

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Paul Gunn, Pastor

THE PARABLE OF THE BAGS OF GOLD

Matthew 25:14-30

January 20, 2019

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The title of my message today is The Parable of the Bags of Gold... and I'll be reading from Matthew 25, verses 14-30.

Matthew 25 contains parables about the return of Jesus, also known as the Second Coming. He came once as a child, he'll return some day as a reigning king.

Here are the points of today's message:

- The wealthy man had a reasonable expectation
- Two servants met the expectation
- One servant did not meet the expectation

INTRODUCTION: The first part of Matthew 25 is the parable of the ten virgins. Five were prepared to meet the bridegroom and five were not. The latter part of the chapter is the parable of the wheat and the tares. Again, this is a parable about the Second Coming of Christ. The middle parable is the one I want to speak about this morning.

Three servants were given bags of precious metal, probably gold. Your translation may say "talent" and as I said last Sunday, a talent was a sum of money in Jesus' day. It was a bag of precious metal weighing about 75 pounds. After reading from several sources, it appears the most common belief is that the precious metal was gold. So, from here on out, I'll reference this as "bags of gold."

In this parable, the servants weren't the owners of the gold, but they were the stewards of the gold. There is a huge difference. The owner can do whatever he wants with his belongings. The steward knows it is not his and his role is to take

care of it. Stewardship comes with the idea of an accounting of things at a future date.

When you prepare a sermon, you have to make decisions regarding how you are going to do it. Sometimes you try to craft it in a way that will hopefully create questions in the minds of the listeners so they'll keep listening. Sometimes you wait until the end to reveal the most hidden item. In this message, I've already told you this chapter in Matthew is about the Second Coming of Christ, so let's look at these verses with that in mind.

THE WEALTHY MAN HAD REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:14-15

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

EXPLANATION: The man going on the journey is Jesus. He ascended into heaven long ago. What is Jesus' wealth? When Jesus was on earth, he was not wealthy by earthly standards. The wealth he brought to earth was a spiritual kingdom, the Kingdom of God.

When Jesus was on earth, he practiced exactly what this scripture says. He interacted with people about the kingdom of God according to their ability. Remember the woman who touched his garment to be healed? To her, he said, “Your faith has made you whole.” Yet to the rich young ruler who claimed to want to inherit the kingdom of God, he said, “Sell all you have and give to the poor.” The man walked away sad because wealth was his god and he wouldn't give it up.

APPLICATION: I love the fact that in the parable the man entrusted his wealth with servants according to their ability. This is a wonderful illustration of the grace and compassion of God. Each of us has different abilities. Each in this sanctuary has different intellectual capacity. To repent of sin and come to Jesus, you don't need to have some type of exceptional ability or intellectual capacity. All you need is to repent and believe.

The fact that God entrusts us with his kingdom according to our level of ability means that we are all without excuse. Yes, that includes the native of the remote island who we “think” has never heard. I say “think” because I actually believe God reaches out to them according to their level of ability, too.

Would you agree with me that the Lord has reasonable expectations of his followers? Would you agree with me that growing the Kingdom of God is a reasonable expectation?

TWO SERVANTS MET THE EXPECTATION

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:16-17

“The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more.

EXPLANATION: I tell you, these servants knew how to invest, didn’t they? Both doubled the amounts given to them. Through our American eyes, we think about the risks involved with investments and we wonder how it’s possible to double your money. Verse 16 says he put his “money to work.” Exactly what did he do? If the parable represents Jesus going to heaven and entrusting the Gospel message with us as his servants, then we should invest in his kingdom and there will always be a return on the investment.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:18-23

“But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

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 master’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!’*

ILLUSTRATION: This week, a man talked with me privately in my office. He shared how the more he gives, the more he has to give. It was a joy listening and sharing in that conversation. You’d be blown away if you knew who this person was and what he plans to do this year.

APPLICATION: The application is so simple you might miss it. Jesus has entrusted you with a piece of his kingdom according to your ability. No matter how you put that piece of his kingdom to work, it will not fail.

ONE SERVANT DID NOT MEET THE EXPECTATION

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:24-30

“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.’”

EXPLANATION: This is indeed the saddest of them all. The third servant did nothing with what he was given. He wasn’t expected to do as much. Since he was given according to his ability, he only had one bag of gold to deal with. He didn’t even put it in the bank to draw interest.

APPLICATION: Now let's take this parable and revisit it through the lens of today. God has given us a mind that thinks. He's given us a conscience that discerns right from wrong. He's put us in a country that provides many opportunities to educate our mind and our conscience. He's given us a country full of Gospel outreach: churches, schools, ministries formed outside of the church. All forms of media are used as Gospel outlets. And we have freedom of speech to share the Gospel. In this city, if people find themselves homeless and hungry, they can go to the Nashville Rescue Mission and there they will hear the Gospel – yet another opportunity.

Yet there are people who know there is a God, know that Jesus is the Savior – and yet they take all this Gospel knowledge and they bury it.

The third servant knew where he'd buried it. He knew he could go get it if he wanted. There was no need to talk about it, no need to tell anyone where it was. It was available if and when he wanted it. Wow, this really speaks out, doesn't it?

Think of the attitude of some: I know how to be saved, I've heard the Gospel, I know there's a better way to live, I know God wants me to live for him. But I don't want to be saved, I don't want the Gospel, I don't want to live a better way, I don't want to live for God. I'll just bury all that knowledge and if I want it I can dig it up whenever I have a need of it.

That was the attitude of the third servant. He would live his life as he wanted and would have a backup plan if he needed it.

ILLUSTRATION: Years ago, my dad went to visit a man who needed the Lord. Many people had prayed for him. The man had the knowledge of salvation but he wasn't burying that knowledge for a later date, he wanted the knowledge of salvation buried permanently. He was awful to my dad and ran him off. A few weeks later he died suddenly. I remember the thought of that young man facing an eternity in hell because he rejected the Gospel.

APPLICATION: If anyone listening to me is using the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a back-up plan, as some type of last-minute insurance policy waiting to be signed

minutes before disaster, I'll tell you what's going to happen. You'll put it off until it's too late. You'll either die or Jesus will return and catch you off guard, just like the man in the parable.

Maybe I'm being too rough on the poor little third servant. Maybe he was just a procrastinator. Let me ask, do any of you know a procrastinator? Do you work with one? Do you live with one? People put off things for several reasons. I read that one reason people procrastinate is not because they don't want to do something, but because they are waiting for the best possible time to do it. That makes good sense. I can relate to that reason.

You might be a procrastinator about things in life, but the one thing you'd better not procrastinate over is repenting of sin and believing in Jesus. Don't put off the most important decision in your life waiting for the right time to do it. The right time is right now. Don't wait until you've cleaned up your life to present yourself to Jesus because you'll never be clean enough to face him. He accepts you as you are with open arms.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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