

## Creating with God: Talents

### Intro:

We are in this 3-week series called CREATING WITH GOD: TREASURES, TALENTS, TIME

The key idea of this series is that GOD CREATED US IN HIS IMAGE AND MADE US STEWARDS OF HIS CREATION AND OF his IMAGE SO THAT WE CAN BE PART OF HIS PLANS TO RENEW AND RESTORE PEOPLE, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, AND THE WHOLE WORLD.

You and I get to be part of God's creating work in restoring and saving humanity. You and I have been entrusted with powerful gifts. This is what is implied to be created in God's image. He put his fingerprint, footprint, wisdom-print, creative-print, love-print, everything-print in you so that you can be part of his plans to love this world. That is why you and I exist.

Last week we concluded that everything we have is his. We need to believe this to continue moving forward with this teaching today. Everything includes our Treasures (resources, finances, possessions), our Talents (skills, spiritual gifts, personalities), and our Time.

His image in us can be seen in the unique ways how he created you and how he has gifted you.

Today we will be exploring the idea of TALENTS (skills, spiritual gifts, personality) having the following question in mind:

- Do you believe that what you do today with what God has given to you has eternal implications? In other words, do you expect accountability for your life when Jesus comes back?

Let's read our passage for today. But before we read, let me clarify, the word talent in the story does not necessarily mean talents as in skills or spiritual gifts. The word talent in the story refers to a type of currency. I'll explain later.

### The Parable of the Talents

<sup>14</sup>“For it (the kingdom of God) will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup>So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup>But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup>Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. <sup>[e]</sup>You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>22</sup>And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, ‘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.’ <sup>24</sup>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, <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ <sup>26</sup>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? <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

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This is a fascinating parable. Remember, parables are not true stories. They are teaching aids that use everyday events to cast a spiritual truth. Every parable that Jesus talked about has at least two main characters: God/Jesus and you/me/us.

So, in this story we have a wealthy master that goes away in a long trip. This is Jesus who has entrusted his servants, you and me, with his riches both spiritual and material. This is a parable about Jesus' second coming, which is one of the non-negotiable beliefs of Christians. It's our hope and longing!

Then, we have three servants who each received a lot of money from the master. The instructions of what to do with that money was not explicit, but it was implied in the type of relationship each of them had with the master. This is a very important detail to understand the message of this parable. Each of them did with the money what they thought or knew the master expected them to do.

A talent was the heaviest unit of measuring, and it was used as part of the currency system in Jesus' times. People would know how much gold or silver was worth based on its weight.

Each servant received 5, 2, and 1 respectively. We can't tell exactly how much each of them received in today's currency. Some say that millions of dollars, others say that 20 years of salary. Either way, it was a lot of money.

Back then, a master would trust their money to stewards, household managers. Even though, it's not mentioned, the picture here is that of a steward. The word and definition of the role of the steward comes from the Greek word *oikonomos* (*oiko* + *nomos* = house + law = house ruler). This is where we get the word *economy* and *economist* from. Why is this important? Because Jesus is putting an emphasis on *the relationship and the level of trust* that existed between the master and the stewards. It was expected for the stewards to handle the businesses of the master while the master was away.

Two of the servants did what they thought they had to do – multiply what they received. Another did nothing with what he received.

In verse 19 we see that, “after a long time the master returned and settled accounts with the servants. There will be accountability when Jesus comes.

For the first two, it was exciting; they both double what they had received when the master left. I love that Jesus includes all kinds of levels of gifts. I love that there is a servant between the two extremes. Most of us most likely are number 2 or 1. Most of us don't get the super talents or skills. However, the expectation is the same. *The standard for accountability is the same.*

To the first two Jesus says: v 23 “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.”

This is Jesus' definition of success. Jesus seems to be impressed by how we use every gift we have received from him for his Glory.

Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Success is about faithfulness to God. Success is about knowing what God expects from each of us and responding in obedience to it. In order to love God the way he wants, we need to change our view of success. *We can be using our gifts in the wrong way, at the wrong places, and with the wrong motives.*

I know we all want to hear those words from Jesus. Imagen hearing from Jesus as he looks at you with a smile "well done, good and faithful servant." Imagen the joy you'll experience knowing that you completed the race. We all long for this but we also know that we have been given an important role to fulfill while we wait for him. And this is the core of this parable.

Jesus highlights the dangers of not taking this seriously as we journey through this life by showing the interaction and results of the third servant.

Verses 24-25

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, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.

We have here two issues of people that are not Creating with God.

- Not knowing the master resulting in misjudging the master's character
- And fear resulting in doing nothing with the gifts

The master's response is: v 26-27

"You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup> 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.

The master points out that the issue was having a wrong view, a wrong understanding of the master.

A wrong view of Jesus is rooted in judging what we don't know about him. A wrong view of Jesus can lead to two dangerous things: not doing what he expects from us and therefore, serious accountability.

This servant's issue was also fear. In this story, *fear paralyzed the dream*. In this story *the solution to fear is willingness to take risks*. For the first two servants, *taking risks for Jesus results in a great reward*.

Creating with God requires taking risks. What risks have you lately taken? What risks is Jesus calling you to step into for greater kingdom influence and impact? What is comfortable to you today that might be in the middle of taking risks for Jesus?

It's worth it to take risks. Jesus doesn't ignore the risks you take for him.

Going back to the gifts, which is our main subject today, we can see an intention here in this passage to get people's attention in relation to what the Master has given to his servants and what he expects from them. Jesus uses talents because it was the highest currency, the highest way of weighing and giving value to something. The point is in what the word talent represented. It was the heaviest unit of measurement. So, 5, 2, 1 are numbers to represent the generosity of the master. The abundant of gifts, the weight of his Glory in us. For the Hebrews, there was even a higher and heavier unit of measurement = God's glory. Not necessarily in relation to money. The word GLORY comes from the root word *weight*. Hebrews thought of God's glory as something heavy.

I want you to catch this. Jesus is using a parable about his second coming. So, what Jesus is trying to communicate here is that we have been given not just tools (gifts) to do something with our lives. He is saying that whatever you got is a manifestation of the heaviest currency – God's glory in you, so we're supposed to manage that with the highest care and honor. Nothing has more value than what the master has entrusted us with.

With this in mind, we can now talk about that manifestation of God in your life.

Your gifting, your skills, your abilities are that manifestation of God's heaviness in you. Those are things that God decided to give you so you can collaborate with him in the restoring of this broken world, in the creation of new and wonderful stories. Every gift matters because they belong to God, they are God's glory in you.

*The quantity or greatness of your talents does not matter as much as the quality of what you do with them.* You gift matters to Jesus as long as it's used to advance God's kingdom.

Wherever you are, whatever you do, God has you there for kingdom purpose. It's for his glory he has you there. Whether it's behind a desk or in front of a business. Whether it's building houses or teaching kids at a school. Everything is for his Glory.

Some of you God might be calling to step up and join the team at this church. For some of you God might be saying, get down from the audience and start playing. For others might mean to start exploring spiritual gifting.

1 Peter 4: 10 says "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

And Romans 12:6-8 says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your<sup>[a]</sup> faith; <sup>7</sup> if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

Do you know your gifts? Are you interest in knowing how God has design you to create with him?

I would like to invite Francis to share something about her story.

**The way you invest your life today has eternal implications.** God has gifted you with skills, passions, and unique personality to display his Glory to those around you. Your gifts are there for God to use so that others would see God through you and glorify his name.