

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Matthew 25:14-34

We read today from Matthew 25:14-34. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What can we learn today about the unique abilities that Christ generously gives to us?

Close your eyes, breathe deeply (expand your stomach, not your chest as you breathe), and for 60 seconds, remain before God in a posture of gratitude. Say “thank you” again and again. Allow your mind to wander into the places where God has shown you his blessing and give him thanks. Close that moment by taking and holding a slow deep breath, hold it, and slowly let it out.

The request of Jesus that the mother of James and John placed before him poses an interesting question. If you want to read the story, turn a couple of pages back to Matthew 20:20-28. The interesting idea comes in Jesus’ response to her in verse 23. *“These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”* What place “belongs” to us in the future kingdom of God? Is our place purely based on the Father’s choice independently or is there something else at work?

Lots of scripture speaks to how we end up where we do in the future kingdom. The very next passage after today’s parable: the sheep and the goats tells us some of how our behavior impacts our standing before Christ after we receive the gift of grace. Revelation 20:11-15 among others also teach us some of what we can learn about the consequence of “what we do”. We can study and learn from these texts and to serve Christ grateful for his gift of grace with the expectation of his blessing because of our faithfulness.

Our parable speaks to that in a way that helps us understand what our specific calling is in doing our “good works”. It does that through repetition.

A close reading shows us two substantial verses that have the exact same wording. Verses 21 and 23 say EXACTLY the same thing:

*“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!’”*

Same wording with one distinction. One servant was faithful with five bags; one servant was faithful with two. Same joy in the master’s voice. Same reward offered to both. Same invitation into the master’s presence.

So, what can we learn from these two identical verses?

The rewards and blessings of God are not dependent on the quantity of our good works, but the faithfulness that fuels them. A well-known writer who impacts hundreds of thousands of believers with their faithful expression of their abilities is blessed in the same way that a caring neighbor faithfully loves those who live on the cul-de-sac. The faithfulness with what we’ve been given is our calling.

Our present faithfulness promises abundance in God’s presence. What are the ‘few things’ that have been entrusted to us? When we are faithful in our service to God out of gratitude for grace, we will be entrusted with ‘many things’. I’m not sure what that means, but many things on the Father’s terms seems like it would stagger our imaginations.

We learn that our faithfulness brings God joy. He invites both servants into a space of happiness triggered by their faithfulness with what they have been given. By contrast, the laziness of the final servant in his squandering the blessing of grace given, brings anger and rejection. Our faithfulness and obedience bring God joy in its presence and judgment in its absence.

What we do in this life does matter. Grace is free and never earned. Our reward and place in God's eternal presence comes through our response of gratitude, faithfulness, and obedience.

May the Lord equip us all to serve him faithfully with whatever measure of gold we've been given.

*May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.*

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

Some questions out of today's text and teaching.

How are you being faithful with your 'bag of gold'? Where have you squandered opportunities through disobedience? Commit today to being faithful to Christ with the abilities and talents you've been given.

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