



In Matthew 25:14-30, we have given to us the parable of the talents. Our Lord here is illustrating the necessity of prudence and faithfulness as we represent Him on earth. He has traveled to the "far country" of heaven, and has charged us with His goods to be managed and wisely used to build His kingdom. We are commanded by Him to "occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

In the parable, each servant was entrusted with a certain amount of his Lord's money, according to his personal ability. Our Lord knows us. He understands our capacities and limitations and uses us accordingly. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7)

While our Lord declared "I will build my church," He has sovereignly determined to use us to do so (Matt. 28:18-20). In His infinite wisdom and goodness, He calls and equips each of us uniquely to do our part in establishing His kingdom here on earth.

In the Bible, a talent was a unit of measure, a weight, either in gold or silver, and represented tangible wealth. The word over time has come to be understood as any innate ability or capacity. We can say that the talents here in the parable represent all of what God has entrusted to us: our bodies, our abilities, our possessions and our opportunities. Everything we are or have has been given to us by the Lord, and He expects it all to be invested in His service.

This is not unreasonable, as the unprofitable servant in the parable bemoaned. "I knew thee that thou art an hard [unreasonable] man, reaping where thou hast not sown." Paul compels us to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

This parable represents the tragedy of wasted opportunity. J. Vernon McGee wrote that *"there is a great principle in this parable for us. And it was given in the light of the fact that all of us are going to have to stand in the presence of God and give an account of how we have used what He has given to us. The Lord is not going to ask how much we have done for Him, but how faithful we have been to that which He wanted us to do. For the child of God there are two important things: 1.) Find out what God wants us to do; that is, determine what the talent is that He has given us, and then 2.) Be faithful in the use of it."*

When God deals with us, it always starts with what He has already entrusted to us. He asked Moses, "What is in your hand?" He used Moses' rod in the great exploits before Pharaoh and the exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea. We think of the widow during Elisha's day and her pot of oil that was multiplied to pay her debt, or the lad's lunch offered to feed the thousands. Amazingly, God gives us what we need to serve Him and blesses (and often enlarges) it for His glory.

These servants in this parable were commissioned and entrusted by their master with his business. 1 Corinthians 4:1 says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

One thing is for certain—God is gracious and absolutely fair. Charles Spurgeon in a sermon on this passage wrote this:

"You say, when such a man dies, who stood in the midst of the church, a triumphant warrior for the truth, the angels will crowd to heaven's gates to see him, for he has been a mighty hero, and done much for his Master. A Calvin or a Luther, with what plaudits shall they be received!—men with talents, who have been faithful to their trust. Yes, but know ye not, that there is many a humble village pastor whose flock scarcely numbers fifty, who toils for them as for his life, who spends hours in praying for their welfare, who uses all the little ability he has in his endeavor to win them to Christ, and do ye imagine that his entry into heaven shall be less triumphant than the entry of such a man as Luther? If so, ye know not how God dealeth with His people. He giveth them rewards, not according to the greatness of the goods with which they were entrusted, but according to their fidelity hereunto, and he that hath been faithful to the least, shall be as much rewarded, as he that hath been faithful in much."

Martha Snell Nicholson poignantly pictures the judgment seat of Christ in her poem, "His Plan for Me":

*When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ,
And He shows me His plan for me,
The plan of my life as it might have been
Had He had His way—and I see
How I blocked Him here, and checked Him there,
And I would not yield my will—
Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes,*

*Grief, though He loves me still?
He would have me rich, and I stand there poor,
Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing
Down the paths I cannot retrace.
Then my desolate heart will well-nigh break
With the tears that I cannot shed;
I shall cover my face with my empty hands,
I shall bow my uncrowned head.
Lord of the years that are left to me,*

*I give them to Thy hand;
Take me and break me, and mold me
To the pattern Thou hast planned!*

May we all strive to be true to the trust He has left us,
seeking to do our best with what we have.

Thank you for your prayers and gracious monetary
support of these broadcasting ministries.

Your servant,
Chris Lamb

J. VERNON MCGEE

**THRU THE BIBLE – WEEKDAYS, 10:00 A. M.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – SATURDAYS, 12:00 NOON
"SUNDAY SERMON" – SUNDAYS, 3:00 P. M.**

John Vernon McGee was born in Hillsboro, Texas, in 1904, the son of very poor parents. At age 14, Vernon lost his dad to a cotton gin accident, and his mother moved him and his sister to Nashville, Tennessee. Through the investment of significant mentors, Vernon was able to attend college and then seminary. After completing his education, he pastored churches in Decatur, Georgia; Nashville, Tennessee; and Cleburne, Texas. It was in Cleburne that Vernon met Ruth Inez Jordan and fell in love with her at first sight. He proposed on their second date, and the two married a year later. Eventually, he and Ruth settled in Pasadena, California, where Dr. McGee accepted a pastoral call to the Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church.

In 1941, Dr. McGee was persuaded to begin a Sunday radio program, *The Open Bible Hour*, on just one station. It later became *High Noon Bible Class*, which laid the foundation for the 1967 launch of *Thru the Bible* as we know it today. Dr. McGee recorded the "Sunday Sermon" messages from the pulpit of the Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles, where he served as pastor from 1949 to 1970. After cancer surgery in 1965, the doctors gave Dr. McGee six months to live. The Lord gave him twenty-three more years. After retiring, Dr. McGee devoted his life to *Thru the Bible*. He and the Board of Directors planned in advance that the recorded five-year program would stay on the air after Dr. McGee's death. On December 1, 1988, Dr. McGee fell asleep in his chair and quietly passed into the presence of his Savior.

Today, the worldwide ministry of *Thru the Bible* continues. It was Dr. McGee who coined the phrase, "the Bible Bus" to describe the systematic way that listeners can study the whole Bible over five years. The idea was that anyone can "hop on the Bible Bus at any stop and ride for as long as they like." By alternating the studies between the Old and New Testaments, the "passengers" can systematically, and in order, travel through all sixty-six books of the Bible in five years.

Today, *Thru the Bible* has been translated into over one hundred languages and dialects. Listeners are invited to join the World Prayer Team who travel the world on their knees praying for the people who hear *Thru the Bible* in many different countries of the world. Free sermon outlines and notes as well as information about signing up to be a World Prayer Team partner are available at TTB.org.

For over fifty years, *Thru the Bible* has followed Dr. McGee's purpose for the daily broadcast, which is "to help you and others like you around the world grow closer to God through the systematic study of His Word through a five-year journey through the Bible." Today, almost thirty years after Dr. McGee's death, the program still follows Dr. McGee's stated purpose, summarized by the slogan: "To take the whole Word to the whole world."