



Matthew 25:19–30

19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’ 21 “His master replied, ‘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 mas-

ter's happiness!' 22 "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' 23 "His master replied, '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! 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. 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.’

Reflection

(Today’s reflection is given by Craig Tub-

man)

The master wants those he invested money with to make that money work. And the refrain through this passage is quite simple. The master says, 'You've been faithful with what I've given you, therefore I will give you more.'

Now before we get ourselves lost in money, investment and digging holes in the ground, let's orientate ourselves. Today's passage is the second half of a parable Jesus started telling yesterday. The parable starts with the words,

'Again, it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted wealth to them.'

The reference to 'again' links back with the start of chapter 25 and the words 'At that time, the Kingdom of Heaven will be like...' and these words link back to chapter 24 and Jesus teaching about his Second Coming.

It's true that sometimes the Bible can be a confusing book, but most of the time our confusion can be resolved by reading around the text for clues. So today's passage is actually about what the experience of Jesus' Second Coming is going to be like. And that helps us to make sense of the parable.

The Master is Jesus and he has given something of great value to his servants. The question is, what is that thing of great value? What does the money represent?

Lots of suggestions have been made but in the context of this parable, the greatest thing of value has been the teaching about Jesus fulfilling the temple and the priesthood in his upcoming death and resurrection and his second return when he will call those who have responded to him in faith and obedience.

In other words, it seems the thing of great value that he entrusts to the servants is the gospel itself! The good news that the kingdom of God has broken into our world through Jesus Christ. He is lord and saviour and has paid the price for our rebellion against God and calls us now to follow him.

So this parable from Jesus becomes deeply personal and challenging.

If you know the gospel, what are you doing with it? This is not a side question, according to Jesus here in Matthew 25 it is a core question. On that final day when Jesus returns he will not ask you, 'How much profit did you earn for your company?' On that final day when Jesus returns he will not ask you, 'How successful were your home renovations?' On that final day when Jesus returns he will not ask you, 'How many overseas holidays did you or your family go on in your lifetime?' No. None of these answers will matter. On that final day when Jesus returns, he will ask you, 'What did you do with the gospel message I gave you?' That's the question to get ready for on that final day.

So let's get ready for it now! What have you done with the truth of Jesus in your life?

What may it look like to invest it? I take it from the parable that to invest the gospel means it grows. The servant who had five bags of gold, ended up with ten. The servant with two bags of gold, ended up with four.

Who can you invest the gospel into? Who may look to you for help or ask you for advice which may lead to sharing the wisdom of the gospel and the good news about Jesus Christ? Who in your church community can you seek out to build up and encourage in their faith? Who can you share your faith with for the first time?

If this is the core question that Jesus will ask us on that last day, what could possibly stop us from being fruitful with the message of God's kingdom? According to

Jesus' parable, fear.

Did you notice that third servant was marked by fear? Not fear of the others, but fear of the master, fear of God himself. Perhaps Jesus is referring to a fear we may have that we aren't good enough? That we can't seek to invest in others because we may not have all the answers and that we're afraid we'll stuff it up or give wrong council?

But the promise throughout the Scriptures is that God will use whatever we can give for his glory. He is a God who will call people to account, but he will not judge you harshly for doing what you can with his kingdom words.

American singer, songwriter Rich Mul-

lins once reflected on how God uses us in powerful ways. And he remarked, 'God takes the junk in our lives and he makes the greatest art in the world out of it.' God is big enough to use our often clumsy attempts to share his kingdom with others. He is big enough and patient enough and gentle enough. So why not trust him with this and seek to invest what he has given you in others?

Think & Pray

Take some time today to reflect on where God has given you opportunities to invest his kingdom message in your life, your friends and your world.

Why not ask him for opportunities and the courage to share and ask him to give you

the faith to trust in him?