
Rite of Passage Recognition Service 2018 5.20.18

Today is the Sunday we annually set aside to recognize our Rite of Passage participants. I look forward to this day each year, because our young people are so special to me. Counting this year's **group of 12**, we have now had **101 young adults** go through Rite of Passage over the last **11 years** (since 2008). I'm absolutely ecstatic about that!

What is ROP? It's simply a tool from Scripture, which points to a journey that is designed to move our children from childhood to young adulthood. It's a "raising of the bar of expectations." Because children will rise to our level of expectations as adults. The model for ROP comes from Luke chapter 2. You remember Jesus in the Temple? He was 12 years of old and yet, He knew exactly where he was headed in life and the ultimate purpose and goal of His life. He said "Didn't you know I had to be about my Father's business?" We know Jesus is our example in all things, and in all stages of life and that includes 12 year olds and becoming a young adult.

We also learn from Luke 2 that Jesus was "submissive to His parents" and the Bible says He "grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men." And so we follow Jesus' example today. Thus, here at MPBC, at the age of 12 (and up to 18), you can participate in our annual ROP here at the church. Our theme verse is:

1 Corinthians 13:11

¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

ROP indicates that according to Scripture, a young adult is expected to act like "young adults" and to behave accordingly. It means they are expected to accept accountability for mature actions and to assume greater responsibilities. Why? Because we know maturity does not necessarily come with age, but with the **acceptance** and **ownership** of increased accountability and responsibility.

This year's group of **12 young adults** have successfully completed a rigorous gauntlet of questions that had them digging in the Bible for hours. This morning, we would like to recognize this year's Rite of Passage participants and I'd like for them to come forward, along with their families to the front as I call their names. **(Not all are here for this service. All are listed in the bulletin. Those here for this service will come forward.)**

First Service

1. Avery Aiken
2. Benji Anderson
3. Andrew Brown

Second Service

4. Claudia Button
5. Nathan Button
6. Abigail Button
7. Kaden Heacock
8. Jared Wentz

Third Service

9. Jeremiah Bullock
 10. Abigail Bullock
 11. Mariah Bullock
 12. Zoe Gahagan
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These fine young adults have fulfilled the principles set forth in Scripture to be considered young adults by completion of this journey. I'd like for them now to have an opportunity to accept an **oath of their commitment** to follow the Lord as a young adult. I'm going to read this oath of commitment from the certificate that we gave them at the banquet a couple of weeks ago.

“Today in the presence of my family, my church and my God, I commit to put behind me childish ways and serve the Lord with His leading and guidance as a young adult. I agree to follow the teaching of Scripture as Paul told Timothy in...

1 Timothy 4:12:

¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Young adults, if you will commit to keeping this oath, would you now say, **“I Will.”**

We are now going to show you a short video from this year's participants as they share about what ROP meant to them.

Isn't that wonderful! We are so proud of these young adults! And I know the families are as well. Parents it is wonderful to proclaim about our children:

3 John 4

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

So parents, we rejoice with you today as your young adult journeys from this “ROP” into adulthood and now we will celebrate that accomplishment with a **ceremonial “passing of the baton.”**

The baton represents Jesus Christ, the Word of God and the principles of being a disciple of Christ and the family is passing this baton to their young adult. The Scripture is clear: The parents are responsible for making this happen, not the church. We come alongside to help, but these young adults have been given to their parents and it's the parents who are to steward their children spiritually. So, we pass this baton...and we've all seen track races and we know how critical the baton pass is. If the baton is dropped, that team is disqualified automatically from the race.

Fathers and mothers... we are called to pass our faith to our children so that they will in turn pass their faith in Christ to their children. So now, as our young adults face forward and reaches back, would you now pass the baton to your young adult. Young adult...don't look back...keep looking forward and hold that baton high...**Glorious!!!**

Let's give them a hand!!

Matthew 25:14-30 “Wasting Opportunities to Trust Jesus”

5.20.18

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 25, verse 14.

Have you ever missed out on a great opportunity? Maybe it was for a job or maybe getting in on the ground floor of a company, when their stock was trading at a dollar and now it's trading at \$300. Certainly, there have been times where I believe we could all say that we missed opportunities or perhaps even wasted opportunities.

Today we're going to see the life of a man who wasted a great opportunity. A man who wasted an opportunity, that was so devastating that it cost him everything. Today we are going to see the

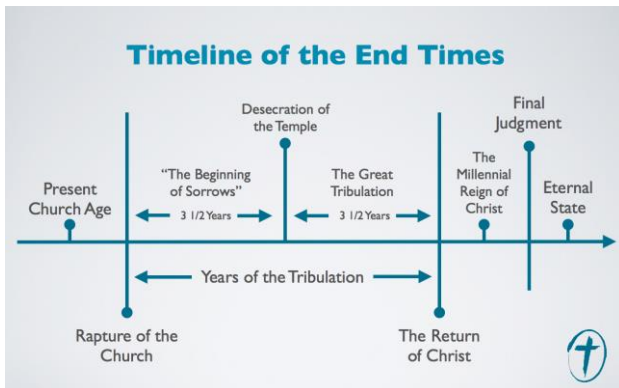
third warning that Jesus offers in His Olivet Discourse. Warnings to His disciples...offered to them three days before His death while He was teaching them on the Mount of Olives about a period of time known as the Tribulation Period.

He has been standing on the Mount of Olives, just across from the Temple Mount, with the Kidron Valley in between...



...and He points back to the Temple and says, "Watch out for what happens on that mountain in the days to come." He's describing what will happen after He comes back and takes the Church off the earth...the RAPTURE. The trumpet will sound and there will be a shout to "Come up" and we will rise to meet Him in the air!

And then those who remain...see our timeline...



They will go through a season of time known as: "The Time of Jacob's Trouble." Jesus is describing what is going to be happening during a 7 year period of time, where there will be a preparation of the earth for the coming of the Messiah...called the Second Coming.

And so, Jesus **offers warnings**...admonitions to be prepared! Be ready! Be watching...in anticipation of His second coming. Remember, His first warning in Matthew 24...Noah's flood...



Noah preached for 120 years and no one but his family listened and all the inhabitants of the earth were destroyed.

Then we saw the **second warning**, by way of 10 virgins...10 bridesmaids, 5 of whom who were unprepared for the return of the Bridegroom to take his bride to the place he had prepared for her for their wedding! Remember how they looked...



“Oh no! I’m not prepared and it’s too late!” They missed the bridegroom, the door was shut!

And today, we’ll see Jesus offer a third warning...another parable that is often called, “The Parable of the Talents.” But, I’ll tell you...what I see in this parable is more than a parable about rewards...I see a parable about: “Wasted Opportunities.” Jesus is once again describing the Kingdom of Heaven...which, will follow His Second Coming and His Millennial Reign.

Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And 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.’ ²¹His 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.’ ²²And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ ²³His 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.’ ²⁴He 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, ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But 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? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Now this parable is really very simple to understand. It’s quite simply about opportunities that were seized and opportunities that were wasted. It’s an account of a man, a Master, who has many servants and he goes away and he leaves them in charge of what he possesses. And he divides the possessions out in certain amounts of money: five talents, two talents and one talent, giving the servants responsibility commensurate with their capability.

Now a TALENT was worth about 20 years’ wages for a common laborer in the first century. In our day...the average wage for an American worker, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017

figures) is \$857 per week or \$44,564 per year for a 40-hour workweek. So, doing the math for today...one TALENT today would be worth \$44,564 x 20 = \$891,280. That's a lot of money!

And the idea is that they are to handle that money and make an investment so that the Master receives a return when he comes back. In essence, the faithful servants will invest the money and in their faithfulness, once the Master returns and sees their commitment and dedication, he will then set them up as rulers. They were faithful in a little and were rewarded with much.

People ask, "Why did the Lord give one 5 (\$4.5 million) and one 2 (\$1.8 million) and one 1 (\$891,000)? Why not all the same?" Because, as Warren Wiersbe says it:

"The talents represent opportunities to use our abilities. If five talents were given to a person with minimal ability, he would be destroyed by the heavy responsibility. But, if only one talent were given to a man of great ability, he would be disgraced or degraded. God assigns work and opportunity according to ability." Warren Wiersbe, Bible Commentator

You see, it was not the **portion** that they made that's the key in this parable, but instead it's the **proportion** that they made, which made all the difference. John MacArthur says it like this...

"If you take the person's capability and their privilege and their opportunity and you put it all together, then you'll come up with a number that God has given them in terms of talents." John MacArthur, Pastor, Bible Commentator

And I believe that's what Jesus is illustrating here. Jesus said it this way in another parable: **"To whom much is given, much is required."** So, what happened? Well, after a long time of being gone, the Master finally came back...

Matthew 25:19-20

¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ 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.'²¹ 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.'

Oh the joy of NOT wasting opportunities! The joy of pleasing the Lord Jesus is the greatest joy of all of life! Oh to hear those words, **"Well done, good and faithful servant!"**

Listen, that's why we are left here on earth after we're saved...to work for His glory...to be His ambassadors...to make disciples of all nations...to live for Him...using the talents and abilities He has given us. **But, there are those who refuse to do what the Master asks**...those are the "worthless servants." **Look at verse 18.**

Matthew 25:18

¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

There it is...wasted opportunity! He made no effort whatsoever to invest the \$900,000! And that, my dear Church family, is the mark of a false servant. He BORE NO FRUIT! Jesus said, "You will know them by the fruit they bear." He bore NOTHING! That servant is the picture of a lost soul!

I will tell you, some commentators say this guy was actually saved and just didn't do right...but, I would argue that he was lost...he was a fake servant...**like the wheat and tares**. He was like the people in Noah's day who would not listen...he was like the virgins with no oil. Do you see it? **When he heard the commands of the Master, He did nothing!** In our vernacular, when he heard the Gospel, he didn't respond to it by being obedient! Therefore, he is lost. He has nothing! He wasted the opportunity.

Let's see if we can summarize what we've seen with an accounting of what we've seen:

Servant 1 earned the Master: \$4.5 million

Servant 2 earned the Master: \$1.8 million

Servant 3 earned the Master: \$0

Church family, may I make a point about how servant #1 and #2 came to the Master when He returned. They didn't come with their heads down! No! They came excited! They came with joy! And that's a picture of the Believer when we come to the Lord at the Bema Seat, when we receive our rewards... We come with boldness to the throne of grace! We come with excitement and enthusiasm and anticipation!

There is no fear in our hearts at the coming of the Lord...if the Rapture were to occur today, we rejoice...we're excited because we know it will be our privilege to stand before Jesus at that Bema judgment and be rewarded for what we've done for Him in service on this earth.

The Apostle Paul said it this way to Timothy from the Mamertine Prison in Rome, just before his head would be lopped off his shoulders at his death:

2 Timothy 4:7-8

⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Paul was looking forward to seeing Jesus! Are you? Are you using the talent (yes, that is a pun) for the glory of Jesus? Are you working for the Master, or for yourself? How do you see what you do? As a worker...at your job...as a student...is it just to make money...is it all about you OR is it about using your abilities for the Master? You see, as Christians, we are to be living for the King? We are subjects in His kingdom...we do what He says...that's why we are called: "Servants."

Look down at verse 24. I want to show you the worthless servants problem. Watch what he says to the Master...

Matthew 25:24-25

²⁴He 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, ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'

Folks, that's ridiculous! This guy has absolutely the **totally wrong view of Jesus, the Master**. And the reason I believe He was lost...not born again...a fake...is because of what he just said to the Master. He was totally wrong in his view of the Master. And I won't to show you why I believe he was a fake servant...not really saved...

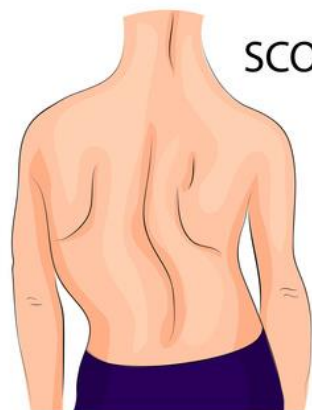
Matthew 25:30

³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Where is that? Hell! That's always the NT description of Hell. Weeping and gnashing of teeth. You see, two things betrayed this guy. **Again**, #1: he produced nothing...there was no fruit. And #2 he actually had the audacity to attack his Master. He said, "You are a hard man." Let me show you the Greek word used:

Skleros: harsh, violent, twisted

The English word for SKLEROS is this:



SCOLIOSIS

Scoliosis. If you have scoliosis you have a twisted or curved spine. Do you see it...this servant described Jesus as "twisted." Can you imagine! He had a wrong view of Jesus!

Now think about this....this servant isn't an atheist... He claims to be a servant. He looks to be a part of the group. He appears to be a Christian...or in our day, maybe even a church member... It's amazing when you think about it... This man lived in the environment of redemption and yet, he wasn't saved...

Think about how he responded to the master...calling Him twisted...does that man really know the Jesus that we know? I mean would you describe Jesus as twisted, as ungracious, or unmerciful? No! He doesn't know Jesus at all.

So how does the Master respond to the false servant? Well, the Master judges him by his own wrong view... **See verse 26.**

Matthew 25:26-27

²⁶ 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? ²⁷ 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.'

Jesus was saying, "I'm going to judge you by your own wrong view of me and if you thought these erroneous things about me...that I was twisted, unfair and hard, then, you ALL THE MORE should have invested my money and at least gotten me some interest!" Jesus said...in essence "You're a fake and a liar and all you are doing now is making excuses."

Church family, I'll tell you this...I've said it before, but I just can't get away from it...



Who was standing in that group on the Mount of Olives... Remind me... In just two nights...he would do this...



Judas would betray Jesus with a kiss. Judas was an unfaithful servant if there has ever been one! Talk about a wasted opportunity!!!

Listen, and we're done...are you a true servant? Is your life marked by genuine fruit? Do you long to live for Jesus or for yourself? What are you doing with your gifts? Are you using them for yourself or for His kingdom?

Oh, that we would be honest today... Would you ask the Lord Jesus to help you look deep inside your soul and see what marks your life? What does He see? Does He see a heart of service, a heart of love for Him, or does He see a heart that says I want what I want! Do you have the correct view of your life? Is it all about you, or the Master!

Oh, may we look inside our souls and find a desire to serve Him, the Master, so that one day we will hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant?"

So, church family, the opportunity is now before us to go serve our Master...let's not waste it!
