**Calvary Fellowship 2.12.2023 Matthew 25:14-46 “Fear Of Missing Out”**

* **A couple of years ago I was speaking at a conference in CA**
* But I almost didn’t make it - in fact, I missed my flight altogether
* A friend & I go to the airport over an hour before the flight took off & we didn’t check a bag (b/c only rookies check luggage for a 4 day trip)
* TSA was so slow that day - if U aren’t aware, TSA stands for Thousands Standing Around - after waiting for 50 minutes I had to get a bit forceful
* I told 1 of the ladies there that my flight was already boarding
* She let us through the line & we started running for the gate (which according to Murphy’s Law would be 17 miles away at the opposite end of the terminal)
* But as we were getting closer, I decided to stop at Versailles b/c I thought if I picked a couple of papa rellenas I could avoid airplane food altogether
* But after waiting for a few minutes, I learned they ran out of papa rellenas
* So we started running to the gate & we still thought we had enough time
* But right as we got to the gate, the lady closed the door to the plane
* I told the lady that I needed to get on that plane & after some convincing she said, “Well, I guess I can ask them if they’ll open the door.”
* I said, “Please. The plane is still there. That giant vacuum thing is still attached.”
* Sure enough, she comes back & says, “Sorry, they wouldn’t open the door, but I can get U on the 1:45pm flight that leaves in 3 hours.”
* I said, “Maam, get me on the phone w/ that pilot. I will convince him to open up”
* She then informed that’s not the way things work
* Then I asked, “Why didn’t U call us on the loud speaker?” - She said, “We only do that for Int’l flights.” - This was before the airlines starting beating people up
* Then after all that, my buddy turns to me & says, “Well, at least U have plenty of time to get those papa rellenas U had to have.” - “Don’t judge me Mr. pick me up a couple of croquetas when U order!”
* **I don’t know if you’ve ever missed a flight, but it’s a frustrating feeling**
* We hate missing anything - most of us suffer from FOMO - for those of us over 40, that means “fear of missing out” - have U ever experience FOMO?
* Have U ever found out your friends went to the movies & they didn’t invite U?
* Or U open social media & your family went to Disney World w/o U
* I once opened social media & found out that someone in my family got married
* I was so bothered by it - And here’s the weird part - I didn’t want to go to the wedding, but I was still offended that I didn’t get invited - how rude of them?
* They should have spent the money on inviting me so I could not RSVP & tell that I have no intention of going - is that too much to ask?
* This idea of missing out is at the heart of what Jesus is talking about as He ends His message on what the world looks like at the time of His return
* **This is message #39 in our series in the Gospel of Matthew & Jesus is a just days away from His death & resurrection**
* And He’s taking the time to share this message w/ His disciples
* But here’s the heart of what Jesus is saying as He’s close this teaching
* We’ve spend 3 Sundays looking at the rich words of Jesus & we’ve wrestled w/ the world as it stands exactly how Jesus said it would look like at His return
* But now Jesus, like a master-teacher is going to hammer home 1 point as He finishes by telling a parable & then giving us exhortation at the end
* And these parables tell us what our lives should look like as we await His return
* It has nothing to do w/ stockpiling weapons or Vienna sausages - it has to do w/ being ready & investing my life & not missing out on what matters most

**———(v. 14-30)———**

**#1 - I Need to Invest My Life Wisely**

* **Here’s what is important for us to understand - 1st, the word talent doesn’t the ability to dance or juggle - a talent is a unit of weight**
* This master is giving 3 of his servants a weight of money to invest until he returns - we learn from verse 18 that it’s silver
* That’s b/c of the Greek word “Argurian” that’s translated money - it means silver
* A talent in a that culture weighed 75 pounds - 75 pounds of silver was about 20 years wages - so don’t feel bad for for the guy who only gets 1 - he’s doing ok
* The average yearly salary in America is $56,516 - that means he’s getting his equivalent off what in our day would be $1,130,320 - no 1 feel bad anymore
* The guy who gets 2 is getting $2,260,640 - that’s a good chuck
* But the guy who gets 5 talents - that’s 100 years worth of wages or $5,651,600
* **Now listen - these talents didn’t double by themselves - they doubled b/c someone took what was deposited in them & they developed it**
* B/c God is expecting something of us - He is expecting us to take what He deposits in us & develop it so it bears even more fruit
* **So it’s going to be mango season soon - let me tell U something - I get more mangoes each year than I know what to do with**
* Everyone I know gives me bag upon bags of mangoes - The most random people just handing me bags of mangoes
* Here’s the thing - I don’t even like mangoes - thankfully, my daughter Mia is the president of the mango lovers society b/c she’s a mango maniac
* **My dad used to have a 30 foot mango tree in his front yard & that tree produced so much fruit he couldn’t contain it**
* He would give me 3-4 bags of mangoes every time I saw him
* He’d just say, “Robert, I can't contain the mangoes, U have to give them away.”
* **But listen - that mango tree didn’t get to 30 feet tall by itself - someone was planted, watered, & tended to that tree to get to this point**
* Do U know what’s amazing about bearing fruit? It’s not just about U
* When you’re really bearing fruit, you’re blessing everyone around U
* You’re blessing people U don’t even know - this is why the master is so upset w/ the guy who had 1 talent - he did nothing w/ what the master had given him
* God has placed something in U & your job is to identify that gift & develop that gift so U can deploy that gift into the world for God’s purpose
* “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 4:10-11)
* **So I went to the post office b/c I needed to mail something out**
* **1 of the guys there knows me & says, “Hey, do U remember when U talked about St. Patrick’s Day to everyone in the Post Office?”**
* So let explain what happened - I was waiting in line & finally I got the counter & I’m talking to the person at the post office that usually helps me
* She says, “So what are U doing for St. Patrick’s Day?”
* I say, “It’s a Sunday, so I’m going to church.” - She says, “Church?” - St. Patrick’s Day is about drinking & getting crazy"
* At this point, everyone is line at the Post Office is listening to our conversation
* I say, “Do U know that St. Patrick was Christian missionary to Ireland who planted 400 churches & led thousands of people to Jesus?”
* And 1 of the guys in line says, “Seriously?” - I said, “Yes. So if U want to honor St. Patrick, go to church this Sunday.”
* The girl behind the counter says,“How’d we end up w/ partying & leprechauns?”
* I said, “This is what happens when we put drunk people in charge of a holiday.”
* Then I invited all of them to Calvary & my work was done
* But this is what I’m talking about - take whatever has been entrusted to U & develop it b/c our master is going to hold us accountable for what we’re done
* That means our gifts, our abilities, our money, the opportunities that God gives us - all of it matters & God wants to use us to make a difference in this world
* Listen - too many people want God to do the miraculous in their lives, but they spend all of their lives burying the talent God has given them
* U only see your talent double if U develop it & live w/ the reality that the master is coming to reward us for the work that we’ve done w/ what He’s given us…

**#2 - I Need to Be about God’s Business**

* This is the point of the parable that Jesus is telling us - it’s that we need to about His business while we wait for His return
* “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’” (Luke 19:12-13)
* **Jesus is telling his disciples that we need to be productive for the kingdom while we’re here - how do we do that? 3 ways…**
* **#1 - Don’t Compare Yourself -** gratitude walks out the door, the moment we start comparing ourselves to others
* “And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability…” (Matthew 25:15)
* A lot of times we want God to do more in our lives - if U want God to do more, then become more - If you’ve only been given 2 talents, double your gifting
* But sitting & comparing & gripping about why U didn’t get 5 talents doesn’t change what U got - put your abilities to work & watch God multiply it
* Mia & Xander took swim lessons, so they are excellent swimmers
* 1 day we were swimming & Xander challenged me to a 2 lap race in our pool
* I immediately said yes b/c I think it’s important for kids to lose to their dad - I don’t let my kids win - U need to earn it
* My dad did that w/ me - I didn’t beat my dad in ping pong until I was 35 years old & he was 70 - that’s how good he was - now, it’s how good I am
* So before we raced, Mia & Xander raced - and Xander was winning, but he kept looking back to see where Mia was & that’s what caused him to lose
* So I tell Xander, U have to stop looking back b/c U can’t win if you’e looking back & everything U want in your life is ahead of U
* Well, Xander & I start racing & the kid smokes me - he beats me so bad I demand a rematch b/c I can’t let that stand
* So we race again & he smokes me again - this happened 10 times
* Then Carey got in the pool & she destroyed all of us b/c apparently she’s part mermaid - Then I got out & said, “Whatever. Swimming races are dumb.”
* But listen, this is absolutely vital in your life - if we keep looking around to what other people have or what we don’t have, it will kill us
* **#2 - Maximize your Abilities -** This means we invest in our gifts & fan the gifts given to us by God into a flame
* “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” (2 Timothy 1:6)
* U don’t become a master at anything - even things that you’ve been supernaturally gifted at w/o intentional investment
* No 1 becomes a virtuoso musician w/o 1,000’s of hours of practice
* No 1 becomes a great artist/ chef/ writer/ entrepreneur w/o untold hours of investment - and those hours are spent in obscurity until the spark is a flame
* But here’s what we do so often in our marriage, we don’t invest but we expect to just be good at it - I want to be the Coldplay of husbands w/o effort
* That’s not how it works - We have to take the spark God gives us & fan into flame - that’s how U thank God for the gifts He’s given U - U steward them
* **#3 - Be Found Faithful -** This is the problem w/ the servant who hid his talent
* He didn’t do anything w/ what was given to him - he was apathetic towards the opportunities God gave him
* **Here’s how that works - U hear about opportunities to serve & opportunities to learn more about Calvary’s DNA in our membership class**
* Opportunities to grow through groups/ classes/ seminars that we offer & we keep saying no - or we check off on the cc that we’re going & don’t show up
* Then we find after a season of time that we don’t have the same passion for God that we once had & we start burying our talent in the ground
* It’s as simple as that - I don’t know that this servant started out this way
* He was faithful enough to be 1 of the 3 servants that were entrusted w/ a significant amount of resources to invest
* But apathy set in & then he began to resent what was being asked of him
* **Listen - that’s a dangerous place to live - how do we change this?**
* The beginning of the joy coming back is to make a decision that we’re going to do what God says regarding of our feelings
* I hear people all time telling me they’re “not feeling it” - listen, your feelings are the worst indicator of what U should or shouldn’t do - why?
* B/c feelings are fickle & change in a moment
* Emotions are God-given, but they can’t be the only factor in decision making
* Why? B/c our emotions are a little too fickle too many times
* **Anybody here ever done some emotional eating? Have U ever noticed that emotional eating is never healthy?**
* Have U ever called a friend on the phone & asked what they were doing & they said, “I’m eating cauliflower & kale.” - And U said, “Oh, you’re emotional eating.”
* But if they say, “I’m eating a pizza, & a cake, & a milkshake” - that’s emotional eating - they are food decisions that are usually unwise
* But God invites U & I to be part of the kingdom work He’s been doing through out history - He’s already given us the gifts - we simply need to do our part
* And if we’ll do our part, then God will do things that we could never do
* He’ll take the 1 talent or 2 talents or 5 talents & multiplies it

**———(v. 31-46)———**

**#3 - I Need to Understand God’s Heart**

* **This is 1 of the most misunderstood & misapplied passages in the Bible**
* If I had a nickel for every time I saw a picture of someone giving a homeless person a sandwich & then quoting this verse, I’d be millionaire
* That’s not to say we shouldn’t help the homeless of visit those in prison
* Of course we should & there are verses that encourage us in that, but this passage isn’t about that - remember the topic of the last 2 chapters
* Jesus is giving us a teaching about the end times scenario
* “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matthew 24:29-31 NKJV)
* After the tribulation, Jesus returns w/ His church & He establishes his Kingdom on the earth for period of 1,000 that’s called the Millennium
* But here’s the question - there are people on the earth who have survived the horror of the tribulation & are still alive
* Scholars estimate that 1/2 of the earth’s population could survive the tribulation
* So what happens to those people? So do they go in or not? That’s what this judgment is - people are separated like a shepherd separates sheep & goats
* Now, this is not the great white throne judgement that’s described later in Revelation 20 - we know this for several reasons
* **The timing is different** - the Great White Throne happens after the Millennium
* **The place is different** - the Great White Throne happens in heaven - this judgment happens in earth in the valley of Jehoshaphat or Kidron Valley(Joel 3)
* **The subjects are different** - the Great White Throne is primarily for unbelievers - this judgment is for the nations who survived the tribulation
* And the criteria for entering the Millennium will be their treatment of Israel
* That’s why Jesus says, “U did it for the least of these My brethren” - Jesus’ brethren is the Jewish people
* The people who helped the Jewish people during the Tribulation will have the opportunity to enter the Millennial reign of Jesus
* When the Bible says we will be ruling & reigning w/ Christ - these are the people we are overseeing & helping all over the earth
* I plan on overseeing the island of Hawaii, so U need to find your own station
* According to Daniel 12, this whole process takes about 45 days
* But then the people of the earth are sorted on the right hand & on the left
* **But Jesus commends the people on His right & says, “Enter the kingdom prepared for U from the foundation of the world”**
* They are blessed to enter the kingdom of God & enjoy the blessings therein
* To the people on the left who didn’t help Israel, they don’t get to enter the kingdom of God - instead, they are carried away to judgment
* “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” (Matthew 25:41 NKJV)
* Hell was not created for people - it was created for the Devil & his angels
* But hell serves an important purpose - it is the place for people who hate God & want nothing to do w/ Him
* **Tim Keller, in his book, “The Reason for God” captures what many people think about hell & judgment…**
* *“Modern people inevitably think that hell works like this: God gives us time, but if we haven’t made the right choices by the end of our lives, he casts our souls into hell for all eternity. As the poor souls fall through space, they cry out for mercy, but God says, ‘Too late! You had your chance! Now you will suffer!’ This caricature misunderstands the very nature of evil.”*
* **So what is hell really? It’s not Satan’s headquarters - in fact, I can assure U Satan has never been there - he’s going there, but he isn’t there yet**
* There are a lot of metaphors that are used to describe hell - 1 is fire & another is darkness - but last I checked, if you’re in darkness, fire would bring light
* But we need to understand the metaphor - God isn’t burning people alive
* What does fire do? It disintegrates - we see that disintegration begin in this life
* Even met someone consumed by their addictions, anger, or ambitions? That fire starts disintegrating their soul to the point where only the addiction is left
* And even though their lives would be so much better is they let go of the addiction, it’s all that’s left b/c the fire has disintegrated everything else
* Darkness is the 2nd thing - it’s what isolates the person in their choice - they say, “No 1 understands me. Everyone is against me.”
* Tim Keller writes, “In short, hell is simply one’s freely chosen identity apart from God on a trajectory into eternity…No one ever asks to leave hell. The very idea of heaven seems to them a sham.”
* My point is no 1 is going to hell against their will - God created us as free beings who can make choices & for God to force us to choose Him violates that choice
* That’s why C.S. Lewis called hell, “The greatest monument to human freedom.”
* Whether people want to believe it or not, God is gracious w/ humanity & there are those who despise it - they don’t want it - they want to do life w/o God
* And in hell they will get their wish - that’s why there’s no rain - b/c God’s common grace is taken away & they are left to themselves
* “Your Father in heaven…He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:45 NKJV)
* *Mark Clark, in his book, “The Problem of God” writes, “But here is the haunting part: there is no water. In other words, hell is the place where the common grace of God, the blessings and comforts that He provides to all of us, no longer exist. All the stuff we enjoy, that we think we possess because we worked so hard for it, is no longer there. God’s grace is absent…Hell exposes the lie we have told ourselves since the garden, the lie that we don’t need God.”*
* That’s why no 1 asks to leave hell - it’s a room that’s locked from the inside b/c everyone who is there would have to acknowledge God to leave
* *Philosopher J.P. Moreland says, “Hell is a place for people who, given what is needed to belong in heaven (submission to Jesus), do not want to go to heaven.”*
* That’s the 1 thing they refuse to do & that’s why they choose to go there
* Listen - why did Jesus speak about hell more than anyone else put together?
* Why did He reference hell & illustrate hell in the apocalyptic imagery that He used over & over again? B/c He’s the 1 who took hell for us
* People don’t come to Jesus b/c they want to escape hell
* We come to Jesus b/c we see His love in that He took hell upon Himself on the cross & willingly loved us enough to do so
* That’s why people who try & remove hell to make God seem more loving don’t really that they’re making God less loving by doing that
* B/c if there’s no hell, then it cost God nothing to love us
* But if there is a hell & Jesus bore it on the cross, then it cost God everything to love us…