

Good morning, welcome to Grace. My name is Bracken, and I'm one of the pastors here. It's awesome to have the privilege of preaching the word of God to you today. We're going to start a new series today called Gospel in Life, and it's going to be slightly different than our usual approach. If you're visiting with us, normally at Grace you'll find us spending many weeks in a row studying and preaching through a book of the Bible. We start at the beginning and try not to skip any part of it, and we like to do that because the word of God is sufficient for us. It is our highest authority, as we believe it is God speaking directly to us today as his Spirit helps us see and absorb the beautiful truths in it, and by preaching straight through a book we are kept from cherry picking favorite passages to prove our own points. We believe that method is most beneficial as we seek to teach the whole counsel of God, and not just the easy or convenient parts. But this series will be one of our rare topical series.

Every once in a while, we bring a question to the text and let the text answer it. To be clear, we don't bring our own answer to the text and hope to find support; we truly seek what God has to say about it. And even though it's not our normal approach, going to the word of God with specific questions is not wrong at all. It's very valid. If our normal preaching through entire books of the Bible can be compared to reading through an annual Bible reading plan in your quiet time, then a topical sermon can be compared to your friend asking you a specific question, and you going to different passages to find the honest answer to the question. It would be silly to tell your friend to just read through the entire Bible and eventually you'll find your answer. We need both approaches.

So today, here is our question: how does the birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus relate to our work? When I say work, I mean everything from our jobs, to our schoolwork, things we would normally associate with the word "work", and our hobbies, raising families, charity work. Basically, I mean anything we spend time and maybe resources on. How does the good news of Jesus impact our vocations?

Our text is Matthew 25:14-30, the parable of the talents. In some ways, this parable is a pretty typical parable to think about faith and work. If you're like me, you've probably heard this parable taught where the word "talents" represents our skills and abilities, and the moral is that we should use our abilities to the glory of God in our work. Maybe a few of you, again just like me, have heard a particularly weak interpretation that essentially makes this parable a lesson on doing good business, making good investments. While I don't think that is outside the scope of the meaning here, I am convinced that this parable is much, much bigger than that. I think this parable answers our question of what does the gospel have to do with our work, like this: **the grace of God is all-encompassing in our lives, including our vocations.** Specifically, I think this passage shows us **how vast the grace of God is, how active it is, and how wonderful it is.** How vast, active, and wonderful, including in our work.

We need to start with some context. The book of Matthew has 28 chapters, so here in chapter 25, we are very near the end of the author's recounting of Jesus' life and ministry. He has already made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, he has taught in the temple, his teaching has been challenged for the last time by the religious leaders, and he is now teaching his disciples one last time on the Mount of Olives before he is killed. This parable is the second-to-last significant piece of teaching Matthew records before Jesus' death. So that's the broader context. For the immediate context, I want to quickly review the parable that comes right before the one in our text today.

In Matthew 25:1-13, we have the parable of the 10 virgins. The 10 virgins are awaiting a bridegroom to come to his wedding feast, and five brought extra oil for their lamps, while the other five

didn't. The five with extra oil were prepared to wait for the bridegroom, and when he finally arrived, they were ready to go in with him. However, the other five were out of oil, and they had to go buy more before they could come in. While they were trying to get ready, the door was shut. It was too late. A brief summary of this parable is that among professing followers of Jesus, some will be prepared for his second coming, and some will not, and furthermore, those who are not prepared will be told that they were never true disciples. Therefore, the teaching is that we should be waiting for Jesus to return, and we should be prepared.

What's interesting to me is that the parable doesn't really say what being prepared means. Figuratively, being prepared meant having extra oil, but what does that mean in real life? What is our extra oil we should have with us while we wait? The closest we can get from this parable itself is to see that the five virgins who brought more oil are called wise, whereas the five who didn't bring oil are called foolish. So, what is this wisdom that we need to go into the wedding feast, to be saved when Jesus comes back?

This is where our text picks up, and as is often the case with Jesus' parables, we need both to get a clear picture. Let's look at the first verse in our text, Matthew 25:14. I want to start with the first two words, "For it". Right away we need to know what "it" is referring to. It's pretty clear that Jesus is talking about the kingdom of heaven. He introduced the previous parable in verse 1 of this chapter by saying, "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like...", and then he goes into the parable of the 10 virgins. In other places where Jesus tells parables about the kingdom of heaven, such as Matthew 13, he introduces each separate parable with a phrase like this. It's interesting here that he uses shorthand: he just says "it". This is one of the reasons that we need to take these parables together.

The other reason is the word "for". Starting with this word usually signifies an explanation or elaboration on the previous point. It often means because, or therefore. Here, this word is a link between the parable of the 10 virgins and the parable of the talents. Jesus finished the previous parable by saying, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour," speaking of his second coming, and we know that this watching includes being prepared. So here in verse 14 when he says "for," he is adding more reasoning to his previous statement. Watch for my coming, and stay prepared, for you don't know when it is going to be, and here's more about what it means to watch and stay prepared. That's how we begin to look at this story of the talents.

So, now that we know that this parable is about the kingdom of heaven, and we know it is deeply connected to the parable before about the 10 virgins, and in fact is a further explanation of that parable, let's see what happens. "14 For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away." Here in the story, Jesus is the man going on a journey. He is not getting technical with exactly when he's going away, or where he's going. If we were to take the details too far, it would be concerning that Jesus was going away at all, because we know that he never leaves us or forsakes us. Here he's just saying this parable is about what happens between my first and second coming. When he says his servants, he is referring to those who profess to know him in a saving way. These servants are not strangers off the street in the story; they have talked with their master; they have done things in his name; they are his servants. There is at least some level of familiarity.

We see that he “entrusted to them his property.” In verse 18 we’ll see that in the story the master specifically gives these servants money, and in verse 15 we just saw that he gives them talents. At this time in ancient Israel, a talent was a specific weight of a precious metal, often gold. Estimates of what a talent of gold would be worth usually claim that it was about equal to 20 years of wages for the average laborer. So, in verse 15 when he gives one servant five talents, one servant two talents, and the other servant one talent, we are to understand very large sums of money. Here is the first big question I have when I read this story. What does money in the parable represent in the real world? Is this a parable about money, which would lead to some kind of narrow interpretation about business, or budgeting, or general financial stewardship? Is it referring to skills and abilities? After all, this parable is actually what led to our modern definition of the English word “talent” to mean a skill or ability, like something we would demonstrate at a talent show.

I don’t think either of these options really gets at what is in view here. The key is to remember that this parable is about the kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of the king of the universe. Everything in existence is his. Everything in the material world, everything in the spiritual world. The kingdom of heaven is all-encompassing. It is vast, and even more important, it is eternally serious. I really don’t think something as eternally insignificant as money is really the point here. And even our skills and abilities, as important and wonderful as they are, still leaves me wanting a little more. Let’s keep reading.

“16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money.” Right away we notice that the story is essentially comparing the first two servants to the third servant. And based on the “trading” language and the parallel parable in Luke 19, we have good reason to believe that the first two likely went and engaged in active business (think starting a company more than passively investing in stocks or something), whereas the third servant buried the money and didn’t do anything else with it.

“19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.” Again, by saying “a long time,” Jesus isn’t making a specific claim about the timeline of his second coming. He’s just saying that there will be a span of time between his first trip and his second. When it says the man “settled accounts with them,” he’s expecting to hear how they managed his property to achieve a return on investment. In verses 20-25 we see how they did: the first two servants doubled their money, but the third servant didn’t earn a penny. We see that the master responds identically to the first two servants: “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.” But he responds very harshly to the third servant.

“24 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, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ 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. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 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. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

That seems a little strong doesn't it? I mean, the third servant didn't steal or squander the master's original capital. He preserved it, which was a lot harder in that time than in ours where banks are almost totally secure. I think in order to understand the master's response, we have to keep digging into what the talents really represent here. Let's compare the descriptions the master uses for the first two servants to the description he uses for the third servant. In both verses 21 and 23, the master calls the servants "good and faithful." But in verse 26, what does he call the third servant? "Wicked and slothful." Faithful vs wicked.

It's most helpful for me to work backward here. At the most basic level, on judgement day, there will be two groups of people: the faithful and the wicked. The teaching Jesus gives right after today's parable of the talents launches right into this: he uses the metaphor of the sheep and goats. So all three parables in Matthew 25 are describing how our present lives impact eternity. In our story, the first two servants are faithful, and the third is wicked. We know from many places in our Bibles that entrance into the faithful group is by faith alone in Christ alone. This parable today does not teach that we have to work to enter God's kingdom. If you don't know what group you're in today, please stay afterward and talk to us. Come find me or anyone who comes forward to take communion after the sermon. We would love nothing more than to help you with that question, not so we can feel good about a good deed we've done, but because believing in Jesus is the happiest thing you'll ever do, and we want to experience that with you.

So, is that it? Do the talents just represent faith in the gospel? As all-important as that is, I don't think so. I think there's more here. If the parable is about the all-encompassing kingdom of heaven, and the good servants are told that they are faithful, or trustworthy, because of what they do with what they have been given, I conclude that the talents in the parable represent every good gift the Father gives to his children; every piece of his kingdom he entrusts to us. Everything he gives us is a gift of grace, a part of his kingdom advancing. We could spend a long time, probably forever, meditating on **how vast the grace of God is**. Yes, the biggest piece is our salvation, but the grace of God includes every good thing in our lives. God's common grace, or the grace he gives to all people and not just his children, includes every breath of fresh air, every smile, every friendship, every positive thing we can think of. Do you realize what those all have in common? We don't deserve them. Therefore, they are all of grace. And then he gives us saving grace, the grace he only gives to believers, the awakening of our hearts to see the glory of God in the face of our savior, to trust in him by faith, and then for all aspects of our lives that are lived in faith to please him. These are all of grace too. **The grace of God is vast; it touches every aspect of our lives, including our work.**

The grace of God is also active. As we just said, the difference between the faithful and the wicked is true belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the most important piece of the kingdom that he gives. He gave us Immanuel 2,000 years ago, to come and live with us. He gives us salvation by giving us the gift of faith. He gives us eternal life with Jesus. But the gospel is bigger than even these highest gifts of God. Think about it this way: God didn't just look down and see our sin, send Jesus to die for us, provide a way into this salvation through faith, and then look away just waiting for it all to play out. Like, "ok, well, glad we got that taken care of, now back to my hobbies for the rest of the day." That's not how God operates, and so neither does his grace. We don't just walk around with a get-out-of-hell-free card, minding our own business until we die. The gospel doesn't stop where we often think it does.

At Grace we talk a lot about how our works can't save us, and in fact, before we're saved, they only condemn us. We repeat again and again that we are saved only by the blood of Jesus Christ, who suffered and died in our place. And then we say that our works can't earn our salvation, but that they are necessary evidence to our salvation. But what does that actually look like on a day-to-day basis? What does all this mean when the alarm clock goes off in the morning, and we don't want to get up? What does the kingdom of heaven mean when we miss a deadline at work, and we're stressed about how our boss will react? What does the blood of Jesus say to a mother or father who feel like they are at their wits end, with no sleep and non-stop crying and seemingly fruitless work in their home? Is our work pointless?

Well, we see in this parable that faithful stewardship of all of God's gifts of grace results in multiplication. The first two servants get a really good return on investment. And they do it through actively investing what they've been given. Remember that the parable is describing the kingdom of heaven. What we learn here is that God's grace is active. He gives us undeserved gifts, pieces of his kingdom, and they grow in our hearts and out into the world. This is a huge topic, but we have to stay brief. Quickly, here are few ways that the grace of God is active and multiplying, always advancing the kingdom of God. First, when we obey the great commission to make disciples, we are part of maybe the most literal sense of the kingdom of heaven multiplying. This is why we talk so much about planting churches that plant churches; multiplying Community Groups and Discipleship Groups. The grace of God for salvation is an active, multiplying force. True disciples disciple others.

But, the grace of God does also transform our skills and abilities, and the opportunities we are given to exercise them. We go from using all of God's gifts to please ourselves, to using them to please him, by faith. See, when lost people use the gifts of God for themselves, and not for his glory, their souls are still dead. Their thoughts and actions are not pleasing to God, and they are not bringing God glory in any positive sense. But when the grace of God is poured into our hearts in a saving way, it goes to work. It re-orientes our desires to the desires of God. And consequently, as we more and more hate the things he hates and love the things he loves, our lives serve more and more of his good purposes. Every sacrificial act of love spreads the love of God around our world. Every effort to bring order out of chaos is no longer a dead end of selfish or futile grasping; our efforts in all aspects of our lives echo into eternity. 1,000 years from now, we'll be looking back and marveling at all the instances where the grace of God in our hearts resulted in more love, more joy, more kindness, more of the kingdom of heaven than the world would have experienced without it.

One more example of how the grace of God is active: God's grace in our hearts continues to draw our gaze further up and further in. It is actively engaging our imaginations, our longings, pulling them ever forward in perseverance. Tim Keller tells kind of a silly story to illustrate an important point. He says imagine the worst job you can think of. For some of you it would be the dirtiest job you can think of, for others the most painful or discouraging, for some the most stressful. You got one? Worst job ever. Some of you are thinking, uh, ya, my current job! In Community Groups this week you can discuss what your worst job ever would be. Alright, now think about doing that job for a month. Sound terrible? For me it does. Wouldn't it be hard to do that job for a month? If not, I don't think you picked a bad enough job. Ok now, imagine that after doing this job for a month, you'll get a billion dollars. One billion dollars. No more filth, no more pain or discouragement, no more stress. Knowing that, would it really be that hard? Some of you are like, uh, dude you don't know what I came up with for my worst job ever...

The point, as you know, is that with a reward like that to look forward to, suddenly the work is bearable. In fact, we could almost laugh at it. "You'll give me a billion dollars just for doing that for a month? When do I start?" Friends, that's what we have, except for us it's infinitely better. I'm not trying to downplay the suffering and toil that we have in this life, or make light of it in any way. But I am saying with the apostle Paul, that "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18) It's not even worth comparing a month of a bad job with a billion dollars.

So the grace of God is vast, it is active, and lastly, the grace of God is wonderful. Let's look at a few things in this parable again. I think when most people read this parable, they focus primarily on the servants. Obviously, we want to be like the first two servants, and very unlike the last servant. We want to faithfully steward all the gifts of grace that God gives us, and we want to see a return on the investment of his kingdom. But what do we learn here about the master? This is crucial. First, let's get something clear about what the master is not. In verse 24, the wicked servant describes the master with some pretty dark language, and then the master quotes this description back at him when he's giving out the punishment. It's surprising to me that this is even debated among Christians because it should be very clear: this is not an accurate description of our God. God is not "hard" or stern with his children; he does not reap where he does not sow; he does not gather where he scattered no see. Everything in the universe is God's, and he is the only one who is holy, holy, holy, so it's utter nonsense to talk about God unfairly taking something. Furthermore, the entire Bible is about the true God who is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love! The master only quotes these words back to this servant to show how illogical the servant's conclusion is. Jesus is saying, if he really was that bad of a master, the only logical thing would be for the servant to ensure that the master's wrath does not fall on him. He should have concluded even more strongly than the other two that he needed to put this money to work, not bury it. Jesus is defeating him on his own terms.

Next, did you notice who gets the talents at the end of this parable? I've never noticed this before. We're very quick to notice in verse 28 that the wicked servant gets his talent taken away, but in the same verse, who does it go to? "...give it to him who has the ten talents." The first servant still has his 10 talents. The master never took the money back, even when he came to settle accounts. Certainly he could have: it's his. So, we know immediately that the master is generous beyond measure. If a talent is worth 20 years wages, and he gives the first servant 11 talents and the second servant four talents, he's giving them more than they've ever imagined. We might say he's giving them a billion dollars.

Now look at what else he gives them. We see in verse 21 that he gives them praise: "Well done, good and faithful servant." He's building them up. He's showering them with favor. The master is kind and loving and encouraging. Then what: "you have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much." This is crazy generous. Not only do they get to keep the talents, but he says that's nothing compared to what I'm about to give you. He's probably referring to how we're going to reign over all of creation with Jesus, as we know from other places in the Bible. (2 Timothy 2:12, Romans 5:17, Revelation 5:10, 20:4, 22:5) But it's not over. "Enter into the joy of your master." I wonder if one reason Jesus uses something as simple as money is that we can't wrap our heads around what it will mean to enter into the joy of the eternal, all-loving, trinitarian God. We know that at his right hand are pleasures forever more, but we can't even get close to feeling the full depth of that. But that's what the master just said. Work this job for a month, and I've already decided to give you the billion dollars.

I love how the first two servants approach the master when he returns from his journey. It says they came forward and simply announced what they had done. The image I get is of a small child who can't wait to show their parents the craft they made that day. The parent walks through the door, the child runs up with it, never doubting for a second that they'll be rejected. Why? Because they know their mom and dad. They know their mom and dad love them. It's an existence of pure, child-like trust. It's not even a conscious thought. These first two servants knew their master. They really knew him. They knew that he wasn't a hard man, reaping where he didn't sow. They knew he was generous, and kind, and loving. They couldn't wait to see him again, and to show him their craft when got home. **The grace of God is wonderful because it is the grace of God.** It's the favor of the one who is the most wonderful being in the universe. And it draws us into the highest joy we could ever obtain: a deep, close relationship with him.

At this point, we have to step back and ask if we know the master. Do we really know him? We don't fully know him, not like we will in paradise. And even then, I imagine we'll spend eternity getting to know him better. But we can really and truly know him. And, we can grow in our knowledge of him here, in this life. And as we get to know Jesus, he transforms our whole world. Everything hard about this life becomes just working that terrible job for a month for a payoff of a billion dollars.

At the beginning we asked what it means to wait prepared for the second coming of Christ. In the parable of the 10 virgins, what does it mean to keep extra oil for our lamps? In the parable of the talents, we asked what the talents represent. If the talents represent everything that God gives us, and that he wants us to be faithful with, we have to be prepared with the oil of persevering faith. It's not enough to have just heard of Jesus, or to have just gone to church for a while. It's not even enough to be introduced to him once and to be enthusiastic about him for a little while. If we aren't actively trusting him all the way to the end, then we never really did to begin with. If that's us, we're just like the five foolish virgins, just like the third servant: we're unprepared, and we've just buried his gifts somewhere behind us, and gone on to live our lives the way we see fit. And then at the end, even the gifts we have, gifts of air we breathe, of smiles on our face, of happy relationships, any good things in this material world, even what we have will be taken away from us. Even the simple fact that he has written down this story to warn us is mercy that we don't deserve.

So, what happens when your alarm clock goes off and you don't want to get up? Well, it depends: are you in despair that your life is worthless, that the small joys you may occasionally get to experience are just not really worth it, that you'll be stuck in this position for way too long, and that you won't have any capacity for joy left at the end anyway? Or, are you a solid week or two into your one month of work, so close to the payoff that you can taste it? What happens when you miss a deadline, and you wonder how your boss will react? Well, it depends: is your job, your paycheck, your reputation the only thing you can really see? Or can you see the president of all companies, sitting at the top of the ultimate org chart, just waiting to get you out of there? What happens when you're a parent at your wits end, with no energy or patience left, and your brain can't even remember why you're still going? Do you remind yourself that you've been adopted, and that you were far more of a problem than your kids are to you right now? Do you remember how deeply you are loved, and how perfect the rest will be at the end of this little month of hard work?

As problematic as it seems when we read the negative response of the master toward the third servant (on the surface, it does seem harsh), we should be far more bewildered when we see how loving

and generous the master is to the first two servants. Because we know those servants. We know ourselves. Left up to our own wills and motivations, we would be more wicked than we dare to think. And as much as we talk about how generous and loving the master is, we have to ask, how? How can he be that way toward us? In a story with a fixed amount of resources, for some to get more than they deserve, someone has to get less. Sure, God is infinite; he doesn't have limited resources the way we normally think about them. But I'll tell you one aspect of God's character that has a limit: his patience with sin. It's actually a mystery that we can't really get a mathematical metaphor to fit around. He has exactly zero tolerance for sin, and yet, two things seem to defy that: one, this sinful world is still turning. Sin is everywhere, and often times it just seems like it's getting worse. How can sin still exist for one more second in the presence of a God who is so pure and perfect that he can't come in contact with it? Two, many sinful people are not going to hell. We in this room who believe in Jesus are not going to be punished for our sin. How does this add up? For some to get more than they deserve, someone has to get less.

In Second Corinthians 8, Paul is talking about generosity, and he explains the foundation of our faith like this: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9) The only way the master can come back and reward his servants for their faithfulness, their trust, their good works, is that he paid the ultimate price. Jesus became poor in every way: poor economically, poor positionally, poor physically (experiencing so much pain that we can say he was totally devoid of comfort), poor emotionally as joy seeped out of his human body to be replaced by stress and sorrow. And poor relationally, as his friends left him, and the Father let him experience his rejection on the cross. His body literally became poor in blood. He ran out of blood! Blood that went to purchase our salvation, including our freedom from futile work.

This week, when the alarm clock goes off, when the boss is upset, when the kids are screaming, when any suffering comes, we have to remember the vast and active grace of our wonderful God. Sure, this parable includes how we spend our money, and it includes how we use our skills and abilities to the glory of God. But can you see how it's so much bigger than that? The talents are every gift of grace God has given to us, starting with our salvation, and including every move of the Spirit within us, every good work he has prepared beforehand for us to do. And as true disciples, we wait for his return with the oil of faith. We trust him. And that trust permeates every aspect of our lives. It results in changed hearts, love for our brothers, renewal of this material world, and thoughts and actions that are pleasing to God, because they are from faith. Because God's grace is vast, active, and wonderful, it means our work is a display, a stewardship, and an investment of that grace! So I get to go to work every day ready to work out the grace of God in real-time.

I was at World Mandate a few years ago here in town, and on opening night, Louie Giglio spoke, I believe about the widow's son Jesus resurrects in Luke 7. Right before Louie got up to speak there was a time of worship through singing, and they did this little display where they threw a bunch of blue paint on this backdrop, signifying sin and evil. And then they started throwing red paint over the top of it, to signify Jesus' blood covering our sin. It was a cool effect, but I'll never forget something Louie said. He was about to end his talk, and he looked down, and he said he'd been so distracted all night by the red paint all over the stage. He was worried because he kept stepping in it and tracking it around everywhere. I think he thought he was making a mess that was going to be much harder to clean up. And then he looked up and said that it him: that's really all we can do. We've had the blood of Jesus not

just stuck to our shoes on a stage, but poured over our whole lives, and all we can do is just hope to track it around everywhere we go, with our actions and our words.

I think this is what it means in 1 Peter 3:15, where he says we should always be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us. I think we tend to picture a stranger coming up to us and asking, “can you please give me a reason for the hope that is within you?” But that’s not what happens; we know this. Your friend at the playground who is struggling with her own small children will ask, “do you ever get angry at your kids?” Or it will be a coworker who says, “how come you never talk bad about people when they throw you under the bus?” They’re asking how your heart can be in such a loving condition, consistently. They don’t know it, but they’re asking about the hope within you. I’ve been asked things like this. In one scenario, they actually thought my lack of anger was hurting me. They knew I could get better results if I lashed out at people sometimes. When we faithfully steward all the pieces of the kingdom of heaven that we’ve been given, the world notices. And sometimes they ask us why or how.

And we have seen our answer: we live in a reality where the work is almost done, where the reward is far greater than we can ever imagine, and where the master is actually our true father, our true best friend, and the firstborn among us, his many brethren. This is our reality, but it’s not the world’s. And they need us to show them, and tell them. They need to see our talents multiply. They need to see that spark of the kingdom of heaven that was planted in our hearts by the loving death of Jesus grow into a fire and spread everywhere we go. They need to see that he’s real. And so do we. Let’s pray.