

Working For the Lord's Return

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Date: 18 September 2022

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[0 : 0 0] And turn to Matthew, the book of Matthew, first book of the New Testament, chapter 25. Matthew 25. And we're going to read verses 14, 1-4, through to verse 30.

Matthew 25, verse 14. And this is Jesus speaking. Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.

To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent 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 the five talents brought the other five.

[1 : 1 6] Master, he said, you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more. His master replied, Well done, good and faithful servant.

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 the two talents also came.

Master, he said, you entrusted me with two talents. 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 the one talent came. Master, he said, I know, 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 talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you. His master replied, You wicked, lazy servant.

[2 : 1 8] 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.

Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

And throw that worthless servant outside into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Amen. Let's hear the preaching of God's word.

I'm truly grateful to God again for the opportunity to bring his word to you this morning. And that passage that we have just read, I will be seeking to give exposition of it and seeking to apply that to us.

Let me then begin by saying this. I did mention during the report time that unfortunately our country, known for a number of other good things, but unfortunately every cycle of five years, this violence around the general election time.

[3 : 56] This time there wasn't though, but one would have wished that it was good.

However, there were challenges. On August 9th, we did hold our general election and the previous concerns brought it up that it's not only the result of the election that should be praised, but even the process.

Actually, that the process be fair, be verifiable, be really accurate, so that the result can be acceptable.

Now, when the results were given of the general election, particularly presidential election, then it became very clear that the parties were not happy, were not satisfied because the process was not fair, it was not transparent.

And so the matter reached the Supreme Court and after a very intense number of days and the petitioners brought lorry loads of evidence really to show that the process was all faulty, rigging was the order of the day.

[5 : 49] when they had made their case and waited for the Supreme Court to give their verdict, the Supreme Court made up of seven distinguished men and women, what they could say could actually be captured in a statement or two.

They basically said all the supposed evidence of rigging was hot air and that broke many hearts because the election split the country right down the middle.

And so, what we had in our country was a divided country because the process was faulty, therefore the result could not be acceptable.

However, as we are talking just a few days ago, we now have a regime in the office.

But as I've said, half the country is not happy. Now why am I bringing, you know, our own election problems to you this morning?

[7 : 29] What would that help us? end. Actually, it's a helpful introduction to what I would like us to see in this passage.

Here is a situation. The Lord Jesus Christ is talking to His disciples and these really, His disciples privately.

We read that in chapter 24, verse 3. So, it's not everyone as in the previous, you know, times, but these are His own disciples.

And He shows them the desire of His heart. He sets before them the work of the preparation of the kingdom and He shows them who it is who will belong to the kingdom that He is setting up.

and it is so important that this be born in mind. Already in verses 1 to 13, He has shown that one must watch for the kingdom and more strictly here for the return of Christ to set up His great kingdom.

[8 : 58] He's about to return. Those who hope to be members of that kingdom better watch. They better not be involved in anything else that otherwise would take their attention away.

They must so prepare by watching, watchfulness. But then what we have now before us from verses 14 to 30 is that not only must one be watchful preparing for the return of Christ but that one must be found engaged in the work of Christ.

In view of the returning Christ one must work. One cannot expect to find themselves in the kingdom of God if they are not involved in the work.

And so to borrow from the illustration the process is important. One cannot expect a fair result if the process is not proper.

We must if we expect to be found in the kingdom of Christ if he is to return for us as it were and receive us home we must be involved in work.

[10 : 37] But you see the passage we want to see the Lord Jesus brings about this matter of work not just doing what we like our election the materials the preparation for the election took away billions of Kenya shillings in the preparation.

And then when the process was flawed and the result was disputed people have wondered was it worth all that money being spent.

This passage is really not for it's not telling us just find what you want to do and be engaged. No.

But really we are being told in this illustration this parable that it is the master himself who provides what is needed or what will be done as people are involved in waiting working and waiting for his return.

So I would like us then we had read the passage I want us to look at this in I trust a simple way by asking what are these that in this passage called talents what are they of course in the process also we'll find out what they are not but the main thing is what are these talents and then in the second place how are they to be used how are these talents to be used as we wait for the return of the service and then finally to do to do to do with our application will really be asking so what is it really a big deal whether we are involved in this work or not whether we choose to do what the master wants or not is that a big deal and I trust at the end we'll realize well it is a big deal and no one can choose to do their own thing and expect that at the end the master will be able to say well done enter the joy of your master even though the seven judges in my country at the

[13 : 13] Supreme Court said oh all these tons of evidence brought before us all this is just hot air they didn't get away with it as it were of course what they said led to the immigration of the person now we have in the office but they have left people so disgusted and a number of people have said just strike us off from the election register there's no need to register if the process can be faulty like this the result gets disputed and then the Supreme Court says come on let's get on with it forget and just move on we don't want to vote anymore well that has been the case can we say the same here oh no the judge in this matter is one who when they speak when he speaks that is the end because we see what happens at the very end of this passage where the master then declares curse the worthless servant into the outer darkness in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in my country after five years maybe there will be another election according to the constitution and even if some half the country say we won't bother at all then half will have their way but in this one there's no hope it is the final and therefore friends what we are seeing here is crucial for all of us now in the first place then what are these talents that we read about if you look at verse 14 and 15 and

I'm reading from ESV I trust you'd be having different versions just bear that in mind verse 14 for it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted to them his property to one he gave five talents to another two to another one to each according to his ability now generally we take talents to mean some special ability that one has which makes them stand out above the others if you're thinking of our church back at home this young man Dennis has an amazing talent we're trying to help him now go in and be trained but he's already above the rest of us when he fiddles around with these things we see he's got an amazing there what generally we would call a talent then there's another young man like a brother here playing keyboard

I would love to know how to play the piano but that's not mine I don't have that kind of talent we even have something now in our TV programs called talent show where people come and they play all manner of things and the best gets away with so much money but you know when the scripture was written talent was not something that someone has and others don't have at all and so it makes them walk with a shoulder high no this initially we need to understand was a measuring weight or some monetary way of monetary unit and it wasn't some mean amount of money it was a way of measuring a lot of money hence this man going away he was definitely a man of ability a rich man and he portioned out a large amount of money to these people according to their ability of course these people one received five the other two and the other one it's true

God does give people ability as again thinking of Dennis in our church God does give people such different abilities or interests and we can even call that natural abilities so and so he's naturally gifted however the Lord Jesus here is showing us what happens in spiritual realm he's showing us that this is what happens in the spiritual realm among believers people who profess his name and so the talent here is not just the ordinary way we think of talent shows and some special ability one has out there and others would desire but they don't have it no that's one thing and then also we need to take note that these talents then represent responsibilities or responsibility to serve the Lord to work out these things for the good of the

Lord ultimately but as we'll see it is to be worked out among the Lord's people these really represent various opportunities that God gives his people for different activities this is the idea of talents here in the kingdom of God he that is God himself does give different people various opportunities to carry out these things among his own people in other words these talents represent what we do with our abilities and not just the abilities themselves what we do with what God has given us these three men were the servants of their master he knew their ability and so he provided them these things according to their ability the

[20 : 53] Lord knows his people he knows everyone who belongs to him who would be in his kingdom and he gives each various responsibilities to carry and the point that I will be emphasizing through is this that those responsibilities are to be carried out faithfully faithfulness is the key thought here you see we all in a church and I believe here included and with this week in mind we all have different abilities and the Lord provides opportunities how we are to carry out those things so we've got preaching done from the pulpit here pastor and others who would help him to preach and then we've got ashes who carry out the very necessary if there wasn't one to do that and visitors walk in they don't know where to sit they wonder whether they are really welcome in the church here but the work of ashes how important that is to make people feel comfortable they would go away saying

I love that church I want to go back again just the way they received me when I was there as stranger I want to go back there again but you see the pastor may stand here and the ushers may be at the door there but already there was quite a bit of work that was done here maybe yesterday getting this place ready or early in the morning there was the cleaning being done and ordinarily apart from next Sunday as I hear it will be a time off but usually there will be some tea or some refreshment and there is someone who then is capable or is responsible for doing that these are each and different opportunities for people to carry out their work in a way to please the Lord it's not to please one another it is the

Lord who watches and therefore none must do their bit but only for the purpose that they would be seen by another now if others see what you are doing because some of these things very public but there are some of these things that are very private it's not obvious think for example the only matter of encouragement there are others who in the church the Lord has so burdened them or given them this talent where they can go alongside another when someone is down curse not all would go around them but there is this brother or sister who would come alongside and be such a great encouragement and others may not know others there is the work of just praying for the church and the various activities that go on in the church you see and I want us to insist on this the faithfulness someone has said and I quote the highest calling in the world is to do for the

Lord Jesus Christ what you can do and what you have been given to do and to do it with your whole heart this is how to please God are you doing that now I'm not suggesting that you are you doing it and doing it faithfully doing it not looking over your shoulder have they seen me do it did pastor pass by do you think they saw me do it not that kind of a heart at all but doing it as unto the Lord with all faithfulness so that's really then what needs to be said what it is not and that what it is but really let's look at this quickly then how are these talents to be used how should they be used there in verses 17 and 18 no 16 and 17 he who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them and he made five talents more so also he who had the two talents made the two more and then we'll see the remaining part in a moment there are these various responsibilities and opportunities to serve the Lord

I've given a few examples earlier but think friends of prayer for example teaching the children visiting the sick witnessing and there are many of course in this church and in any other biblical church there are many responsibilities and opportunities now you know these are not to be done by one person and not to be done by one person because this parable that we had read and we are looking at really is showing us that no this is not a one man show no it is not if you're at church today and thank God you're here but if all that you do is attend church on a

[27 : 30] Sunday then how surely will these other things that we have mentioned be carried out yes we come to church on a Sunday morning together but the activities of the church spread out through the week therefore really if all one does is attend church on a Sunday you know what that's a terrible failure actually that is a sin against the Lord the giver of these talents we are seeing here and not only are you sinning against the Lord but against his people because these talents where would they be used now remember this is a parable it's an earthly story surely we can relate with it when it was being read earthly story but it has this spiritual meaning that we are seeking to understand when the

Lord gives his talents they are to be used for his glory but they are to be used among his people among his people and you know if you are not using your talent then as we will be seeing sadly you are burying your talent you are burying your talent so how are these talents to be used we can see that in two ways one we can see that you can use it in a way that you then draw from the master these words good and faithful servant and that's what we are told when these two had been given their talents we are told they set off to work immediately each according to his ability and again this word faithfulness and someone has said that faithfulness is the currency by which the value of

Christian service is to be measured as opposed to some scale of importance it is faithfulness that's why we see here that the five talents man exercise the five talents responsibility and he earned five talents profit and exactly the two talent man just did the whole person did just the same where he he labored faithfully with his two talents and gained two more and then not everything can be saved because we don't have much time but the master is indicated here that went away for a while for a long time and of course in the church of the

Lord Jesus Christ the Lord having set work among his own in the church has gone away but will certainly return and his delay is not forgetfulness it's not that he does not carry out his promises indeed he will but when he does come he then will utter for those who work faithfully we hear those words well done good and faithful you have been faithful over a little and so he goes on there in verse 21 and also in verse 23 and this keeps coming the main thing is constant faithfulness in the work

God has given us to do Christian life is a call on duty a 24 7 work one cannot say they have done enough or they will not continue no it is faithfully serving the Lord till such times when he will return and the question is are you faithful are you faithful in the work whatever it is I have touched a few of those areas there are other areas in the church life but how faithful are you and remember you want to please the master above and so that is the way these talents are to be put in use it's not only in this passage the good and the faithful words coming but we also see these frightening words verses 24 moving down to 28 the one who had received the one talent really we are told what he did there in verse 24 where we read he also who had received the one talent came forward saying master

[33 : 50] I knew you to be a hard man reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter no seed so I was afraid and I went and hid your talent in the ground here you have what is yours wow but of course his master answered him you wicked and slothful servant you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scutted no seed and you ought to have invested my money with the bankers and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest and then we are told again those very hard words at the end so here is one talent man and what he did really revealing what was in his heart his inactivity his sin that he buries that which belongs to the master and then he was ready with an excuse honestly he just wasted his talent now someone has said and it's obvious when you think about it that nothing is static in life and money under the mattress doesn't earn any interest

I think we know that and especially nowadays when value of money particularly in our country the value of money changes not really for the better the one talent man was responsible for being productive unfortunately his inactivity by doing that he was just robbing his master he was stealing from his master you see if you are a professing believer then God has given you his Holy Spirit God has given you his word so how do you live your life how do you operate in your life are you a Sunday only person do you think surely that the

Lord is happy with you will he surely be able on that final day to say well done or surely will he not say wicked and lazy as though that is not bad enough being inactive this wicked person goes further and actually blames his master he blames his master and he says you are a hard man you know as then so now it's possible if people don't utter those words loudly but one it's possible to say Lord it's been too hard your standard

Lord is very high don't you say that be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect and I just felt I couldn't reach that and so no I didn't try your standard is very high are we not guilty of saying Lord you are a hard master you know I thought others could do better so I didn't want to I just let them do it master would not have any of that master say you wicked lazy or slothful servant and Jesus is showing us here God is patient God is patient but his patience must not be seen as weakness God will not reward inactivity no he will not but if we labor if we struggle if we attempt for the

Lord the outcome will be his he is a loving master he will never demand from us what we are unable to do remember our passage tells us there in verse 15 near the end to each according to his ability dear brethren the things the Lord has laid for us in the church and in our Christian life let's get on with them we will be amazed when we really set off to do to please the Lord in obedience it's amazing what things we then will be able to do but if we sit back and think how do I mean this is not my area I think the church is big others can do be careful otherwise you would be listed as one given yes some talent and don't you say that but mine was only one that leads us then naturally to see some area of application we have so what okay we are seeing here the

[40 : 42] Lord is the one who gives those talents and he gives to everyone in his church in different ways we need to find out what areas the Lord is inclining me what opportunities the Lord is laying before me there are times we can even ask pastor help me I want to be of service in this church I don't know is it this or is it this and you will be helped every believer has this God given talent to be used for his glory for the good of his people you see I've mentioned some objections that people would raise one would raise possible objection just like this person you know I failed because I had only one talent but actually you know even the five talent and the two talent person can fail and people do fail we are not perfect in carrying out these areas but it goes further there those who even though they may know what to do fortunately some sense of self righteousness or pride comes in and they are able to even ask what

I'm doing will will anyone notice it my duty is hidden there's no encouragement I'm getting from others that should not happen because it's the Lord who gives his people these talents you see if we use these talents as we ought this will happen one the faithful will grow in grace the faithful will grow in grace look at verse 29 for to everyone who has will more be given and he will have an abundance that's what will happen Jesus again surely is teaching us how we would grow spiritually here one who has if they use faithfully then they will know more blessing on that our blessings will be multiplied when we are on that road of obedience when we are carrying out the

Lord's work in obedience will you grow in grace then be found be seen for the Lord whatever be your area now much along the way much of what happens in the church along the way will get to be known but others have said may never be known humanly they are those who may even be bedridden but they are prayerful warriors on behalf of the church the church may never know them for that they may be prayed for here so and so Lord remember them they have not come to church for a long time what they are doing there they are laboring in prayer if they wait for people to know that they're praying no it is the Lord and when faithfully we continue in that the

Lord does see and when the Lord returns indeed that will be the case the Lord causes growth for those who are faithful in his work and I therefore just encourage you dear brethren particularly this week with the events already begun but tomorrow there's hundreds of delegates coming the preparations all so that the visitors can come has been a lot and it will be a lot I know last year we held our youth conference among our churches and that was a nightmare for us it was just about 80 80 just trying to accommodate the people and arranging the meals very challenging but the

Lord did saw us through and if there is the second time now this time next week it will be held in Kisumu our sister church and another time it will go somewhere else but it taught us great lessons and we thank the Lord for the opportunity and definitely not everything will go right but oh what a privilege set before you dear brethren and that you would do what you are to do faithfully but then the faithful will grow in grace however the faithless will but deteriorate they will diminish and that's what we are reading there as we continue in verse 29 the middle of verse 29 but from the one who has not even what he has will be taken away now it is said who has not then what he has be taken away what can be taken away of course we this will be taken away what is it the

[47 : 15] God given talent he was given one talent he didn't make use of it he buried it blamed God at the end God says that will be taken away remember it was God's gift now again we can't expound this other our time is far spent but oh hasn't God given us in this church and in every other church where the gospel is preached faithfully there has been wonderful words of life coming through to each and everyone so you know you have received you have heard in that sense you have heard the wonderful words of life pronounced in your hearing other privileges also have been set before you not perfectly but you have seen believers in this church so live a life that is desirable admirable remember not perfect but they so live in such a satisfactory way and it's like wow but you are not making use of your

God given privileges you know what God will take that away a time comes there will be drought in my country drought is real and that's the drought for water and okay then it goes to grain and other things but when there is drought for the word of God then that is real drought and a time comes for one who squanders one who despise one who would not receive wholeheartedly the wonderful words of life that comes from God through his servants and demonstrated in the life of the church and then friends so not only will the faithful grow in grace the faithless will deteriorate you know what the repentant the unrepentant the unrepentant will perish in other words there if we look at it in verse 30 and cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness in that place there will be weeping gnashing of teeth you see those are very hard words though at the very end but you know the

Lord gives that hard word at the end but it also is an opportunity to be latched upon it is the unrepentant that will perish but if one repents even at such a point there is hope for them unless you repent you will perish that's what the Bible tells us Jesus speaks as the final judge our Supreme Court judges spoke and they had their way but clearly they left a country that is not united of course those who then were disappointed say okay we accept what you have said but we don't agree with you because they felt that there was great unfairness you see friends this parable teaches us to believe in the

Lord Jesus as Savior he comes as a master and when he comes he wants to see men and women boys and girls who have been faithful faithfully waiting for his return active in serving him in whatever way I say don't despise the talent you have use it faithfully use it faithfully each one of us in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ we have because it is the master who gives it but also then friends don't fear because he's he's a fair judge he's a loving father he's gracious and those who seek his face and say master

I would have loved to do more but there are my challenges here and the master knows that he just desires faithfulness from us at the end it will be said what we saw earlier and we didn't unpack where he says enter into the joy of your master twice said to a five talent man and two talent man the master is described as one joy waiting and therefore those who have been faithful will enter into his joy it reminds us of that passage in Hebrews 12 verse 2 for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross he was faithful through it all to the end and he is saying you be faithful follow me to the end and you join in that joy with me dear believers let's just press on our labors may not be seen as anything by this world but the

[53 : 55] Lord does see our labors and those who are not saved and you hear the words of the Savior he is the master he is the one who portions out gifts if you would be in his kingdom then you must trust him you must believe in him he then will set before you a talent or talents and you have to use it for his glory in the church these are talents that the Lord himself does give what is your talent use it faithfully let us pray Lord our God thank you that the son the Lord Jesus Christ had his joy that was set before him and therefore he was willing to endure all that he went through to the cross itself and he became victorious now he's the one who then give gifts to his people and these gifts are to be used for your glory

Lord we are to work we are to work faithfully because the Lord is coming help us to be faithful but I pray also Lord that those who really would be able even right now to say yeah I see I have not been faithful look look to him and be saved and be busy serving waiting for his return hear our prayer these things we pray in

Jesus name amen amen amen to to that