

# Pr Mark Turner: Stewards of God's Property (9/2/19)

## Introduction:

This is the beginning of our new series about stewardship. Today's message will be somewhat of an introduction. We will be learning from scripture about the general idea of stewardship.

## Book Plug:

- 7 Weeks to a more generous life
- Christ's Object Lessons

## The Text:

Matthew 25:14-30 - The Parable of the Talents

The passage of consideration today is a parable about stewardship.

In this parable, as with many of His other, Jesus says: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like..."

- 'God's rule is like...'
- 'God is like...'

But for us to understand this parable well, it would be well for us to review the context.

## The Context:

Obviously the immediate context of Matthew 25 is Matthew 24. But Matthew 24 begins with a question. So let's take a step further back and see the context of that question.

Matthew 23:37-24:1 - Jesus tells the Disciples that destruction is coming.

Matthew 24:3 - In response to the words of Jesus, the disciples ask: 'When will this be?' and 'when will be the coming of the Son of man?'

Matthew 24:39,42,44 - 'I don't know,' Jesus said, 'so watch and be ready for whenever He comes.'

After this Jesus gave a series of parables to prepare them:

- The 2 Servants (Matthew 24:45-51)
  - The Faithful & Wise Servant
  - The Evil Servant
- The 10 Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
  - What does it mean to be wise?
  - Prepared
- The Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)
  - What does it mean to be faithful?
  - Profitable
  - This parable is about "the tragedy of wasted opportunity."

## Illustration:

When Pr Mark and his brother were young they would go to visit their grandparents every week. Their grandmother loved to indulge upon them and would feed them all the junk food that they liked and let them watch all the TV they wished.

All the while their very talented grandfather was out in the workshop doing woodwork.

Never once did Mark or his brother go out to the workshop to learn from their grandfather. It was a wasted opportunity that they were never able to claim back.

## **Be Faithful:**

### **1. The Responsibility we Receive**

In the parable there were servants on a farm. Not mindless servants who only do as they're told, but among them there are artisans, farmers, craftsman, tradies. These were men of ability and when the owner went away (for months or for years) he entrusted with them a certain responsibility (according to their assessed ability).

A talent is a measure - typically about 20-40kg. It is likely that these men were given a heavy bag of silver coins (to the measurement specified in the parable).

In other words, they were given responsibility. This word - talent - is where we get the idea of 'gifts and abilities.' The 'talents' that we possess.

What are some of these talents?

- Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Natural Abilities
- Mental Faculties
- The Power of Speech
- Influence
- Time
- Health
- Strength
- Money
- Kindly Influences and Affections

### **2. The Reaction we Have**

Two of the servants immediately react by developing/maximising the opportunity they were given.

"The talents, however few... of good of which we are capable." Ellen White, Christ Object Lessons, pg 329

The other servant left his responsibility/ability unimproved. He just chose the 'safe' way!

"It was the one with the smallest... despised the gifts of heaven." Ellen White, Christ Object Lessons, pg 355

The trap is that the man with few looked around him and assessed everyone else as so far ahead that there was no point trying.

There is a trap for those with many talents as well. They don't have to try in order to do well - so they don't. They assess others as the standards, and so long as they are comparable, it's ok.

### **3. The Reckoning we Face**

For Mark, this came in year 11. He had been used to cruising through school, cramming at exam time, and doing 'ok.' In year 11 it was different. His grades were assessed by performance throughout the year. He knew he was going to fail, so he dropped out of school - rather than failing. But he still failed himself.

"... there will be an eternal loss." Ellen White, Christ Object Lessons, pg 362

When the day of reckoning comes, we will be held accountable for how we have developed our abilities.

Stewardship is NOT a side issue! It is about more than tithes and offerings. It is about how we live our lives with the ability God has given us.

### **4. The Reward we Gain**

The "confidence" and "boldness" spoken of, with which we can come to God, is as a result of faithfulness to the gifts given to us.

In the parable, the reward for faithfulness over the abilities given us, is receiving a

multiplication! We are given more to be blessed by and with. We now have more to give!

The man who did not use his gift did not receive a multiplication, but lost even what he had.

All missed opportunities are eternally lost. It is easier to bury your talent in the sand than to develop it.

"Let none suppose... they receive the same condemnation." Ellen White, Christ Object Lessons, pg 364,365

**Conclusion:**

Let us learn to faithfully develop what we have!

To learn more about what it means to be a faithful steward continue coming for the next several weeks to listen to the series.