



selfless
service

Matthew 25: 14-49

'Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.



'After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five.

"Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more."

'His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"



‘The man with two bags of gold also came. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with two bags of gold: see, I have gained two more.”

‘His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

‘Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. “Master,” he said, “I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.”



‘His master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”



‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

‘Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.



For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

'Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?"



‘The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

‘Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was ill and in prison and you did not look after me.”



‘They also will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or ill or in prison, and did not help you?”

‘He will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”

‘Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.’

Matthew 25:14-46



God gives good gifts

Abundantly according to ability (Matt 25:14-30)

Bag of gold - Greek 'talent'

Amount

talent = 20 years' wages

current average UK earnings £27,000

1 talent equivalent £540,000

2 talents = £1.08m

5 talents = £2.7m

Weight

talent = 20-40kg

current UK cost of gold = £30,800/kg

1 talent equivalent £924,000

2 talents = £1.85m

5 talents = £4.62m



God gives good gifts

God's gifts aren't just financial (Matt 25:31-46)

Romans 12

encouragement
giving
leadership
mercy
prophecy
service
teaching

1 Corinthians 12

administration
apostle
discernment
faith
healings
helps
knowledge
miracles
prophecy
teaching
tongues
interpretation
wisdom

Ephesians 4

apostle
evangelism
pastor
prophecy
teaching

Misc. Passages

celibacy
hospitality
martyrdom
missionary
voluntary poverty



For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat (giving),

I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink (service),

I was a stranger and you invited me in (hospitality),

I needed clothes and you clothed me (helps),

I was sick and you looked after me (pastoral),

I was in prison and you came to visit me. (mercy)



Blessed by being a blessing

Don't cross oceans for people who
wouldn't cross a puddle for you.

- Tony Robbins

- the world says

No, do it. Do cross oceans for people.
Love people, all people. No conditions
attached, no wondering whether or not
they're worthy. Cross oceans, climb
mountains. Life and love isn't about
what you gain, it's about what you give.

- Unknown

- the church says



Blessed by being a blessing

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But **store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve both God and money.**
(Matt 6:19-21,24)

Here's the lesson: **Use your worldly resources to benefit others** and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, **they will welcome you to an eternal home.**
(Luke 16:9)

The marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;
it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— **for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.**
(Rev 19:7-8)



“Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honour and recognition. It will devise subtle, religiously acceptable means to call attention to the service rendered. If we stoutly refuse to give in to this lust of the flesh, we crucify it. Every time we crucify the flesh, we crucify our pride and arrogance.

...

Even more than the transformation that is occurring within us, we are aware of a deeper love and joy in God. Our days are punctuated with spontaneous breathings of praise and adoration. Joyous hidden service to others is an acted prayer of thanksgiving [to God].”

Richard Foster (Celebration of Discipline)



Buried gifts need to be unearthed

“If you lived in Germany during WW2, would you have stood up to the Nazis?”

If you lived in South Africa during apartheid, or Southern USA in the 1950 - 60s, would you have stood up against racism?”

In years to come, if your grandchildren find out that **today** 22,000 children died of poverty and 2,300 people died as a result of drinking dirty water, what will you say when they ask you what you did about it?”

Max Lucado (paraphrase)



Buried gifts need to be unearthed

Encouragement – who could you encourage on a regular basis?

Giving – what do you have which you could bless other with?

Leadership – in your home? Family? Workplace? Church?

Service – who can you help? Cutting grass? Shopping? Baby sitting? Church Ministry – kids' work, Noah's Ark, Food Bank, Worship group, Cleaning rota?

Teaching – kids' work? Homework? Assemblies in schools?

Administration - Family budget? Computer skills? Filling out forms?

Wisdom – who can you give advice to? Young parents? Newly weds? New Christians?

Hospitality – who can you host? Cook meals for? Let stay with you for a while?

Evangelism – who can you lead to Christ? Find new ways, run CU, Alpha, Life Explored...

Missionary – Did you ever have a desire, prophesy about going to “regions beyond”? What are you doing about it?



God gives good gifts
What has God given you?

Blessed by being a blessing
How will you use his gifts?

Buried things need to be unearthed
What do you need to dig up?



Humanity was made in God's image (Gen 1) but Jesus had to come in our image (John 1) in order to restore what had been lost.

Jesus came to show us how to love (1 John 3:16-18)

This is how we know what love is: **Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.** And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, **let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.**

Jesus came to show us how to serve (John 13:4-5)

Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

