

Matthew 25:14-30

Introduction

- I. Our use of money and material resources is one of the most tangible expressions of our faith
- II. Our prayer/hope for this series:
 - A. That God would free us from the hold that money and possessions have on us
 - B. That God would unleash his resources through our generosity for the sake of His kingdom
- III. The Parable of the Talents helps us be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we have Jesus' perspective on money and possessions

The Passage

- I. It's all God's property (v. 14: "his property")
 - A. Everything in heaven and earth belongs to God (Ps 24:1-2, 1 Chron 29:11, Col 1:16)
 - B. We ourselves belong to God first as his creatures and second as his saved people (1 Cor 6:19-20)
 - C. All our possessions ultimately belong to God (Deut 8:17-18, 1 Cor 4:7)
 - D. Thought experiment: imagine if everything you owned actually had a "property of God" sticker attached to it.
 - E. So, the question becomes not, "how much of my money will I, out of the kindness and generosity of my heart, give to God?" but rather "What am I going to choose to do with God's stuff?"
- II. God has entrusted his property to us (v. 14: "entrusted to his servants") with the purpose that we invest it so that when he returns, his property has expanded
 - A. Our role is one of steward: a steward is someone who manages another person's resources in the interest of that other person
 - B. So, Jesus is saying: "I'm giving you my stuff, I'm entrusting it to you, and I want you to invest it so that when I come back, my estate/kingdom has multiplied because of how you invested my resources." The idea is that we use his resources so that his fame and reputation is expanded in the world, so that people come to know who he is.
 - C. Examples of using his resources to expand his kingdom
 - 1. Giving \$5,000 to Northrise University
 - 2. Spending \$25 a week to take a friend out to lunch and have a spiritual conversation
 - 3. Offering your house to a young life ministry group once a week
 - 4. Giving a drum set to a worship team
 - 5. The point is this: there are millions of ways a person can do this, and God gives us a level of freedom in determining this
 - D. So the question becomes not, "What do I want to do with my money?" but rather, "How would Christ want me to invest his resources to expand his kingdom?"
- III. One day there's going to be a reckoning when he holds us accountable for what we did with his resources (v. 19)
 - A. We can have boldness and confidence at the thought of Christ's return (1 Jn 4:17, 2:28)

1. The first two servants have a confidence at the master's return because they invested his resources responsibly (v. 20-21)
 2. The third servant did not have that confidence
 3. Are we using the money and resources God has given us in such a way that we will have confidence and boldness when X returns?
- B. Key question: "As I consider a purchase or use of resource, will this be something Jesus looks at and says, 'well done, good and faithful servant?'"
1. Notice the question is not "what's wrong with this purchase?" but rather "what's right with this purchase? In light of how I could spend Christ's money is this the best way to do that in order to expand his kingdom?"
- C. If we let this sink in, it's a pretty overwhelming responsibility

IV. How we respond to this responsibility all depends on our view of the master

A. The third servant's view

1. The master is a "hard" man (v. 24-25)
 - a. He thinks he will work hard investing and the master will reap the fruit
 - b. He thinks the master is a hard and intimidated guy who is never satisfied
 - c. He thinks that if he loses the money, the master will be harsh
2. So, he tries to play it safe and bury the money in order to not lose it
3. His view of the master drives him to a cautious, fear-based response (which was actually "wicked and lazy")

B. The first two servants' view

1. The master is incredibly generous
 - a. a "talent" is between \$500,000 to \$1 million dollars by today's standards!
 - b. and he promises to give them even more of his possessions (v. 21)
2. The master is a risk taker
 - a. He entrusts his stuff to them, and he doesn't micromanage them or tell them how to invest. He leaves it up to them to go figure that out.
3. The master is joyful (v. 23)
4. So, their view of the master leads them to go out there and go for it and invest, not fearing losing it all (v. 16), and they have great confidence when he returns)

C. Who is our God?

1. He is not cautious, not fear-based. He is big, wild, generous, joyful, full of life, willing to take risks on little people like us—a God who says "Go for it. Go out and put this to work for me, expand my kingdom. I don't want you to keep it safe, I want you to use it (but not on yourselves, use it for my kingdom)."
2. So we are called to go out and proactively, creatively invest his resources, but not for ourselves but for his kingdom

D. So, the passage is not simply a call to responsible use of our resources, rather it is also an invitation to abandon our own little self-centered kingdoms and enter into the adventure of investing in God's great kingdom

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. Why is it difficult to have an open discussion about how much money we make, how much we have, and what we do with our money? What dynamics or issues make that conversation particularly difficult? And should we be able to be more open and candid about our financial situation or not?
3. How do you react to the idea that all of our money and stuff is actually God's? In what areas is that the hardest for you to truly internalize? In what areas do you think you've done a good job of internalizing that reality?
4. How do you react internally to the question posed on Sunday: Do I spend God's resources in such a way that I will hear, "well done, good and faithful servant?" What issues, concerns, or questions does asking that question that raise for you?
5. In the parable, the master leaves it up to the servant's discretion to determine how to invest his wealth. Let's assume God has given us that same level of freedom and discretion to determine how we uniquely invest his resources. In light of that, ask yourself, "Where would I want to invest God's resources?" Consider your unique interests, experiences, relationships and opportunities. Consider how God has uniquely worked in your life. In light of that, how might you want to invest God's resources? Share a few thoughts along those lines.