

David Carter / General Adult

Gather Grow Give Go / Matthew 25:14–30

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Every job that I have had, I've had to have performance appraisals. You know, when at the end of the year you sit down with your boss, your supervisor and they evaluate your performance from the previous year.

Usually it includes, spending time talking about the things that you really excelled at, and here are things that you should focus on growing in over the next year.

Sometimes it can be a question of whether or not your employer has given you the right tools, the adequate time, and space to do what is required of you.

Or sometimes it's a question of whether or not you have the right gifting, talent, capability to do the job, like is this job the right fit for you?

But imagine for a moment that you were given exactly the right tools to do the job, that you were specifically gifted and talented for the role you had, and the employer ensured you had adequate time, space that you were given a job, a role that was not more or less than you could handle.

What if you showed up to that performance appraisal and you still had a poor performance, whose responsibility is it then?

In our passage this morning Jesus tells us a story of a master who goes away on a long journey. While he is gone he puts 3 of his servants in charge of his estate and he gives them exactly what they need to succeed; he gifts them graciously according to their abilities. Two excel, one makes excuses, and everything is fine until the master returns wanting to know what they have done with what he has given them.

That's the question that is before us as we wrestle with this parable this morning, what have we done with what the Lord has given us?

The message that Jesus wants us to get from this parable is to take the gifts that he has given us and put them to work.

There is this expectation that our Lord has for his followers that while he is away, that we are diligently using the gifts that he has given us to further his kingdom and to bring him glory.

Look with me at our passage this morning in ***Matthew 25:14-30***.

We've spent these first few weeks of our fall to focus in on our discipleship path as a church.

You'll notice we have 4 verbs, 4 action words on the walls of the sanctuary...  
Gather, Grow, Give, Go.

And each of those words represents a step of discipleship that we challenge you to take with us.

Each of these things are all things that God's Word calls us to, they are disciplines of the Christian life.

We are called to gather, to gather regularly with other believers in worship and fellowship. We are called as followers of Jesus not to remain in spiritual immaturity, but to grow and mature in our faith, in our understanding of God's Word, in our love of God and love of his people.

This week we focus on the Give step.

And when we say give, what we mean is really three things that we are called to give back to the Lord, to contribute to our local church family.

Time, Talent, and Treasure.

If you are a part of our church family, each of us makes a commitment that we will give and contribute to the ministry and work of this church with our time, our talents, and our treasure.

But the question is, does Jesus call us to these things? Do I have to give of myself to the work of the church, to the forwarding of the Kingdom or can't I just come and sit in the pew, sing a few songs, hear the message and leave?

And the answer is you can, but you're missing out on the great blessing of the Christian life, the gift of serving, but more importantly you are not being obedient to the will of Christ.

As we read through the New Testament what becomes clear is that a faith that saves is faith that serves, saving faith is lived out in service.

In our parable this morning Jesus makes that clear.

He is so clear here about what his expectations are of those who are his servants.

Our parable this morning falls in a passage of a series of other parables. And they are all intended to answer the question what do we do while we await the return of our Lord.

You can read this on your own, this a great, great passage known as the Olivet Discourse where Jesus is telling his disciples that he is leaving, but promising that he will return, and the question is well what are we supposed to do while we wait for your return?

And Jesus gives a series of parables, to show this, this is what you should be doing.

And what's clear about this parable is that Jesus is saying, we should be working while we wait. Working while we wait.

Working with what?

Well here's some questions to wrestle with this morning as we journey through this parable, questions that will help us apply this passage to our lives.

Question #1 is this...

## QUESTION #1

What do I have that Christ has given me?

That's an important question and I ask that because the setting of this parable is that a master, a Lord is going on a journey and he gives talents to 3 of his servants, we see that, look at **Matthew 25:14-15 ESV**.

***“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. Then he went away.***

Jesus says it will be like, it being the Kingdom of heaven that's the theme that he is teaching on in this section.

It will be like a man going on a journey and he calls his servants and gives his property to his servants.

Now get this, the man going on a journey is clearly the Lord, Jesus. In fact in the original language, when this man is referred to as master, it is from the Greek Kurios which is title for Lord.

So you get this, Jesus is likening this man to him, and Jesus is telling his servants I'm getting ready to go, I'm going to be gone for a while and in his absence he gives his servants, by the way that's you and me and everyone who is a believer and follower of Jesus, he gives his servants his property.

He gives them each a certain amount of talents... what is a talent. That's important, in fact it's key to understanding this whole parable, what is a talent or what does this talent represent?

Well a talent in this time was a form of weighted currency. In essence it was finances, and the heavier the talent, the more the currency was worth.

So the question is well is this parable all about investing our finances in the Kingdom of God, well yes, but also no.

It's not less than that, but it's so much more.

The talent in this parable is at least talking about how we use finances to forward the Kingdom, but it isn't the only thing Jesus is talking about.

The key is really just the amount of money these talents are worth.

In Jesus time a day's worth of wages was known as a denarius, it's what you made for a day's work. One talent in comparison would be worth six thousand denarii, that is literally six thousand days of work, now you can multiply that out then what 2 talents are worth and what five talents would be worth.

30,000 days of work!

The point is that the value of what this master gave his servants, was meant to be shockingly high, it was an abundant amount of money.

It's meant to bring to our minds the abundant blessing that Christ pours out on us, his servants. And those blessings don't just come in financial quantities but just think over your life and how much God has blessed you with.

Not just one, two or five talents, but the parable of the unforgiving servant tells us that we have been forgiven 10 thousand worth of talents in our sin alone, a zillion dollar debt.

That's before we even think about what God has blessed us with in our knowledge, our health, our strength, our time, our intelligence, our opportunities, our positions, our homes, our families, our friends, our careers, our skills, our talents, our gifts.

Think, just think about the abundant blessings that God has poured out on you, and yes even the blessing of our finances.

There is not a thing that you have right now, that God has not blessed you with. Praise God from whom all blessings flow...

The shockingly high amount that this master has left to his servants is meant for us to think upon the abundant blessings the Lord has bestowed upon us, and the purpose of this parable is for us to think upon the reality, the questions of how am I using what the Lord has given me, how am I using it to further and multiply his kingdom work.

Think this morning about what God has blessed you with.

Notice, notice first of all that whatever these servants have, they have because their master gave it to them, do you see that?

That's why he can demand how they use it because he gave it to them. It changes our perspective when we think about what we have in our lives, our time, our talents and giftings and our treasure. We realize they are on loan to us in our time here, what we have doesn't belong to us, it belong to the one who gave it to us.

Second thing we need to notice is that the master, the Lord did not give to them equally, but equitably, do you see that?

**Matthew 25:15 *ESV***

***To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.***

He didn't give them all five talents or one talent each, no he distributed them how he saw fit according to their ability, he didn't give them more or less than they could handle.

We realize this, just as we look around and we see that some people are blessed and have more opportunities than others. And there are differing gifts. I will never be able to sing and play the guitar as well as Carlos, but that's not what God has gifted me with.

Some people seem to have more financial blessings... but the point is not to squabble over what we have or have not, it's not about how much you've been given, but what you're doing with what has been given to you.

And the serious warning is, notice that the person who has been blessed with more, more is expected of them. The more abundantly God has blessed you, the greater harvest that is expected from you.

The first question is to think about what God has blessed us with. Think about your talents, your spiritual giftings, think about your time, your position, think about material blessings, think about your intellect, your knowledge, your expertise, think about your financial blessings.

God has blessed us abundantly...

But here's the second question.

## **QUESTION #2**

How am I using what the Lord has given me?

How am I putting it to work for him?

That's what at least these two wise and faithful servants did isn't it? They take what the master has given them and they put it to work for him.

The master leaves and it says in **Matthew 25:16-17 ESV**.

***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 two talents more.***

There's no squabbling hey why did you get five and I only got two, no talking about what each deserves, no question, they went at once and traded to gain more. Literally in the original language, they went to work. They put the talents to work.

They took what their master had given them and immediately, there was no hesitation, there was a sense of urgency. I don't know how much time I have, when the master could be returning, I better get to work, I better take the blessing that he has given me and use it to multiply his estate.

Notice the gain is not for them. The gain is for their Lord.

It gives us the mission, doesn't it? To take what our Lord has given us in our time, our talent, our treasure and put it to work to multiply his Kingdom, for his glory, for his gain, not my own.

See this is what the calling of our give step is all about. It's an opportunity, a challenge for you to live out this part of your walk with Jesus in this community that he has placed you in.

To recognize that Jesus did not save you to sit in a pew. That he has saved you and gifted you and filled you with his Holy Spirit so that you can put to work what he has given for his glory.

To recognize that yes, yes Jesus has in the very least called me to use the finances that he blessed me with, to invest in multiplying and building his Kingdom.

Do I spend more money on Netflix than I do investing in the Kingdom?

Like Jesus cares what I do with my money, not because he wants my money, no, but because where we spend our money leaves a trail to what we love the most in our hearts.

It's why he says Where you treasure is, there your heart will be also...



But hear me, giving is not just about your money.

Jesus cares what I do with the time he has given me. How much of my time is spent pursuing my own desires, of chasing after things in this world, how much of my time is spent staring at a screen, scrolling, binging.

How much of my time is given to empty pursuits?

How much of time is invested in building and multiplying the Kingdom?

Jesus cares what I do with my talents, and giftings that he has given me.

You and I have been gifted not for ourselves but for the local church that we are a part of. For the edification of the body.

How are you using your giftings, your abilities, your intelligence to build up Christ's Kingdom and edify his church?

And courses are helpful for sure; we have a course starting soon that you can take to understand and explore your spiritual giftings, but you know the best way to figure out your spiritual giftings, just get involved, just try something.

I'm pretty sure they didn't have spiritual gifting classes in the First century church, you know how you found out, you just worked.

Like I'll tell you what, all I gotta do is go downstairs and sit in the JK/SK class in Grow Zone and you and I everyone in that room will find out quickly that's not my gifting, that's not where God has called me.

All some of us have to do is just sing one note, and you'll know and we'll know, do you know what, that may not be where God is calling you.

See part of growing as a disciple of Jesus is giving back, putting to work what he has given us, blessed us with for his glory.

So Gather, and we take a step to grow, but we also call you to take that step to give, to not just sit in the pew and consume, but to get involved in the life and

ministry of the church, to partner with us in the work of the Kingdom, to faithfully contribute to the financial cost of doing ministry.

And we ask you to serve, we ask you to give financially, not because we're asking you to do us a favour, but we're giving you an opportunity to fulfill this God given calling on your life as a follower of Jesus to take what the Lord has blessed you with and put it to work to multiply his kingdom for his glory...

The danger is that some of us, some of us can be more like the third servant.

**Matthew 25:18 *ESV***

***But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.***

So you've got two servants that take what the Lord has left them and put to work, investing it to further his estate, but the third one takes and hides it in the ground.

Now that may seem strange to us but remember there were no banks to put money in back then, and so digging a hole and hiding treasure or valuables to keep them safe was a normal thing.

Maybe we get what this guy is doing on a personal level. It's safer just to keep our gifts, our time, our finances to ourselves, there's no risk, there's no chance of getting hurt, maybe we don't like being tied down or over committed and so the safest things to do is to just bury it, to bury it deep down and be safe.

But here's the third question, I would say the most important question to wrestle with in this passage.

### **QUESTION #3**

Will Jesus be pleased when he returns?

Ultimately you aren't serving to please me or anyone else, you are serving for the pleasure of one.

That's really the question that matters, when Jesus returns and he sees all that you have done with what he has given you, will he be pleased?

We see how this plays out for these three servants.

**Matthew 25:19-23 ESV**

***Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'***

This is the point, Jesus is returning, that's the whole point of this section.

I know that he's been gone a while, but the master will return, and when he returns, he will settle accounts.

That is that you and I will be held accountable for what we have done while we've waited.

And you say well what does that mean, like I thought, I thought that our sin was forgiven, that we won't face judgment because we've been forgiven in Christ.

But there will still be a judgment, it will be a judgment of our work in the Kingdom.

### **1 Corinthians 3:12–15 ESV**

***Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.***

In 1 Corinthians Paul is talking about how he and other apostles have built the foundation of the church, but his point in these verses is that every generation after him are building on that foundation.

And what we're building is mixture of materials some gold, silver, precious stones, some wood, some hay, some straw

The image is things that are costly, things that are valuable, things that will last, or things that are worthless.

But notice when he says we'll know the difference, he says the Day will disclose it, the Day being the day when Christ returns, and the worth of what we have built will be tested by fire.

The image is this, picture in your mind that at the end of it all when you meet Jesus you've got all this stuff in your hands that represent your work while he was gone, and in front of you will be an altar of fire and what you and I will do is we will throw all work, on the fire and the fire will test the work, and those things that are worthless, the wood, the hay the straw will be consumed and all we will be left with is the work of value.

Notice it says you will be saved, but you will suffer loss.

See this is the judgment for believer, this is why this matters that we are pew warmers, that we are working in God's Kingdom because when Christ returns our work will be tested.

And the only things that will matter are those things that we have done that are of eternal value.

Notice, notice the reward here, back in Matthew, he says to these servants well done, good and faithful servant... Like is there any higher praise than that?

To think, to picture on that day when you and I meet Jesus and he looks over how we have taken what he has given us and use it for his glory that he would be pleased and say... well done.

But notice he says you have been faithful with little, I will set you over much... this tells us that we're going to be working in heaven... working without the burden, work that is fulfilling, eternally satisfying, and our faithfulness with what he has given us in this life will determine what kind of work and responsibility we're going to have in heaven.

But he says enter into the joy of your master...

Brothers, sisters, here's why this matters, here's why we call you to not just gather with us, not just grow with us, but to give with us.

To partner with us in the work of ministry here at this church, to take that step and share the responsibility of ministry, in your time, give your time to the work of this church, and give your talent, God has gifted you with skills, abilities, spiritual gifting we want you to be used here in our church, give of your treasure to share with us in the financial responsibility of ministry.

We all have a role to play.

Jesus is returning and when he returns, I want him to find you and I faithful... I want to hear those words from him... Well done....

Here's the point of this parable, the point that is really driven home.

Saving faith, is serving faith.

A faith that saves is a faith that is serving.

No, no, don't mishear me now. I'm not saying you earn your faith by serving, no we are saved by faith alone, through grace alone.

But a faith that has saved you will show in how you serve.

I get that because of how this parable ends...

**Matthew 25:24–30 *ESV***

***He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'***

Some people need to be wooed, some people need to be warned.

The wooing is the reward, brother, sister there is great reward in heaven for your faithfulness in serving.

The warning is, don't be deceived. Don't be deceived into thinking that salvation is about sitting in a pew, singing songs, listening to sermons, and leaving.

Notice these words that Jesus gives are not to an atheist or a rebellious person, but someone who considers themselves a servant, someone who would call him Lord.

But the evidence is not in what his lips say, but in how he lives his life.

Why is this master so harsh? Well for starters, all this guy gives is excuses.

I knew you were a hard man, so I was afraid and I hid your talent in the ground.

This isn't reality, this is an excuse, and the master calls this servant what he is, he is wicked, wicked because he has a false understanding, a false view of who his master is, but he calls him lazy, because if he truly believed that was how his master was, he would have at least, at least taken and invested his money with bankers.

Folks when we meet the Lord there will be no excuses, the evidence of whether he is our Lord will not be what we confess with our mouth, but the evidence of whether Christ is your Lord is in whether or not you choose to serve him.

Why, why is this man judged? Because he wasn't a true servant, he was cast out because even though he claimed to serve the master, all he had was excuses.

He served the Lord with his words and his theology, but he did not serve the Lord with his time.

There is this unbreakable connection between what we believe and what we do.

Believing in Jesus is not simply enough, but the question is, does your belief in Jesus impact your life choices.

Remember what James said in his letter, he said Faith without works is dead.

Faith that does not impact how you live is no faith at all, it's a dead faith.

Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

What good is it if faith is just simply something I talk about, but not live out?

The issue with this servant is that all he had to offer was lip service, his faith, did not impact his life and so his faith was no faith at all.

Saving faith, is a faith that serves.

I want to challenge again with our discipleship path.

We talked about the importance of Gathering together, the importance of taking the step of growth.

But the third step of our discipleship path is give... I want to challenge you this morning to think about how, how am I going to take that step to give.

In your bulletins, you'll see three things written there.

Time, Talent, Treasure.

Like maybe what you have to offer is your time... Write down between you and the Lord how, what step are you going to take to give your time.

We have ministries that is all we're asking of you. You're time. We have opportunities to serve as a greeter, an usher, at our connection ministries, pouring coffee, welcoming people, sharing how they can get connected, we need people serving there.... Maybe you can give your time serving in the food bank or on our security team.

Talent, maybe you have a gifting, a talent.

Like maybe you're gifted in the area of music, we need people to serve on our worship team, if you're gifted with children and kids, youth we're always looking for people to serve in our next gen ministries, to invest in the next generation, maybe you're gifted in praying and encouraging and journeying with people, maybe you want to serve in some of our care ministries, maybe you're gifted in tech and sound or maybe you're gifted in building, fixing, repairing.

How, how are you going to use the talents the Lord has given you for his Kingdom?

Lastly is treasure...



And we are so grateful for those of you who faithfully give sacrificially to the ministry of BBC, we could not do it without you.

But maybe, maybe you don't have a regular commitment, an amount you set aside, like maybe you can take that and pray about how much the Lord would have you partner with us in ministry financially.

Most of you know that we have operation revitalization initiative going to bring some much needed updates and repairs to our building. And we've had faithful gifts, one time gifts, but maybe, like maybe in this season you'll think about making that part of your regular giving. Maybe you can commit to \$10 a week, 50 a month or more.

We've made some progress, but we've got a bit more to go, man we would so appreciate your partnering with us. Part of our commitment as leadership, we want to be able to do this without going into debt, we want to do this based on faith, that God is going to provide what we need.

I mean think about this, we have easily 12 or 1300 people that come here every week.

Think about what would happen if just conservatively 800 people committed to giving 10 a week to operation revitalization, that would be 32000 a month, multiply that out for a year, what if 1000 people gave just \$10.00 a week, we could easily as a church family raise enough to pay for the repairs left in our church building.

I would just ask that you would prayerfully consider that.

But what steps of giving could you take... Your time, your talent, your treasure.

How are we using the gifts that Christ has given us to work for his Kingdom.