

What if the abilities that come most naturally to us are actually sacred trusts placed in our hands by God himself? That is the question at the heart of this message on stewarding our talents. Drawing from James 1:17, where every good and perfect gift is described as coming down from the Father, we are invited to rethink the origin of everything we are capable of doing well. Whether it is music, leadership, hospitality, craftsmanship, or the simple gift of encouragement, every ability traces back to the same generous source. This shifts the entire conversation. Instead of asking how our talents benefit us, we begin asking how they can honor God and serve others. First Peter 4:10-11 reinforces this by calling us faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms, reminding us that the goal of every gift is that God would be praised through Jesus Christ. The message challenges us to stop measuring our gifts against what someone else has been given and to start embracing the unique role we have been designed to fill in the body of Christ. When we do that, something powerful happens. The whole body grows stronger.

Title: Faithful Stewards: Using Your God-Given Talents for His Glory

Sermon Summary: In this message, Pastor Bo continues a stewardship series by focusing on the talents God has entrusted to every believer. Drawing primarily from the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25, he establishes that every ability, skill, and natural gift originates with God and is meant to be actively used for His glory and the encouragement of others. Pastor Bo challenges the congregation to move beyond comparison and fear, recognizing that God does not measure faithfulness by the quantity of gifts given but by what each person does with what they have received. The sermon calls every believer to step out of complacency, stop burying their gifts, and commit to serving in whatever capacity God has designed for them, with the ultimate goal of one day hearing the words "well done, good and faithful servant."

Key Points:

- Every talent and natural ability originates with God, who is the generous giver of all good gifts
- God intentionally distributes different gifts to different people because the body of Christ has different needs, and no gift is more valuable than another
- Talents are not given for personal gain or recognition but to glorify God and point others toward Christ
- Fear, comparison, and complacency are the primary obstacles that cause believers to bury their gifts rather than use them
- God does not reward the size of a person's gifting but the faithfulness with which they stewarded what was entrusted to them
- Every believer will one day give an account to God for how they used the gifts He placed in their hands

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 25:14-30 (the Parable of the Talents, in which a master entrusts varying amounts of gold to three servants and later evaluates their faithfulness)

- James 1:17 (every good and perfect gift descends from the Father above, who does not change)
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (the same Spirit distributes different gifts to different believers for the common good)
- Romans 12:4-6 (the church functions like a body, with each member having a different role and gift)
- 1 Peter 4:10-11 (believers are called to use their gifts to serve others so that God receives the praise)
- Matthew 5:16 (believers are called to let their light shine so others see their good deeds and glorify God)

Stories:

- Pastor Bo recalled his college roommate Joe Ananias, who could listen to an unfamiliar song once and then immediately play and sing it perfectly on guitar, illustrating how some gifts appear effortless and awe-inspiring
- Pastor Bo shared a self-deprecating account of being the designated flashlight holder for his father growing up, and later for his wife Danae, to illustrate that not everyone shares the same practical abilities
- Pastor Bo described working alone at a small gift shop in downtown Lake Geneva while the owners, an older couple dealing with health issues, were unable to come in, using this as an analogy for stewardship: he did not own the business but was trusted to manage it well and knew he would eventually answer to the owners
- The Parable of the Talents from Matthew 25 is the central narrative of the sermon, in which a master gives five, two, and one bag of gold respectively to three servants before going on a journey; the first two invest and double what they received and are praised equally as good and faithful servants, while the third buries his out of fear and is rebuked upon the master's return

Scripture References from the Sermon on Stewarding Our Talents

****James 1:17****

The source of every good and perfect gift being from the Father above, who does not change.

****1 Corinthians 12:4-7****

Different kinds of gifts distributed by the same Spirit, different kinds of service under the same Lord, all working toward the common good.

****Romans 12:4-6****

The church compared to a human body, with many members having different functions, and different gifts given according to grace.

****1 Peter 4:10-11****

Using received gifts to serve others as faithful stewards, speaking as with God's words, serving with God's strength, so that God receives the glory through Christ.

****Matthew 5:16****

Letting your light shine before others so they see your good deeds and glorify the Father in heaven.

****Matthew 25:14-30****

The Parable of the Talents, including the master entrusting bags of gold, the faithful servants doubling what they received, and the unfaithful servant burying his talent out of fear.

Opening Scripture Reading (Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 7, 10-11)

The blessing of forgiveness, confession of sin, God as a hiding place, and the call to rejoice for those who trust in Him.

Pastor Bo emphasized that recognizing God as the source of our talents changes how we view them -- in what practical ways does acknowledging God as the giver of your abilities shift your motivations for how you use them?

James 1:17 reminds us that every good and perfect gift comes from above -- how does this truth challenge the tendency to take personal credit for our accomplishments or natural abilities?

The sermon drew a parallel between the human body and the body of Christ, noting that each part has a unique role -- in what ways might the church be weakened when believers either overvalue or undervalue their own particular gifts?

Pastor Bo warned that the enemy uses comparison to convince us our gifts are unimportant and keep us from using them -- can you identify a time when comparison caused you to hold back from serving, and what would it have looked like to step out in faith instead?

The third servant in the parable of the talents buried his gift out of fear rather than losing it or wasting it -- what fears or insecurities most commonly cause believers today to bury the gifts God has entrusted to them?

The master in the parable gave the servant with two talents and the servant with five talents the exact same commendation -- what does this reveal about how God defines success, and how does that differ from the way our culture measures a person's worth or contribution?

Peter writes in 1 Peter 4:10-11 that we should use our gifts so that God receives the praise through Jesus Christ -- how do you personally guard against the temptation to use your talents in ways that draw attention to yourself rather than pointing others to God?

Pastor Bo noted that some of the greatest ministry opportunities happen quietly and without recognition -- how can a community of believers cultivate a culture that genuinely honors and encourages those who serve faithfully behind the scenes?

The sermon suggested that when you are serving within the way God has gifted you, there is often a sense of joy and purpose -- how do you discern the difference between a gift God has given you and a skill you have developed but are not truly called to use in ministry?

Pastor Bo closed by asking whether God would call you faithful with the gifts he has entrusted to you -- what is one specific, concrete step you could take this week to move from burying your talent to actively stewarding it for God's glory?