

Review – Please look over your notes from this weekend or the points below before your group meets.

Without faith nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible. Mary McLeod Bethune

We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations.
Charles Swindoll

Remember – you don't have to ask every question and cover all the material.

SHARE IT – Connecting with each other

➤ *What would you do for God if you knew you could not fail?*

GO DEEP – Connect with the Scriptures

At the time when Jesus told the Parable of the Talents, the disciples were asking when His kingdom would come to power and what they could expect. Jesus responded by describing events that were to come before the end of age. Jesus taught that His disciples should be more concerned with living God's way consistently no matter when He came in glory. Read [Matthew 25:14-30](#); [Luke 19:11-27](#).

What are the similarities between the two parables? What are the differences?

How was it determined how much each individual was given?

What instructions were given on how to handle the money?

A lord leaves on a journey, making his servants responsible for his possessions. While he is away, the servants are to use the gifts they have been given for the benefit of their master. One day the master will return, and then there will be an accounting.

Whose property was it at the beginning, and whose property was it when the master returned from his journey?

When the master was taking account of the servant's stewardship of his property, what do you think he was looking for?

How does the reward compare with what was entrusted?

Is it possible that the master was testing his servants as to their diligence and faithfulness during the time he was away? If that is so, what can we learn from it?

Why did the last servant choose to hide the money and return it back to his master?

How does our opinion of God affect how we serve Him?

Why did the master become angry with the servant who hid his talent?

When Jesus Christ returns and takes His church to Heaven, He will sit on His judgment seat and judge His people. He will not judge our sins, because these have already been judged on the cross. But He will judge our works and will give rewards to those who have earned them.

Read [2 Timothy 4:7-8](#); [James 1:12](#); [Revelation 3:17-22](#); [Matthew 25:34-40](#).

What are we promised for being faithful?

What leads to our inheritance of God's Kingdom? How were resources utilized?

Read [Matthew 18:33](#); [John 1:16-17](#), [15:1-17](#); [Ephesians 4:32](#); [1 John 4:7-21](#).

What has God given us that He wants to share with others?

NEXT STEPS – Applying the truth of Scripture to life

It is unfortunate that the term "talent" means something very different today from what our Lord meant when He told this parable. The talent was the largest measurement of money in those days. Since a talent was actually a measurement of weight, it did not have a constant value. A talent of gold, for example, would be worth a whole lot more than a talent of bronze. While commentators differ somewhat over the approximate value of a talent in today's economy, all would agree that it was a large amount of money. We must remember, then, a talent is a measure of money; it is not a reference to abilities.

However, the talents in the parable were distributed on the basis of ability, not as the bestowing of ability.

What does this mean for you and me? What things has God entrusted with you?

How then should we look at what other resources God has given to others?

What God has promised will come to pass. But our time is not to be spent dreaming of that future day. It is to be spent in the service of our absent Lord who has entrusted His possessions to us. Christ the King has entrusted to us His kingdom. Being ready for His coming means being involved as servants in the ongoing ministries committed to us by our Lord.

What thoughts or attitudes cause us to be lazy in carrying out our Christian responsibilities?

What are the risks of investing our gifts for God's service?

What are the rewards of investing our gifts for God's service?

In what ways can you be a "good and faithful" servant?

What discourages you from investing your talents?

When you are making financial decisions, what are the values that influence the choices you make?

If you were given \$5000, what would you invest it in?

We should carefully note the outcome of faithful service, and of unfaithful service, in this parable. Faithful service led to increased responsibilities in the kingdom of heaven, and eternal joy in the presence of the Master. Unfaithful service led to condemnation, the removal of one's stewardship, and an eternity of weeping and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness, away from the presence of our Lord. One must surely conclude that this parable is not just an interesting story, but a message of eternal significance.

PRAY

All year long you'll be at work preparing us for the day when we come into Your glorious presence. We're confident and grateful as we face that day, because You have promised to complete the good work of the gospel you've begun in us. Our hope is built on nothing less, nothing more, and nothing other than Jesus' blood and His righteousness. Jesus is the only reason we can be sure we'll stand before You with great joy. But You won't just give us joy in that day; You give us joy in this day as well, for Your joy is our strength. Because of Your great delight in us, we find great delight in You. Because You rejoice over us with singing, we will sing the new song of the gospel forever. What a gospel by which to live this year... what confidence and hope, joy and peace You have given us in Jesus!

Gracious Father, You are the only God, the only Savior—to You "be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!"