



START WITH THE END IN MIND

Text: Matthew 25:14-30

1. We Have All Been Given Something (Encouragement)

- God gives each person gifts, talents, opportunities → everyone has value.
- Ephesians 2:10: we are God's masterpiece, created for good works.
- Talents in the parable = large amounts of money → symbolizing God's abundant trust.
- Gifts include time, people, abilities, personality, mind, opportunities.
- Warning: comparison robs joy, peace, and gratitude.
- God gives according to ability, not favoritism.
- What may be someone's blessing could be another's burden.
- Trust God's evaluation; be thankful for what you've been given.

2. We Have a Responsibility With What We've Been Given (Reminder)

- Question: What will you do with what you've been given?
- Servants with 5 and 2 talents: they *began* and *worked* → started immediately, put effort in.
- Work is required: God gives trees, but we make tables.

- Fulfillment comes through serving and multiplying what God provides.
- Third servant: hid his talent out of fear → represents wasted opportunity.
- Fear magnified leads to burying gifts; faith magnified leads to growth.
- Fear must be buried, not our gifts.
- Sins of omission: failing to do what we should is also sin.
- God doesn't call us to comfort, but to mission and courage.

3. We Will All Give an Account (Reality)

- One day Jesus will return → each person must answer for their stewardship.
- Judgment will be personal: not about family, church, or pastor, but *you*.
- Life is uncertain; tomorrow isn't guaranteed.
- Challenge: Build a *life* (impact, love, faith) not just a *résumé* (status, possessions).
- The third servant failed due to wrong view of the master (saw him as harsh) and lack of faith in his return.
- Belief about God shapes how we live and serve.
- Salvation is by grace, but true faith bears fruit.

Conclusion

- Serving God means:
 1. Remembering God has given us something.
 2. Taking responsibility for it.
 3. Living so we hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant."
- For believers: judgment is not to fear but to anticipate joy.
- Revelation 21:4: God will wipe away every tear; suffering will give way to eternal celebration.

Connect Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. Do you have someone in your life who takes every opportunity to enter into “sermon” or “lecture” mode? Is it you? ;)
2. What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

Study & Discussion:

1. The sermon emphasizes that *everyone has been given something by God*. How can we practically recognize and affirm our own gifts without slipping into comparison with others?
2. The third servant let fear dictate his choices. What kinds of fears keep us from using our gifts today (fear of failure, rejection, inadequacy, etc.)? How might faith help us move forward despite those fears?
3. The first two servants *began* and *went to work*. How do we balance trusting God with putting in the hard work required to steward our gifts well?
4. The sermon highlights that failing to do what we know we should is also sin. Can you think of situations where inaction may be just as harmful as wrongful action? How does this perspective challenge our daily discipleship?
5. If you knew Jesus would return tomorrow, what would you want Him to say about how you used your gifts and opportunities? How can that future vision shape your choices today?

Practice:

“Use What You’ve Been Given” Challenge

- **Step 1:** Each person identifies **one talent, resource, or opportunity** God has entrusted to them (e.g., time, skill, relationship, encouragement, finances).
- **Step 2:** Pray and ask God to show **one specific way** to use it to bless someone else this week.
 - Example: call or visit someone who needs encouragement, use a skill to help a neighbour, volunteer at church, share a meal, write a note of gratitude, give generously, etc.
- **Step 3:** Do it intentionally, not waiting for a “perfect” time — begin and go to work, like the first two servants.
- **Step 4:** At the next group gathering, share what you did, how it felt, and what you learned about using your gifts faithfully.