: I could never do that. I'm not qualified. Do you remember when you were in school and the teacher would ask a question and you knew the answer but you thought there might be a chance you'd be wrong so you didn't raise your hand? God says that doesn't cut it as an adult!

Self pity: I've failed in the past so I won't try again...I got burned or I burned out...so I'm never going to try again. That's like saying, “I ate at a restaurant once and it was bad food so I decided I'd never enter another restaurant.” It doesn't make sense.

Self-consciousness: What will other people think? Will I become a fanatic? There are others more talented...“Let them do it, God.” Listen up: “If it's worth doing, it's worth doing poorly.” That is how any of us learn. What counts is the effort! This is how we grow and mature.

Fear causes us to make excuses for doing nothing. This guy even has a prepared speech where he blames the master for his doing nothing!

PRINCIPLE 6 - APPLICATION: If we don't use it, we lose it.

Matthew 25:28 *“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents.”*

It doesn't seem fair for the rich to get richer. But it is fair, because God has the right to take back what we don't use properly. I forfeit it if I don't use it the way God wants us to. The cool thing is when we start using what we have for God...God grows our investment as God grows us.

PRINCIPLE 7 - COMPENSATION: If we use our talents, we are going to be rewarded.

Matthew 25:21(23) *“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!”*

Life is a test...and there is an exam at the end...with big rewards.

Reward #1: Affirmation - Our Lord and Master says: "Well done!" I can't think of anything better than to stand before Jesus Christ and have Him say, "Good job! You gave me your best."

Reward #2: Promotion – Our Lord and Master says: "You've been faithful with little; I will trust you with more." God can't trust many of us with greater blessings because we're not faithful with the many little blessings we have already received.

Reward #3: Celebration – Our Lord and Master says: "Come, share my joy!" The happiest people I know are those who are using what they've got for God.

What we have is God's gift to us...what we do with what we have is our gift to God. Amen.