

Matthew 25:14-30

Stewardship

Image Church // Moving Forward: Week 8

Introduction

Well good morning Image Family! If you're a guest we're so glad that you're joining us this morning!

Hey, ***I want to jump right in*** because I have some exciting and important information that I want to share with you as it relates to regathering in-person again!!

On ***Saturday, November 14th*** we're going to be having a big **Thanksgiving Potluck** where we are going to ***eat, sing and sit under the Word*** together...

And here's the deal, **November 14th** is the kick-off for the start of ***in-person*** gatherings again! So, ***from Nov. 14 on***, we'll be having in-person gatherings- no RSVP necessary. And all this is going to be happening at ***Orange Hill Baptist Church***.

Now I know you might be wondering:

- Why Orange Hill?
- Why Saturday?
- And for how long?

Let me answer those for you...

- We're at ***Orange Hill*** because we have a relationship with them, and right now it is the only thing available, they are allowing us to meet for free, and their facility has an 1100 seat auditorium where we can gather safely and adhere to the social distancing guidelines...

- We're gathering on ***Saturday's*** because that was the day they have given us to gather.
 - The good news is we can treat Saturday like a Sunday with our gathering time which will be a **10:30am**.
 - There will be a live stream service available before that at 9am.
 - There is a chance Sundays will open up and if they do we will make the transition to Sunday...
 - *Joke: Saturday was the original sabbath day anyway!*
- ***How long***, that is contingent on East Cobb Middle School and the climate of COVID and its impact on the School. So, in the meantime, Orange Hill is going to serve as our temporary gathering space giving us the chance to gather.
- And for those of you who do not feel comfortable gathering we will also be providing a ***live stream*** option at both 9am and 10:30am.

Let me give you a few other details as it relates to the precautions that we're taking at this time...

- We are asking for all kids to join their family in the service. Once we are able to launch Image Kids safely and have the right volunteer ratios, we will launch Image Kids.
- We are asking everyone present to wear a mask while in the building.
- We have created a flow of one way in and one way out.
- We will be checking temperatures at the door on the way in.
- We will have hand sanitizer stations and masks available...

Lastly, you can find all of this information and even more on our website at **imageATL.com/regathering**

Challenge: Family listen I know that this is not ideal for some of you and that this is going to take some shifts and there may be a few challenges, but I want to ask you to press through.

Now is not the time to step back, it's the time to step in. We need this- we need to gather again, we are called to gather again- you need this, we need this.

I want to challenge you to think beyond yourself- I want you to understand that

And I know that we are going to have some challenging days ahead, but Jesus is worth it...

Pray

Ok! Well we're coming to the end of our series called **Moving Forward**, just one more week... We've been looking at looking at *Progress in the Christian life* by keying in on the different **rhythms** and **spiritual disciplines** and **practices** that the Bible prescribes and **pressing in on them for the purpose of growing as followers of Jesus...**

As Christians we're called to **sanctification**- the process of change as a result of the gospel at work in us...

So, the **goal** is to challenge us to **grow as disciples** in light of who Jesus is and what He's done...

This week we are looking at **stewardship**... This is one of our core values...

If you have your Bibles today, go ahead and turn to Matthew chapter 25... and as you're turning there let me fill you in on what's going on...

Jesus is coming to the end of his ministry on earth— His disciples don't know it yet— even though Jesus has been hinting around at it like crazy...

Like right before this in **Chapter 24** Jesus says to His disciples "**Hey boy's, you see that temple over there, that bad boy's about to be torn down**" ... And they're like **WHAT?!?**

- Jesus was **alluding** to the fact that there wouldn't be any need for the temple anymore because of what He was about to do on the cross, the curtain would be torn and there could be access to God through the blood of Jesus... And the temple would be replaced by the church!

So, the disciples are all confused, talking about the temple coming down?? So, in **Matthew 24:3**, the disciples are like, *ok what's the deal... How's all this gonna work?? What's the signs of "the end of the age"??*

This is the question that set's up the parable that we're gonna be looking at today... **Don't miss that**- it's important to make this connection!

So, in the rest of **Chapter 24**, Jesus answers their question very directly as He walks through a bunch of things that are going to happen... But at then He tells them **no one will know the day or hour of His return...**

- **Joke: so for those that think you know- you're wrong...**

And then at the end of Chapter 24 Jesus **pulls a Jesus and** turns the conversation from what will happen in the future, **to how we're living now**... Which leads us into **Chapter 25** where He tells 3 parables right in a row...

The first one is about 10 Virgins- **it's not what you think**

- The point of it is this, don't miss the party... Right now, because of the blood of Jesus there is an open invitation to the Party—**which happens at His return**—but after Jesus returns the invitation to the party is no longer and open invitation it is closed.

The second parable is the parable of the Talents- which is where we will be today...

The third one is about the Sheep and the Goats:

- This parable is a “*word picture*” of the final Judgement where Jesus will separate those who **have** truly trusted in Him and those who **haven't**.
- And that those who **have** trusted in Jesus, respond by loving “*the least of these*”, It's evidence of heart position because what breaks Jesus' heart also should break the heart of those that follow Him...

Now, the Bible isn't just random content. The it's the divinely constructed Word of God, meaning, that everything's where it is for a reason...

Which is why it's so important to understand the **context**...

When you look at context here, what you see is that in **all 3** of these parables are essentially **asking one question**: Are you ready for the return of Jesus? The most important thing is not how it will all end, **but are you ready??**

So, this morning, we're gonna look at, how do we live a life that's ready for the return of Jesus? This is where stewardship comes in, how we live now matter...

You could boil it down like this, **how you're living now reflects whether or not you're ready for Jesus' return...**

Let's watch how Jesus unpacks this for us...

Matthew 25:14-30

Verse 14 “For it [Jesus' return] is just like a man about to go on a journey. He called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them. **15** To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent, depending on each one's ability. Then he went on a journey.

A couple of things that you need to see here: the master entrusts his servants with what?? **HIS POSSESSIONS**... it's not *theirs*, **his**... *they are not owners, they are stewards of what the master has given them*...

- If we could just get that right there, it would fundamentally change how we view our finances....

Here's another thing. The Servants had no say in what they were given, they were all given different amounts but they were entrusted with the **same responsibility** regardless of the amount given...

They were each given “**talents**”: A **talent** is a unit of money, a lot of money! A talent is about 20 years wages.¹

Now what you also need to see is that the word talent is a **double entendre**, which is just a fancy way of saying a word with 2 interpretations...

The word for talent in Greek is where we get **our** word for talent... **Like Americas Got Talent**, like things that you're good at or gifted in kinda **talent**... Meaning this word was understood to be more than money.

So, it's not just about money, money is a huge part of it, but this passage goes *even further* than that, pointing to the **total stewardship of everything** that we have...²

Alright let's see that they do with the money they were given...

Immediately 16 the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. **17** In the same way the man with two earned two more. **18** But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

¹ Matthew–Luke, Bible Expositor's Commentary, 516. Referenced from JD Greear.

² Jon Bloom: Desiring God; It's not a Talent Show:
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/it-s-not-a-talent-show>

So, the guys with the 5 talents and 2 talents put what they had received to work and earned more, but the guy with 1 **talent** buried his...

Let's keep reading:

19 "After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. **20** The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I've earned five more talents.' **21** "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy.' **22** "The man with two talents also approached. He said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I've earned two more talents.' **23** "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy.'

I want you to notice this, both the 5 talent guy and the 2 talent guy **came to the master** and presented how they had stewarded what the master had given them...

- *It's kinda like when my wife comes home and I stand by the sink...*

Here is what you need to see... Both the 5 talent guy and the 2 talent guy recognized their **role**, which was to **steward** what had been **entrusted** to them...

And they also knew the master and his expectations... Which is why the master affirms them, pointing to the fact that stewardship was the expectation...

There's something else, look at how the master rewards them... Both the 5 talent guy and the 2 talent guy receive the **same reward**... Seems interesting right??

Why does the master do that??? Because the master **doesn't** value how much they made... **The master values their whole-hearted**

faithfulness and their commitment to the master by stewarding what belongs to the HIM!³

You got to see that... Their reward wasn't based on what they had accomplished (*how much \$ they made*), it was based on the fact that they were **faithful stewards** of what had been entrusted to them!

Now let's see what happens with the 1-talent guy...

24 "The man who had received one talent also approached and said, [there is no presentation here, he just goes directly in and says] 'Master, I know you. You're a harsh man, reaping where you haven't sown and gathering where you haven't scattered seed. **25** So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' **26** "His master replied to him, 'You evil, lazy servant! If you knew that I reap where I haven't sown and gather where I haven't scattered, **27** then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and I would have received my money back with interest when I returned. **28** " 'So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents.'

The **1-talent guy** failed to steward what the master had given him and he's condemned.

Now listen, he **wasn't** condemned for what he **had** done, but what he **didn't do**... He **did not steward** what the master had entrusted him with...

The reason he did that is rooted in the fact that he didn't really know the master... We see that in his response he viewed the master as harsh and unjust...

If he really knew the master, then he would have done the same thing the other servants did and stewarded what had been given to him... But instead he did the opposite...

³ Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (Vol. 3, p. 408). London; New York: T&T Clark International.

Let's look at Jesus' verdict as He concludes the parable...

29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. **30** And throw this good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Now, remember that what Jesus is saying is in response to the question the disciples had asked Him, *what will the end of the age be like? What will it be like when you return??*

And what Jesus is saying is that for those who have **stewarded** what's been entrusted to them, more will be given, but for those who **do not** steward what's entrusted them, even what they have will be taken away from them...⁴

In the **business world** this parable makes perfect sense... but this parable isn't a business model it's a model for how we should view our lives...

There's 2 major things that we need to see from this today:

1. Everything you have has been given to you by God

Example:

- My daughter... *That's mine!!... Excuse me?!?*

The foundation of this parable, is that you own nothing, and God owns everything... *At best* everything you have is on loan from God...

Psalms 24:1-2: *The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord; 2 for he laid its foundation on the seas and established it on the rivers.*

You say, "Well that's not fair!" ... First-of-all you don't want to play the **fair-game** game with God... If God did what was fair we would be dead so let's just get that straight...

Second-of-all, **Genesis 1:1** says: "*In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth*" ... I think we forget sometimes that God created everything- *Which I feel like that pretty well qualifies God to own everything...*

And in case there's any other confusion **James 1:17** clears it up when he says: **Every** good and perfect gift come from above...

God is the creator, he is the owner, you are a steward...

For some of you though, this doesn't make a lot of sense, you don't understand that you're just a steward ... And for you it's easy read this parable and view the master as **cruel** and **demanding**...

The reason why is because just like the 1 talent guy, **you don't know the master**...

You can't understand the expectations of the master until you know the sacrifice of the master...

The greatest investment of all was the investment that the master made because the master invested **Himself** in humanity...

See, instead of **stewarding** what God has given us, we **squander** it on ourselves... We've used the things that we've been given to rebel against that God that gave it to us...

But the Bible tells us that even in the midst of our rebellion that we were actively living in **with stuff that isn't even ours**... That God would offer us hope through Christ...

I want to explain how this hope works...

⁴ Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (Vol. 3, p. 411). London; New York: T&T Clark International.

- Think about the most valuable person in your life... How many of you would **invest** the death of that person for a man on death row??
- Take them down to the prison and let them hop right in the electric chair and sit there and watch them take the place of and evil person?? ... That's sick!! NO ONE would do THAT!

But that's exactly what GOD DID... He would give up his perfect righteous Son for you, to take your place both in His life and in His death...

And then in His resurrection He would offer you NEW LIFE in Him and His finished work!

See, the cross of Jesus is the greatest **investment** that the world will ever know!

And, **You will never understand stewardship until you see Jesus as your Savior.**

Which leads me to the second thing...

2. You are called to faithfully steward your life for God's Kingdom

What does that mean?

It means this: Gods Kingdom lasts forever, so when you steward what He has given you for his glory you are investing in His Kingdom...

Which was God's plan all along- to give you what you have to point people to Him, that was His plan... We just fail to see that so often... Stewarding your life for Gods kingdom is pointing people to Jesus!

And when people are pointed to God and they encounter Him for who He is and they trust in the finished work of Jesus- there eternity is re-altered...

So when you hear: the term *Kingdom-minded*, or "we are perusing the kingdom" it means that you care more about what happens after death than what happens in this life!

So, let me practically walk through how you can live this out, how you can leverage what you have for God's kingdom... and I want to do that using **3 categories** that we hold up a lot here...

A. Time

One thing that we all have regardless of where we are in life, is time, the question is how do we use it?

- Do we use it for our gain and glory or God's gain and glory?

Let me ask you this, what does your **calendar** indicate that you value the most... Maybe I can ask it like this: What gets crossed off **first** when you're in a bind or you have a sudden change of plans?

- Church related things or other things??
 - Church things here are Kingdom related things...

Let me ask you this, are church related things even valuable enough to make it on your calendar???

- Of all your weekly commitments, are your commitments to the Kingdom of God: Community Group, ministry, volunteering, are these the first to go?

COVID

Do Godly things get priority in your life?

For some of you, you're generous with your money but your **stingy** with your time, and it's time to go ALL-IN with both!

For others of you it's looking for ways to use your time more wisely... God has given all of us time right now, there is no telling when it will gone, how will you be faithful to steward it? Will you spend it all on yourself or will you spend it for the mission of God??

B. Talent

At the end of the day, when you think about your talent and your career does the kingdom of God get 1st consideration?

Are you asking how you can leverage your degree when you graduate for the mission of God?

- **College Students you have to get a job after graduation....**

Do you see your job as a mission field? Or just a means for financial gain?

How are you leveraging the things you're good at? Do you leverage it for your success or for the advancement of God's kingdom?

- What if every person that called image Church home was leveraging what they were good at for the building up of the church in order to advance the gospel!?
 - Can you imagine what that would look like?!?

C. Earthly Treasure:

Jesus talked about money more than any other subject in the New Testament— he had more to say about money than **heaven** and **hell** combined...

The reason is because money can so easily grab hold of our hearts, and it's the fuel that feeds so many other idols in our lives...

- What we have to see is that **how** we manage and view our finances is **connected** to where our heart is...

How are you managing the money that God has entrusted to you?

- What does your budget and the way you spend money reflect that you value??

What does the way you spend money show your kids what you value the most?

- Do you have to say "no" to some things as a family so that you can say "yes" to being generous?... **Example:** My parents...

Storing up treasures in Heaven means living with an eternal perspective. You do that by remembering what you have in Christ and **responding** to His **generosity** by being **generous** with your time, talent, and treasure.

Conclusion *****[Start VAMP]*****

Listen, you need to understand that this whole **stewardship** thing isn't just good advice for your life... Stewardship is directly connected to your heart...

There's a strong warning in this passage that we need to see from this parable... One day Jesus will return and He will settle accounts for all of eternity... **The question is will you be ready??**

The 5-talent guy and 2 talent guy were **ready** for the master to return, they were eager to stand before him...

And what we see is that, ultimately **their stewardship revealed their trust in the master...**

Faith is an important word in this passage, the servant's faith in the master was shown by what they did with what was given to them...

What are you doing with what God has given you?

What does the way that you're living your life reveal that you have faith in?

When you fully trust in Jesus, it frees you up to leverage all that you have in response to what He has done!

You have one life to live... Whatever you do, don't waste it!

Some of you need to start by trusting in Jesus... You need to surrender to Him as Lord of your life... You've never done that and

this whole idea of generosity doesn't make sense because you haven't received the generosity that Jesus offers you!

Others of you need to re-align your heart by looking to Jesus and allow Him to change how you live!

- ***Stinginess is the result of forgetting the gospel, and generosity is an overflow of the gospel at work in you.***

Jesus will return, and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord... Will you be ready? What words will you hear? ***Well done good and faithful servant*** or ***you evil, lazy servant***?

Notes:

But what I want you do over the next few weeks, is put this card in a place where you can see it, so that you can be reminded to be praying

about what God wants you to give and what areas of your life you need to go ALL-IN...

And to be praying for our church that God would do more than we could ask or imagine in every way during this season in the life of our church!

There was a story of a Farmer in the Midwestern who was adamantly against Christianity. He would plow his field on Sunday morning, and shake his fist at the people who passed by on their way to Sunday worship.

Well, October came and the farmer had his best crop ever—the best in the entire county. When the harvest was complete, he placed an article in the local paper that belittled the Christians for their faith in God. Near the end of his article he wrote, “*Faith in God must not mean much if someone like me can prosper.*”

The Christians in the community responded in the next edition of the town paper, one sentence that simply said, “**God doesn’t settle His accounts in October.**”

<https://bibletruthpublishers.com/god-does-not-settle-his-accounts-in-october/echoes-of-grace-1956-1957/la127476>

It is easy to go through life **hoarding** and **squandering** the gifts that God’s given you to steward, living *your best life now* with no regard to the God that allowed you to live it...

But the Bible is clear that one day **every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord**... Listen, **Jesus will settle all accounts**, the question is will you be ready to stand before Him?

Paul Maxwell:

God entrusts us with a “talent” — an investment (Matthew 25:14–30). That’s not your worldly responsibilities. That’s *himself*. We are not stewards first and foremost of our possessions. We are stewards of Christ because he invested himself in *us*. He has given us a stock that has infinite value. In a world where the gospel is *true* (i.e., the world in which we wake up every morning), burying our talent looks more like relying on the earthly economy for our treasure than on God’s presence.

Parable of the sheep and goats: this is not a parable but a ‘word-picture of the Last Judgement’.⁸ Its special force derives in part from its climactic placement at the end of Jesus’ public ministry and at the end of the eschatological discourse.

- ⁸ Manson, *Sayings*, p. 249. Gnllka, *Matthäusevangelium*, 2, p. 367 (observing the numerous future tenses, uncharacteristic of parables), and Hill, *Matthew*, p. 330, also deny that 25:31–46 is a parable. Paschalius Radbertus (ca. 785–860) was apparently the first to call our passage a parable. See further Gray (v), p. 352.

Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004). [*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 418). London; New York: T&T Clark International.

Jon Bloom:

Our English word *talent* refers to a person’s innate ability or aptitude to accomplish something, typically an above average to extraordinary ability. But the only reason this word is in our lexicon is because of Jesus’s “Parable of the Talents”

In Biblical Greek, the word *talanton*, the etymological ancestor of *talent*, meant a measuring unit of weight, often of money, such as

a talent of gold or silver. In the New Testament, a talent was the largest unit of monetary value and some estimate its contemporary value in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

But in Jesus's parable, he was clearly using this monetary word *talent* metaphorically to imply any God-given stewardship we are entrusted with, including our abilities

The servant considered the master unjust, so he distrusted his master. Why did he think this way? Nothing else in the parable points to the master's unfairness. It appears that something in the servant was fueling this perception of the master.

- Pride when you see people more talented than you.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/it-s-not-a-talent-show>

Mike:

What we do is not more important than who we are, but what we make reveals who we really are!

Its not about how much they made on their return its about the fact that they stewarded what they had!

Jon Bloom:

For what he [Jesus] made with his life has great bearing on what we should make with ours. Our ultimate goals should be the same as his.

What implication does Jesus's making have on our making?

Essentially it means that we should make Jesus's priorities our priorities. If Jesus devoted his earthly life to making his word known and his church grow, then the aim of our making should be knowing and spreading his word (Matthew 28:19) and serving the growth and health of his church (Ephesians 4:13).

the message of the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14–30):
Faithful investment of what we're given produces fruitfulness.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-will-you-leave-behind>

Paul Maxwell:

God entrusts us with a "talent" — an investment (Matthew 25:14–30). That's not your worldly responsibilities. That's *himself*. We are not stewards first and foremost of our possessions. We are stewards of Christ because he invested himself in *us*. He has given us a stock that has infinite value. In a world where the gospel is *true* (i.e., the world in which we wake up every morning), burying our talent looks more like relying on the earthly economy for our treasure than on God's presence.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-price-isn-t-quite-right>

The master is Jesus. His slaves represent the church, whose members have received various responsibilities.¹⁸³ The master's departure is the departure of the earthly Jesus. The long time of the master's absence is the age of the church. His return is the *parousia* of the Son of man. The rewards given to the good slaves stand for heavenly rewards given to the faithful at the great assize, and their joy is that of the messianic banquet. The punishment of the evil slave represents those within the church who, through their sins of omission, condemn themselves to eschatological darkness.

¹⁸³ But Hare, *Matthew*, p. 286, thinks it is about Christians with special gifts; and Harrington, pp. 354–5, suggests that the third servant stands for 'the movement within Judaism after AD 70 that sought to preserve the Jewish patrimony by building a "hedge" or "fence" around the Torah.' See further Harrington (v).

- Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004). [*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 402). London; New York: T&T Clark International.

This verse is parallel to v. 20 while v. 23 reproduces v. 21. That is, the first and second slaves say much the same thing, and the response of the master is identical. For all practical purposes the two faithful slaves play the same rôle. Moreover, **that both servants receive the same reward shows that what is valued is not one's accomplishments in a quantitative sense but the fidelity of one's commitment, as mirrored in one's whole-hearted activity**.²¹⁷

²¹⁷ Meier, *Matthew*, p. 299.

- Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004). [*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 408). London; New York: T&T Clark International.

It does not perfectly fit the parable, for **the wicked slave is deprived not because he had little but because he did not multiply what he had**.²²⁸

- Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004). [*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 410). London; New York: T&T Clark International.

'everyone who has' must mean 'everyone who has increased talents' while 'everyone who has not' must mean 'everyone who has not increased talents'.

- Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004). [*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 411). London; New York: T&T Clark International.