

Faithful

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30

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Good morning. This is the first week in February, as Josh mentioned earlier, and so that officially means we have started tax season. Now, as I say the words tax season, I know that each and every one of you probably had a different response inside. If you work in the financial industry, you're thinking, my life is over for the next three months. Or maybe if your spouse does, you're thinking, I'm single for the next three months.

Maybe your family generally takes a vacation or makes a large purchase with your tax return. And so there's a level of excitement around this time of year you're thinking, Disneyland baby, here we go. Or if you're like me, tax season is just where we get back in the black financially every year. Can I get an amen? Survival season would be a better word for it for us. But we didn't gather here today to talk about your 2022 tax return.

But we are going to talk about a story that looks at money. Now when I say the word money, I know all of you just groaned inside and you're thinking, oh no. Is this another message where we're going to try and get us to give more to the church or give for the first time? And I just want to encourage you if the lord lays on your heart to give, do it. But that has nothing to do with what we're talking about this morning.

Today, we're going to be looking at a story in the book of Matthew, chapter 25, and the title of our sermon today is faithful. So if you would begin turning in your bibles to Matthew 25, we're going to be looking at versus 14 through 30 today. Now, Matthew is one of the four books in the Bible that we call the gospels. And this word gospel just means good news.

And as Donnie Riley preached a few weeks ago, this is the good news about Jesus Christ, the messiah. Now, I would like to just pause for a moment and say, are you thankful for the word that brawny Donny brought for the last three weeks? For guys like me that work in the United States and in nice small towns like Angola, guys like Donny are like the mountaintop.

You think, man, this guy puts his life on the line, his family on the line, every single day. That the gospel might go forward. So appreciative for the work that he does in missionaries like him around the world. Today we're going to be reading a story in the gospel of Matthew that is near the end of Jesus earthly life. This is the last week before he was crucified.

And Jesus has just gone on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. And as he rode in on a donkey, the people were shouting, Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord, Hosanna in the highest. This was like the mountaintop moment of Jesus ministry thus far. For much of his ministry he had been concealing the reality that he was the messiah, and this is what you might call Jesus full send moment.

He's like, yep, it's me. The people are excited, and then what's next? Things quickly take a turn for the worse. Instead of ushering in an earthly kingdom for the people of Israel, Jesus as quickly gone on an emphatic rebuke of the nation of Israel, the religious system in Israel and more specifically the religious leaders in Israel.

And it's during this rebuke that Jesus tells a series of parables or stories to tell of the coming of the end times and that one day he will return and these stories are meant to bring a sense of urgency to the people of Israel. And so today we're going to be studying one of these stories in Jesus rebuke, talking about the end times, and there are four main characters in our story today.

Number one, we have a character that is referred to as the master. And I just want you right now to insert Jesus. As Jesus speaks of the master, he's speaking of himself. So we have a master, and then we have three other characters in

this story. They're all servants. And to Jesus first century audience, they were to put themselves in the story as the servants.

But the gift is that even 2000 years later, you and I are invited to do the very same thing. So as we read this story, I want you to put yourself in the place of the servants. We have a master and three servants. And as we study this passage, my heart cry is that just as Jesus was trying to call for a sense of urgency among the people of Israel in the first century that he would awaken us to a new sense of urgency for his coming and for his glory.

Let's pray before we get into our passage this morning. Lord Jesus, we truly believe that you are master. You are lord of everything, everything was created and is sustained by you. And so lord, I do pray that as we come to this passage as we come to this story that you spoke so many years ago, lord that your Holy Spirit would speak directly to each and every one of our hearts.

And that we would be moved with a sense of urgency today. We love you. We give you the praise and Jesus name, amen. So let's begin reading Matthew 25 beginning in verse 14. Again, it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. Now, the first thing I noticed, and we've already mentioned it, these people are servants.

And the job of a servant is to serve. This leads us to our first main point this morning, and that is that life's not about you. You and I were put on this earth to bring glory to our master. And yet we have this sinful tendency to slowly just creep back in and say, nah, it's really all about me. It's as if we get the planets of our solar system out of whack and we're thinking, it just all revolves around me.

And instead of acknowledging Jesus lordship, we find ourselves spiraling down in discouragement and depression and hopelessness. Reminds me of the words of Jesus earlier in the book of Matthew and he said, whoever finds his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

You and I were created in such a way that you will find the greatest inner peace and joy and satisfaction in acknowledging Jesus, my life is all about your glory. I surrender it to you. And I now follow in your example to lay down my life for one another. That will bring the greatest, satisfaction ever.

The next thing I notice is that the master is going to be away and he's giving these servants responsibility. They are not only serving him, but he entrusts what is valuable to them. And I think we need to realize sometimes not only is my life all about bringing glory to God, but everything I have to do so has come from him. And it's still his.

Notice it said he entrusted them while he was away. It doesn't say, hey, this is your money, do what you want with it. They were to use everything they had for his glory. Let's continue reading in verse 15. To one, he gave 5 bags of gold to another two bags and to another one bag. Each according to his ability, then he went on his journey.

Now, I'd like to take a moment to clarify these bags of gold because I don't know about you, but in my prayer time, I've not been getting hit with bags of gold lately. God's not been blessing me that way. He always provides for our family, but I ask the question, is this story just about money? Are we just talking about how does God expect us to use our money? And I just want to emphatically say no.

This is about far more than financial use. This encompasses your entire life. Your body, your relationships, your family, the gifts that God has given you, the passions that God has given you, every joy, every success, every heartache, every trial. Those are all part of what God has entrusted to you.

And I noticed that the master just distributes it as he pleases. There's no conversation, there's no, hey, I'd really like 5. Okay, you can have 5. He just says, hey, you get 5, you get two, you get one. There's no conversation, but he's not just doing it carelessly. If you notice, it says, each according to his ability. God has created you specifically for what he is entrusted to you.

This leads us to our next main point this morning. That is that we need to stop the comparison game. I believe that one of the greatest tools of the enemy is to get the people of God focused on comparisons. We can get so distracted thinking, you know, I wish I had a spouse like that. I wish my kids acted like that.

I wish I was financially stable like them, I wish I had that life experience that they've been gifted with. I wish I had their set of gifts. Sometimes we think, man, my gifts are just boring for the kingdom. I wish I was that person. And we can

become so distracted, but I think even we often get distracted with what we wish we didn't have. God, I wish I didn't have this scar.

I wish I didn't have that emotional trauma in my story. I wish I didn't have this physical ailment. And the enemy of our souls can slowly swipe us to a place of jealousy and resentment instead of accepting that it is the lord who has given us our lot. We continue reading.

The man who had received 5 bags of gold, when at once and put his money to work and gained 5 bags more. This servant it says at once, this guy wasn't wasting any time and notice it says that he used everything the master had given him and gained everything back for his master. He wasn't wasting anything that the lord had put entrusted to him.

And he made a proportional profit with what he had been given. We continue on. So also the one with two bags of gold gained two more. This servant also made a proportional profit with what the master had given him. He didn't complain and say, hey, I really wish I had the 5. He just said, okay, it's time to get to work.

This leads us to our next main point this morning, and that is don't miss the moment. I'd like to tell you two brief stories to explain this from my life personally. My wife and I have been doing ministry for 8 years now. And there are times in ministry where everything goes right. When we were in youth ministry, it's when all the kids show up and small group time is fantastic. And kids are just giving things to the lord and you're just thinking, oh, thank you, lord.

This is awesome. But then there are the other times. I remember the first week we started at a church and we had youth group and we showed up and only two kids came. And I remember feeling like, what are we doing? Like, should I call their parents and tell them, hey, nobody showed up. We're not going to have youth group tonight. It can feel like the insignificant moment. So over the years, I've wrestled with these feelings and my mom in the last two months had a conversation with me.

And she said, I just want to encourage you not to miss the small moments. And she began to tell a story when I was very young of how she was about to divorce my dad. And she was about to actually give up on her faith altogether. I didn't know this. I'm going, wow. The truth comes out. But she said, I was at the end of my robe. And I decided to attend a class with the pastor at the church they were going to at the time.

And she said, when I showed up on Wednesday night, I was the only person there. Just me in the pastor. And if I were that pastor, I'm thinking, cancel the class. I can't even have this class with one female. It's not appropriate. And we'll scrap it, we'll do something else. But he said, she said that instead, he invited another lady from the church to come and join the class. And he said, you know what? We're going to do it anyways. We're just going to keep pressing on.

And it was through that class in that season that God radically changed my mom's life. She radically surrendered her life to Jesus again, stuck with my dad. They're still happily married to this day. And I think to myself, what if that pastor had been more focused on that just being a two moment? Instead of a 5.

But instead, God used his faithfulness to truly change my future. To change my family's future, I want to encourage you this morning to put your full effort even in the small moments. That moment you don't think matters with your children, it matters. That moment you don't think matters with your neighbor, it matters.

That small moment with your life group, that could be the turning point for someone's future. And everyone they will impact going forward. And I love how this servant said, you know what? I'll be faithful with two. And I will give you the return anyways. We continue reading on. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

This guy didn't put any effort into what the master had given him. And provided no return for the master. In essence, he's saying, you know what? My time, my convenience, my self-preservation is way more important to me in this moment than my master. So I'm digging a hole. We're going to be done with this thing. We continue reading. After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

Can I just encourage you this morning one day God will settle accounts with each and every one of us? You will meet Jesus, period. Whether that's because you die and you go and you meet him or he one day returns for his bride, you will meet Jesus. There will be a reckoning day for what he has entrusted to you.

So this leads us to our next main point. And that is finish the job. I came up with a trendy slogan for this, but it was quite childish, so I took it off as my main point. But if you haven't seen the sun, your job's not done. You say that with me, if you haven't seen the sun, your job's not done. I'm going to say something a little difficult here.

There is no such thing as spiritual retirement. In ministry, we often hear people say, I did my time. I invested for years. Now it's my time. It's my time to receive. It's my time to kick back, enjoy this moment. And I believe this is one of the ways that the enemy slowly lures pillars of the faith back into the lie that it's all about me.

I don't misunderstand me. I understand that seasons change. Our bodies change. Our energy levels change. Our giftings change. We can't always just do exactly the same thing. And it's good to pass the baton to the next generation. I'm not encouraging that we don't do that well, but as long as you are still on Planet Earth, you have a job to do.

It's time to reinvest, don't bury your treasure late in the game, finish the job, it's time to dream again. Do you know how many young men and women need godly investors in their life? That can give them the wisdom and the comfort of someone who has gone before. Do you know how many life groups need your zest and your passion and your gifting even now?

To minister to them and to join with them and fellowship, do you know how many ministries in the church need pillars of the faith invested? Finish the job. We continue reading. The man who had received 5 bags of gold brought the other 5. Master, he said, you entrusted me with 5 bags of gold, C I have gained 5 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, calm and share your master's happiness. The first thing I notice is that this servant's faithfulness brings delight to his master. And then the master says, you know what, I'm going to take this and I'm going to reinvest back in you to continue to do the same.

And finally, we see that this servant gets to experience the joy and the happiness of his master. I believe that you and I, in moments of faithfulness, God reinvest back in us and not only does he give us the joy in that moment, but we have the hope of eternity with him forever. To share in our master's happiness. We continue on. Then the man with two bags of gold also came.

Master, he said, you entrusted me with two bags of gold. See, I've 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. Do you notice that the master showed the same delight for the servant who had brought him 5 more and the servant who brought him two more.

Because the master's delight wasn't just in the reward, it was in the faithfulness. And this servant got the exact same reward to share in the master's happiness. Finally, we hear about the third servant. Then the man who had received one bag of gold came, master, he said, I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathered where you have not scattered seed.

So I was afraid, and I went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here's what belongs to you. This servant has put his own well-being, his own desires, his own time, above the master's interests. And he begins to just kind of make excuses. And then we hear the master's response. His master replied, you wicked lazy servant.

So you knew that I harvest where I have not sewn 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 return, I would have received it back with interest. The master is not listening to any of these excuses, and he does not sugarcoat it as he says you're wicked and lazy. I want to encourage you this morning: There is no such thing as a neutral life.

There is no such thing as a neutral life. If you are not investing what God has entrusted to you, for his glory, it is wicked, and it is lazy. Finally, we see the consequences, so take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance.

Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus concludes this parable with a blunt warning. That reckoning day is coming. And he's calling for a sense of urgency. To the people of Israel.

And so this morning, I asked the question, what about us? What about fairview missionary church? What kind of urgency do we have to be faithful for our master? I personally believe that a lack of urgency is one of the greatest struggles of fairview missionary church. I don't mean the church in general.

I don't mean the church nationally globally. I'm talking fairview, missionary, church. We're a comfortable people. Myself included. We've been blessed, we have so much to thank God for. But we can so easily let the enemy twist that into a root of apathy and honestly far worse a root of idolatry.

So satisfied with the blessings that God has given us financially, relationally, our jobs are votes, I don't have a boat, but I know a lot of us have boats. Our hobbies, even this church building, and we can be so satisfied in these things that we can find ourselves ineffective and unfruitful for what the master has entrusted to us.

Young families so focused on their own time, their own agenda, their own goals, that they cease to think about how am I bringing honor to the lord and how am I bringing him a return? Pillars of the faith who have walked with Jesus for decades, slowly digging a hole and burying what God has given them and saying, it's my time.

And a church so incredibly gifted and blessed and resourced, slowly slipping into a lack of reality with the brokenness that's around us, each and every day. For some of us it's morning, it's time to get back to a place of urgency. Now this morning, I also know that maybe you find yourself being faithful.

You're making the hard decisions. You're doing what it takes to say, lord, I give you everything. Can I just encourage you this morning? Keep on keeping on. Every decision that you make publicly and privately has an impact and it brings delight to the heart of Christ. And you don't know you don't know who you're going to impact with that small decision. I am living proof that faithfulness with the two can make all the difference in someone's life.

Don't give up. God will continue to give you everything you need for everything that he has called you to do until he calls you home or takes you home. So I'd like to close by asking each and every one of us. If today, we're reckoning day. If today is the day, you and I meet Jesus, how will he find us?

What will your response be? With what he's entrusted to you, every gift, every blessing, every trial, every heartache, how will you offer that back to him? And my heart's cry is that the lord would rekindle a sense of urgency among his people. To be faithful in everything that he's entrusted to us. And that the Holy Spirit would renew that fire within us as a church.

Would you pray with me? Lord Jesus, you have blessed us. We truly are a blessed people, lord, I am blessed. Not only for the good things you've given me, but God for every trial for every heartache for every challenge, lord, we believe that each and every one of these things is a resource that you have entrusted to us.

And lord, I pray that you would just stir fresh in us as a people. Renew a sense of urgency in your bride. And God, whether it's the small moments with the two or the big moments with the 5, would we just be faithful? To honor you and give you all the glory. Lord, we love you, and we ask this in Jesus name, amen.