



MORE THAN ONE WAY  
TO BE WICKED  
MATTHEW 25:14-30



CONNECT

What would you do if you had a billion dollars?

WORD

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

#### WHAT

What does the Bible say?

Jesus often used stories of activities that would have been familiar to the people hearing them to make points about the Kingdom of God. In this story he tells of a man who is taking an extended journey and he entrusts some of his money to the keeping of his servants. This was a fairly common practice for responsible investment. All three of the servants would have been men that he trusted to a greater or lesser degree.

The "talents" that he entrusted them with referred to a weight of money in precious metals. It's generally agreed that the talents would have been the equivalent of about 6,000 denarii each. To put this in perspective a denarii was one days wage for the average laborer. So even the least capable servant was trusted with the equivalent of 20 years' worth of pay!

When the master returned, he asked for an accounting of what had been done with the funds. As a group, the servants performed admirably. For his investment of 8 talents, he received a return of 15. However, the servants were not judged as a group, but rather as individuals. The last servant did not waste the money or invest it unwisely. He was able to return the full amount given to him, but he did not put the money to work for his master and was not able to provide any return for his master's investment.

God entrusts each of us with wealth, gifts and responsibilities in accordance with our abilities. Just as each of the first two servants were entrusted with more because of their performance, we will be entrusted with more based on how we use what we have been given to advance the Kingdom of Heaven. We will not be judged as a group, but as individuals. We will each have to give an accounting of what we did with the gifts that have been entrusted to our care. We will have to account for our stewardship.

#### SO WHAT

What is the relevance to my life?

- What really stood out to you in today's message and lesson? What would you like to discuss further with the group?
- The good servants did their work *promptly*, with *perseverance* and *success* and they stood *ready* to give an accounting for what they had done. How has your work been *prompt*, *perseverant*, and *successful*? Are you *ready* to give an accounting for what you have done with the wealth, gifts and responsibilities that you have been trusted with?

- The servant who was given two talents was not required to produce five talents of return like the first servant. He was not judged by the first servant's standard. He was given less, and less was required of him. However, he received the same reward as the servant who was given more. What does this teach us about God's expectations for us?
- The master rebukes the last servant not only for being "slothful" but also "wicked." What did he do that was so "wicked?"

#### NOW WHAT

How do I apply the word to my life?



How does this lesson change the way you think about stewardship? Why did God choose this moment to bring this lesson to you?



What has God laid on your heart with this lesson? How does the parable of the talents change your relationship with him?



What does God want you to do differently this week as a result of this lesson? What do you need to do so that your stewardship is prompt, perseverant and successful?

How can we help you and hold you accountable? How can we pray for you? What can we do to show our love for you this week? Who do you know that needs to hear this lesson? Who can you share it with?

