

TALENT: "USE IT, OR LOSE IT!"

(Luke 19:11-27)

...A common expression today is if you "Don't use it, you'll lose it." This little ditty rightly tells what happens to our acquired skills if we go very long without using them, we get very rusty.

...Jesus, while within weeks of His death and making His last journey to Jerusalem, told the parable about the stewardship of the Gospel. We who have received the Gospel are given the work of carrying it to others.

...During the interval between Jesus' ascension and His return, there is a great WORK to be done...the building of His church. This is what Grace Church is all about...our focus is "To Know Him, and to make Him known."

TWO QUESTIONS WARNING US TO LABOR WELL IN THE GOSPEL BY DILIGENTLY DOING GOD'S BUSINESS. Jesus will soon return and call us to account.

I. What Point Is Jesus Making In The Parable Of Stewardship? (vv.11-27)

- A. Jesus explains why He taught this material. (v.11)
 - 1. He was not now going to establish His Kingdom, but there would be a delay.
 - 2. He knew His delay during the interlude would be hard for His disciples. (Acts 1:6)
...Waiting is such a hard thing to do. God's time is not ours. His plan is perfect.
- B. Jesus, now near Herod's winter palace, pointed to his actions 30 years earlier as a basis for this parable. All who heard Him would immediately think of Herod Archelaus.
...When Herod the Great died in 4 BC, he inherited Palestine. But he needed to go to Rome and have Caesar appoint him. He was greatly hated by the Jews, for he had killed 3000 of them...
...Eventually Caesar gave him the rule, but not the title "King." Though put on probation he...
...When he returned from Rome, he rewarded his faithful friends and butchered his enemies.
- C. Jesus' parable urges us to invest our gifts, abilities, and time in to God's work. Work!!!
 - 1. It tells of the King's trust. (vv.12-14)
 - a. The king gave his 10 servants one mina each. A mina is about 4 months of wages. They were to do his business while he was away. "Investing."
 - b. "Do business with this until I return." (v.13) A command, this is the work!
 - 2. It tells of the King's test. (vv.15, 16, 18, 20-23) This trust was a test of whether or not the servants would be faithful and dependable in the "little things." (v.17)
 - a. The first servant was called to give an accounting of his work for the king.
...1000% increase. Wow. He is commended, "Well done!" He was promoted because he was faithful in a small matter. He gets a prominent admin role...
 - b. The second servant is called to give an accounting of his labors. (v.18)
...500% increase. He too was commended, and promoted in the kingdom.
...Faithfulness is rewarded. The reward is completely out of proportion...
 - c. The third man, is not even called "servant," just "another." (v.20)
...The sheer length of his review makes him the major focus, a warning!
...He is rebuked for having done nothing with the mina. He is called "evil."
...It appears that he did not even know the King. "Afraid." (v.21) Unsaved? He did nothing for his king. He lost everything...
- D. The returning king also dealt with his enemies. The judgment falls... (v.27) Hell.

II. How Can We Do The Business Of The King While Waiting For His Return?

...Remember the three gifts given to us: Time, Talent, and Treasure. "Everything for the Gospel."

- A. Work hard in the Lord's work. Make wise investments with your time, abilities and money. When you think about it, ultimately we will confess that we have done far too little for Jesus, when compared to how much He has done for us. (William Carey, his letter to his son: "I am this day 58 years old, but how little I have done for God." He was a missionary to India.)
- B. As we feel our failure in this, we need to remember our acceptance before God is not based on who we are or what we have done, but on who Jesus is and what He has done for us. Amen!!!
- C. Because of the Gospel, what we do with what we have is accepted in Jesus. He is not a harsh taskmaster, but a kind and generous King, who loves to reward the servants who love Him and seek to serve Him. This makes me want to serve Him more. "Always abounding in the WORK..."

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

1. So what are you doing with what you have? Hudson Taylor wrote, "A little thing is just a little thing, but faithfulness in a little thing is a great thing." Are you being faithful in doing God's work? As the day of the Lord return draws near, give yourself and all that you have to serving Him. How specifically are you using your talent (ability) here at Grace Church? Everyone should have at least one specific job. Please, for your sake, sign up and use your ability as we move forward this year in the Lord's Work.
2. We put the Gospel to work by carrying out our regular calling (work) in a way that shows the supremacy of Christ. The worker can do this with his labor, the educator with her teaching, the lawyer with his justice, the artist with her craft as long as it is done with the intention of bringing glory to God. "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinth 10:31)
3. Put the Gospel in your life to work. This is "God's power unto salvation," and it causes the kingdom to grow. It builds the church, by turning God's enemies into friends. Tell of God's love to your friends and acquaintances. Work for Jesus. Don't excuse yourself because of fear. Jesus is coming soon and you will stand before Him and give an accounting of your labor for Him. What will you hear from our Lord? "Well done?" You may, by getting busy and serving Him today.
4. Today you are both encouraged and invited to receive Christ Jesus the Lord as your Savior. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that if you believe in Him, you will not perish (Hell) but have everlasting life." (Heaven) Now that's GOOD NEWS!!!!

Life Group Questions

1. In Jesus' parable found in Luke 19:11-17, He calls us to labor in the Gospel and that when He returns we will give an accounting of our work. Knowing this then, what is it that you specifically do in the Gospel work at Grace Church? How does what you do advance the Lord's work?
2. If you are currently not serving in any position at Grace Church, why are you not helping and what can be done to engage you in some aspect of the work?
3. When you think of all Jesus did for you in comparison to what you have done for Him, what thoughts come to your mind? Paul's answer to this is found in Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." In what ways can you too put the Gospel to work in your daily life? Thoughts?
4. How is this parable more about faithfulness than giftedness? Can you see the difference? What is it?