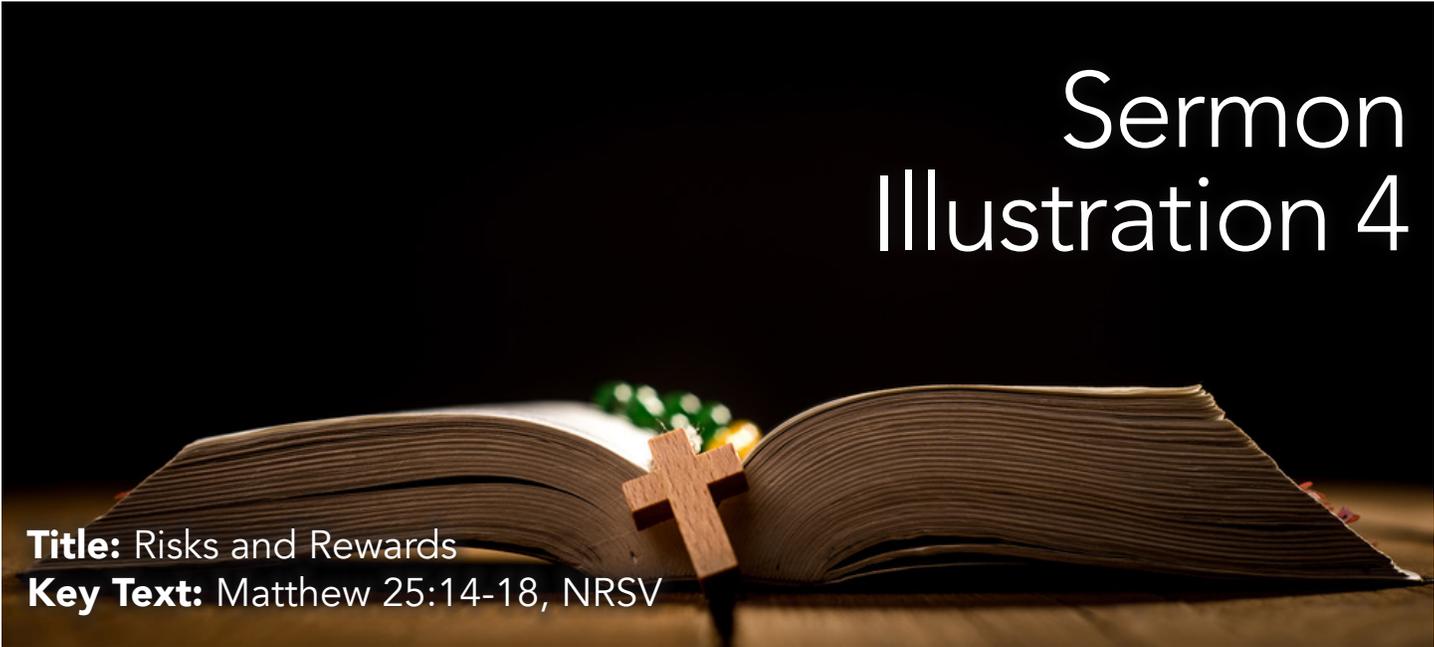


Sermon Illustration 4



Title: Risks and Rewards

Key Text: Matthew 25:14-18, NRSV

When you hear the name Walt Disney, what comes to mind?

The “happiest place on earth?” A man who created fabulous theme parks? A dreamer who became a movie mogul?

In reality, Disney was one of America’s greatest risk-takers. He faced so many challenges and setbacks in 1921 that he was forced to dissolve his first animation company. At one point, he could not pay his rent and survived by eating dog food.

We all know how his story ended. His dream succeeded because he did what few of us are willing to do. He took the risks required to produce immeasurable rewards.

God expects us to take risks. God expects us to walk by faith. Why? God turns a great risk into a sure thing.

In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus tells us:

“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the

one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.” (Matthew 25:14-18)

The two servants who took a risk with what the master had left in their care heard the words “well done” when he returned. They did not bury their money. They did not hide it. They took a risk and put it to work for him in the marketplace.

The only servant who did not fare well was the one who chose to play it safe, who feared taking a risk. He held on to what he had received. Instead of investing it in the hope of a return, he offered it back to the master, expecting him to be pleased that he had not lost the money. However, the master was anything but pleased.

Don’t be that servant – the one who fears taking a risk with God’s resources. God has given us resources of time, talent and treasure for God’s purpose. God’s mission of reconciliation and healing extends to all people. What we have received comes with God’s expectation that we will use it generously for God’s purpose.

When we see things from God’s perspective, the only financial risk we truly face lies in not investing the money God has given us where it can do the work God intended it to do.

Take a risk. Trust God. Give generously.

What seems like a risk to us is a sure and certain promise with God.



- Choose a way your local church takes a risk in serving your community. Encourage your congregation to give generously and serve courageously to support it.
- Connect this illustration with God's global interests by sharing a way your church's local giving multiplies through connectional giving with The United Methodist Church.

1. **The Black College Fund** supports United Methodism's historically black colleges and universities. These schools create vibrant spiritual environments that encourage pride and self-esteem. Through United Methodist Church giving, we support the important work of 11 schools committed to academic excellence based on the Christian perspective of community service and social responsibility. Students interact with academic staffs that serve as strong cultural and spiritual mentors.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-black-college-fund>

2. Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." The **World Communion Sunday** offering makes education and vocational impact possible for gifted and qualified students from around the globe, allowing them to become the world-changers God created them to be. The people of The United Methodist Church believe God created and gifted all of God's children to build the kingdom Jesus ushered in. Together, our giving provides more opportunities for many deserving students to have the resources they need to succeed. Our giving on World Communion Sunday, enables the most powerful tool to change the world—education.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/world-communion-sunday>

3. The **Interdenominational Cooperation Fund** enables United Methodists to have a presence and a voice in the activities of several national and worldwide ecumenical organizations. Together, we work in partnership with ecumenical organizations to bear witness to a common Christian faith. This fund provides the United Methodist share of the basic budgets of these organizations.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-interdenominational-cooperation-fund>

4. The **General Administration Fund** provides for the expenses of the sessions of the General Conference, the Judicial Council, special commissions and committees constituted by the General Conference and other administrative agencies and activities recommended for inclusion in the budget by the General Council on Finance and Administration and approved by the General Conference. It is not quite as glamorous as the more visible work The United Methodist Church does such as eradicating malaria, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ or raising up new leaders to develop innovative solutions to the challenges facing our world today. Guided by God's Spirit, the General Administration Fund is the oil that lubricates the gears moving the church's work forward to influence hearts and lives. Without it, the life-giving work of The United Methodist Church simply would not be possible.

<http://www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/the-general-administration-fund>

