



Voice Ministries

# **GOOD STEWARDSHIP**

## Reading: Matthew 6: 19-21

*His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master."*

(Matthew 25: 21)

"Well done, good and faithful servant!" How wonderful if these were the words we first hear when we face our Lord, having entered glory. I'm sure that these would be the words that we would all like to hear as we enter into His eternal joy.

We have heard the parable of the talents preached many times, and I'm sure that many people think of the value of talent as being relatively mediocre, yet in reality, the value of the talent was immense. During our Lord's time it was the largest unit of money in existence, equivalent to many years wage to the servants who were entrusted with the various amounts. In fact, so valuable were the talents that the slave who buried his in the ground may well have been fearful of such a valuable amount. Once you realise just how valuable each talent was then you start to realise just how immense the trust was that was placed in each of the servants. Equally we can begin to understand just how the true meaning of this parable has been lost by the watering down of this value.

Our word for talent derives from this parable, and once again we can find a watering down of the value of the talents that we have been blessed with as we are urged to use them. God has given us so much and yet so often people fail to utilise their gifts and talents for His glory, even though that is the prime purpose behind our receiving them.

As we enter into another year of stewardship people will be considering the way in which they can give of their time and resources, both in financial terms and in the use of their talents. We will be considering ways in which we can invest what God has blessed us with in order to obtain the best benefit from it, whether that means making cakes for sale to raise money for something or direct giving to the church through the offertory. Perhaps we will commit to giving the church a certain amount of our time in order to help in maintaining both church and ministry.

So, is this what the parable of the talents about? Is the parable primarily an exhortation to relieve us of our money, as that seems to be the intention in the manner that it is sometimes used?



Well, I thank God that that's not what it's about! It has nothing to do really with either our finances or our abilities, but, like all of our Lord's parables, it speaks of the Gospel. It's all about the most valuable thing that can be of eternal benefit to every human being, the Gospel message revealed in the birth, life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's about the tremendous Good News that faith in Jesus, the Son of the living God, brings. It's about commitment to following the way of the cross as a result of that faith, the way of offering ourselves as living sacrifices, investing ourselves in Christ's purpose. It's about following Him beyond pain, beyond suffering, beyond disappointment, and beyond loss, into a deep and meaningful relationship with God the Father. Just as the value of the talents would have been massive, so the Good News that the Gospel message brings is equally massive!

The 'talent' that we are given is something that we have been given to invest by sharing it with others. As others come to know Christ through our sharing witness so the rewards can be seen on our investment.

It all sounds so easy! The reality is different, however, for as committed Christians in a materialistic and corrupt world we will feel that we are always swimming against the tide. Maybe we will find that, despite being faithful witnesses, we never seem to reap the harvest of our labours. So does that mean that our planting is in vain? Far from it, for where we sow it may well be the task of others to reap. The important thing is that we *continue to sow throughout our lives*. God will not chastise us for trying and appearing to fail, but He will if we fail to make any attempt at trying.

We have been blessed with the gift of faith and we have had the opportunity to declare that faith by our belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Further than that, we have been blessed with the opportunity to invest our gift by labouring in Christ's vineyard for the benefit of the everlasting kingdom. We long for revival. Let us pray that we might first be revived, that we might discover anew the wonder and awe of knowing Jesus so that we might share with a fresh excitement that wonder and awe with others in order that they too might accept Him into their lives.



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In this season of stewardship let us each commit ourselves afresh to our responsibilities regarding God's wonderful gift, and let us rededicate ourselves to pledge not only our finances and earthly talents, but also ourselves, in sacrificial offering to our Lord. I'm sure that everyone will be generous in the giving of their money, abilities and time, but I hope the same generosity will apply in our bold approach to fulfilling the Great Commandment as well. If we can all do that, then I'm sure that when the time comes we will hear those precious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Amen

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