



Matthew 25:14-30 (NRSV)

¹⁴"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master replied, 'You

(continued page 2)

Opening

- 1. Pray:** Loving God, help us to understand that every gift we possess has been entrusted to us for your use. Forgive us for the spiritual depreciation caused by our fear and stagnation. Give us the courage to invest consistently and generously in the work of the Kingdom, sharing your love with others. Amen.
- 2. Share:** Share of an experience of trying to start or tend a fire. What did you learn?

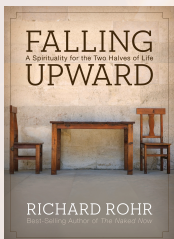
Dive Into the Text

- Why is the master described as traveling "after a long time" (v. 19) a significant detail for understanding the master's expectations for the servants?
- The servant who buried the talent claimed he was afraid because the master was a "harsh man" (v. 24). Was the servant's fear justified? Why or why not?
- The master rewarded the first two servants by giving them more, but he chastised the third, took his talent, and threw him into the "outer darkness." What does this punishment suggest is the greatest spiritual risk in the Kingdom of Heaven?
- Failing to invest leads to spiritual depreciation. What does spiritual depreciation look like in the life of an individual or in the life of a church community?

Matthew 25:14-30 continued

wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The Two Halves Of Life



Richard Rohr, in his book *Falling Upward*, suggests that life is lived in two spiritual halves. The first half focuses on building the "container" (identity, career, family), and the second half focuses on the "contents" (using one's wisdom and gifts for others).

Pastor Chris continues:

Being an elder means that you're not in competition with emerging generations. You're not afraid of what is coming underneath you, but you are the cheerleader for those who are trying to figure out who they are, just like you used to do.

Heckert, Chris (Rev. Dr.). "Feed The Flame." Sermon, Haddonfield United Methodist Church, 16 Nov. 2025.

Go Deeper

1. How did the sermon's discussion about spiritual depreciation (wasting opportunities, stagnation) impact your reading of the Parable of the Talents? Does it make the master's response more understandable?
2. What is the practical difference between mentoring a younger person (acting as an elder) and simply competing with them or trying to impose your own "container" onto their lives?
3. The master did not expect a 100% return overnight, but a reasonable return over time. In what relationship or area of service do you need to stop expecting instant gratification and commit to a long-term investment instead?

Close in Prayer

Close your time in prayer together.