

## **Sermon – Matthew 25:14-30 – Personal / Group Study and Reflection**

### **“Parable of the Talents”**

#### **Matthew 25:14-30 (English Standard Version)**

14 “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ 21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ 23 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ 24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ 26 But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The following questions relate to the morning 10.30 and evening 18.00 services on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025 (available on the church website).

**Feel free to pick and choose questions / sub-questions as appropriate for your group's interest, preferred study style and time available. They are simply there to facilitate good discussion / reflection. Do **NOT** feel you need to go through them all.**

**(1) Opening Icebreaker.** Using our gifts and talents.

(a) Think of any examples where (1), you have gone out of your way to use your skills / talents for someone; and (2), any times where you have held back from using your gifts and talents for someone. What thoughts / perspectives motivated you in the former and held you back in the latter?

**(2) How we view what we are given by God – true view.** In the parable, two of the servants put the talents they are given to good use (v16-17, 20, 22).

(a) What does this tell us about how they viewed their master and the talents they had been given (e.g. master's character, ownership, how we live)?

(b) Who do you **truthfully** see as the rightful owner of all you have (e.g. house, money, job, talents, gifts, opportunities)? How does this impact how you use them? To what extent are you motivated to use these to grow God's kingdom Vs using them for your personal benefit)?

**(3) Taking risks for God.** In the parable, two of the servants don't just use the talents they've been given, they get cracking **at once** and **trade** the talents (v16, 17). In other words, they take risks with the talents they are blessed with.

(a) To what extent are you willing to take risks for God with what He has given you? Think of any examples – what motivated you, what was the outcome, did it encourage you to be more of a risk taker?

(b) Equally, have there been times when you've been risk averse – e.g. wanted to keep researching, kept waiting for a so-called 'perfect' moment or opportunity? What might encourage you to be more of a prudent (vs reckless) risk-taker for God?

**(4) How we view what we are given by God – distorted view.** By contrast, the third servant does none of the above. He just buries his talent in the ground (v18).

(a) What does this tell us about how he viewed his master and the talent he had been given? Why is his view so wrong (just from the evidence of this story alone)?

(b) To what extent have you held back from using your God-given talents to grow God's kingdom in some way, or allowed your talents to atrophy?

(c) To what extent do you see God like this third servant? If so, what caused this view? And if your view has changed, what prompted the change in perspective?

**(5) What matters to God.** The master commends the first two servants (v20-23) and orders the third servant's to be taken from him and given to the first servant (v28-30).

(a) The master says "well done, **good and faithful** servant. What does this tell us about what at heart matters to God and why is this phrase so encouraging?

(b) What is so **significant and encouraging** about the commendation given to the second servant who makes four talents compared with the first servant who makes ten talents. What does this tell us about the kingdom of God?

(c) Why is the third servant so severely reprimanded? What does this tell us about how God views us when we don't use what he has blessed us with?

**(6) Closing Reflection.** Your gifts and talents.

(a) Reflect on the gifts and talents God has given you. Are you putting these to best use? What changes might you make?