

# DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE

C. Stephen David | Ekklesia Evangelical Fellowship | January 7, 2024

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:14-30

**Context:** Olivet discourse (message delivered on the Mount of Olives)

**Matthew 24:3**, As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered them,

- **Lord Jesus gave a non-stop answer from Matthew 24:4-25:46** (covering 94 verses, about 2000 words)

**Christ spoke about the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, the kingdom of heaven, His second coming, and judgment, with A FOCUS ON AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS FOR HIS RETURN.**

- ❖ **24:42**, Therefore, **stay awake**, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.
- ❖ **24:44**, Therefore you also **must be ready**, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

**Focus:** All three parables in **Matthew 25 (The Parable of 10 Virgins, The Parable of the Talents, The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats)** address the issue of preparedness to meet the Lord.

- Comparison between **the five wise and the five foolish virgins**,
- between **the faithful and wicked servants**,
- between **the sheep and the goats**.

**"Parable of the Talents" (Matt. 25:14-30) can be categorised into three sections:**

## **1. DELEGATION**

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

**25:14**, For "it" will be like a man going on a journey,

**What is “it”?** “It” is the kingdom of heaven (v. 1)

- ❖ **25:1**, “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.”
- ❖ **25:14**, For “it” will be like a man going on a journey... **[When Christ returns to establish His Kingdom]**

**Who is the “Man” or “Master” (used 9 times)?** Master is Christ Jesus.

**What are the Talents?** Most often an amount of money, a lot of money (not ability). “Denari” is a day’s wage. “Talent” is worth 6000 denari (about 20 years wages).

**If Jesus told the parable today**, he might say he gave his servants about 50 crores, 20 crores, and 10 crores.

**Applications:**

- The master symbolizes Jesus,
- The servants symbolize professing Christians who call Christ “Lord” **[not pagans or Gentiles and not just pastors and Christian workers]**
- The talents symbolize **gifts / responsibilities / time / money / life itself with a goal of glorifying God and benefitting people, particularly God’s people.**

**Observation: 25:15**, To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each **according to his ability.**

- Each servant had **an ability.**
  - All believers have abilities to serve and to become fruitful.
- The master gave them **His talents** (v.14, “entrusted to them his property”)
  - All we have (life..etc) is His. What do you have that doesn’t belong to Him?
- The master gave them talents **according to his ability.**
  - God will not entrust us to do something beyond our ability.
- The master gave them the **freedom to use** talents according to their ability.

- The servants were **accountable** to the Master for how they were **productive** in utilising their talents according to their ability.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION

- ❖ **25:16** He who had received the five talents **went at once and traded with them (without wasting time he worked)**, and he made five talents more [**50 to 100 crores**]. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more [**20 to 40 crores**]. (**both were doubly productive**)
  - ❖ **Proverbs 14:23**, In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.
- ❖ **25:18**, But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. [**10 crores**]
  - To hide money in a hole in the ground was considered a safe way to secure money, especially in times of turmoil.

## 3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND JUDGMENT

### The intentional delay of the Master:

- ❖ **25:19**, Now **after a long time** the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.
- ❖ **25:5**, As the bridegroom **was delayed**, they all became drowsy and slept.

**Observation:** The language of “after a long time” reminds us that the return of Christ may take a long time.

**Note:** The problem is not with Christ's coming but with our readiness.

### REWARDS AND PUNISHMENT:

**25:19** Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

**Misconception:** Many suppose when Christ comes, He will take us directly to heaven. **But He will first settle accounts with us.**

- ❖ **2 Corinthians 5:10**, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

**Caution:** Waiting for Christ's coming is good, but if you do nothing and remain unfruitful, His coming is not good news.

## **i) REWARDS**

### **a. Appreciation**

**25:20** And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered [entrusted] to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' **21** His master said to him, '**Well done, good and faithful servant**'.

**25:22** 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**'.

**Encouragement:** AIM FOR THIS COMPLEMENT FROM THE LORD.

### **b. Entrance into Master's joy**

- ❖ **5:21**, Enter into the joy of your master. (First servant)

- ❖ **5:23**, Enter into the joy of your master. (Second servant)

**John Piper might say:** "The call to 'enter into the joy of your master' is a call to embrace the eternal satisfaction that comes from being in the presence of God and enjoying Him forever."

### **c. More Responsibility**

**5:21**, You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. (First servant)

**5:23**, You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. (Second servant)

**Observation:** Whatever you have on earth is little compared to the glorious responsibilities God is going to give us in His coming Kingdom.

**Douglas Sean O'Donnell:** "You see, the people of the kingdom of heaven, on earth now and in Heaven later, are not passive. To enter into the kingdom through faith in Christ is to enter into his workforce, and it is to return in some sense to Eden, to pre-fall holiness, where work was given to man as a divine gift, not a curse. I'll put it this way: **do your kingdom work well now, and you'll be rewarded with more work now and especially then.** As one commentator put it, **"Heavenly rewards are not beds of rest; they are posts of duty."**

## ii) Punishment

**25:24** 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.'

### a) THE ATTITUDE OF THE SERVANT.

- He mistrusted his Master (**hard and unfair**). Those who have a hard view of God will be unfruitful in their lives.
- He had fear (**fear that does nothing good**) and didn't want to take risks.
- He didn't use his ability.
- He didn't use the opportunities to labor (put to work) and hid his talent in the ground.
  - The Master was fair, giving him only one talent because he had little ability, but still, he couldn't use it.
- He didn't lose anything. He didn't gain anything. He gave back what was his Master's.
- He gave excuses for not being productive.
  - **Proverbs 22:13** The lazy man is full of excuses. "I can't go to work!" he says. "If I go outside, I might meet a lion in the street and be killed!" (TLB)
  - **Illustration:** General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, who had lost his eyesight. His son was given the difficult task of telling his

father there would be no recovery. “Do you mean that I am blind?” the General asked. “I fear we must contemplate that,” his son replied. The father continued, “I shall never see your face again?” “No, probably not in this world.” “Bramwell,” said General Booth, **“I have done what I could for God and for His people with my eyes. Now shall do what I can for God without my eyes.”**

### Respectable Excuses:

- **Some pray but don’t labor:** Prayer could be a sign of laziness because you pray but don’t labor.
- **Some claim to believe in grace but don’t labor: 1 Corinthians 15:10,** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.
- **Some blame weaknesses / afflictions for not being fruitful.** But His divine power has given us all things necessary for our fruitful living. **(2 Pet. 1:3)**

**Do you know who said these words?** “Commitment, discipline, patience and work. Values few believe in these days, where so many have an entitlement mentality... Nothing works for those who don’t do the work.” – Robin Sharma

### b) THE CRITICISM OF THE MASTER.

- ❖ **25:26** But his master answered him, ‘You **wicked and slothful servant!**
  - Don’t take laziness for granted. It is wickedness and unfaithfulness.
- ❖ **25:30** And cast the **worthless servant** into the outer darkness.

### c) THE PUNISHMENT OF THE MASTER.

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 **[cf. Deuteronomy 23:20]**, 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.

**The Master removed what the servant had:** “Take the talent from him,” says the master, “and give it to the one who has the ten talents” (25:28)

**25:29** For to everyone who has **(productive with what he has on earth)** will more be given **(more rewards in the coming Kingdom)**, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not **(who is not productive with what he has on earth)**, even what he has will be taken away **(will have nothing and will perish)**.

**25:30** And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

- **Cast into the outer darkness:** without God
- **Weeping and gnashing of teeth:** without joy

**Note:** This parable doesn't teach about earning or losing salvation but how the lives look like of those who are genuine and superficial people of God.

❖ **John 15:8**, "By this my Father is glorified, that **you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.**"

- Some may bear more and some less fruit but there is no fruitless Christian in the Kingdom of God.

**Gospel:** Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead for our fruitful Christian living.

**Three kinds of people:**

- a) **People who Excel:** Properly use what God has given and excel.
- b) **People who Abuse:** Abuse what God has given and become worse.
- c) **People who are Mediocre:** Do nothing with what God has given.

**Mediocrity** refers to a state or quality of being average or ordinary without a lack of diligence and excellence. Mediocrity suggests a level of performance that falls within the middle range, neither outstanding nor notably deficient.

**Deception:** The dangerous thing about being okay with mediocrity is that we think we are not abusing anything. THE MAJORITY FALL IN THIS CATEGORY.

**Third servant:** He didn't rob or abuse it. He did just nothing. He wasted his life. GOD GAVE YOU LIFE NOT JUST TO EXIST BUT TO BEAR FRUIT FOR HIS GLORY.

**Caution:** Not only is committing murder, adultery, and robbery a sin, driving people to hell, but also laziness and unfruitful living are sins and may take people to hell.

**Judgment Day:** You will hear either of these words— “Well done, good and faithful servant” or “You wicked and slothful servant.” **What do you think you would be hearing from the Lord?**

**Note:** This doesn’t just speak about pastors or Christian workers but about every believer in Christ. Whosoever you are, based on what you do with your life on earth, you are going to hear this testimony from the Lord.

**Applications:**

- **Unbeliever,** repent of your sins and believed in the Redeemer.
- **Believers: Grow inwardly** (build your inner life—learning, praying, nurturing your soul). You cannot give what you do not have. You cannot serve if you do not grow.
- **Labor outwardly** (love, serve, sacrifice, be a blessing, use opportunities, wisely use your time)
- **Be fruitful** (God be glorified and people be blessed)

**Brian Bell:** There is no worse crime than the crime of a wasted life.

**John Piper in “Don’t Waste Your Life”:** “For me as a boy, one of the most gripping illustrations my fiery father used was the story of a man converted in old age. The church had prayed for this man for decades. He was hard and resistant. But this time, for some reason, he showed up when my father was preaching. At the end of the service, during a hymn, to everyone’s amazement he came and took my father’s hand. They sat down together on the front pew of the church as the people were dismissed. God opened his heart to the gospel of Christ, and he was saved from his sins and given eternal life. But that did not stop him from sobbing and saying, as the tears ran down his wrinkled face—and what an impact it made on me to hear my father say this through his own tears—“I’ve wasted it! I’ve wasted it!”

This was the story that gripped me more than all the stories of young people who died in car wrecks before they were converted—the story of an old man weeping that he had wasted his life. In those early years God awakened in me a fear and a passion not to waste my life. The thought of coming to my old age and saying through tears, “I’ve wasted it! I’ve wasted it!” was a fearful and horrible thought to me.