

Parable of the Talents

by George Warnock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and investing our God-given talents with humility and faith to fulfill His purpose and glorify Him.

Duration: 1:25:45

Scripture: Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 7:24-27, Matthew 25:1-30, Luke 12:48, Romans 2:12, Hebrews 12:6

Topics: "Parable"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the parable of the talents from Matthew 25. The parable tells the story of a man who goes on a journey and entrusts his servants with different amounts of talents (a form of currency). Each servant is given talents according to their ability. The preacher emphasizes that God gives us gifts and abilities according to his plan and purpose for our lives. He encourages the congregation to use their talents wisely and invest them in the lives of others, so that they may bear fruit and bring increase to the kingdom of God. The sermon serves as a warning to not be prideful or discontent with the talents we have been given, but to faithfully steward them for God's glory.

Transcript

The Lord is good, the Jews will praise Him. He was no slave before. No man before.

He was His name. He was His mind. And He was not a man.

Not yet He came. In the most high. Our God reigns.

Our God reigns. Our God reigns. Our God reigns.

Out from the Jews, He rose with grace and majesty. He's our loving King. He's our eye.

God loves us so. He hears His prayers. He is kind.

He's so kind. In my heart, I will enter His court with praise. I will sing His hymns the day that the Lord has made.

I will rejoice for He has made me glad. He has made me glad. He has made me glad.

I will rejoice for He has made me glad. He has made me glad. He has made me glad.

I will rejoice for He has made me glad. I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart. I will enter His courts with praise.

I will sing His hymns the day that the Lord has made. I will rejoice for He has made me glad. He has made me glad.

He has made me glad. I will rejoice for He has made me glad. He has made me glad.

He has made me glad. I will rejoice for He has made me glad. This is the day.

This is the day that the Lord has made. That the Lord has made. We will rejoice.

We will rejoice and be glad in it. And be glad in it. Oh, this is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day. This is the day that the Lord has made.

This is the day. This is the day that the Lord has made. That the Lord has made.

We will rejoice. We will rejoice and be glad in it. And be glad in it.

Oh, this is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day.

This is the day that the Lord has made. Oh, the joy of the Lord is my strength. He gives me many ones and I thirst no more.

He gives me living waters, and I thirst no more. God is so good. He's so good to me.

He took my sin. He's so good to me. Now I am free.

He's so good to me. God is so good. He took my sin.

Now I am free. He's so good. He's so good to me.

Holy Lord God Almighty. As we lift our voice before you, let us shout it out loud. Holy, holy.

Holy, holy. Precious Jesus. We're so glad to hear you sing it out loud.

Precious Jesus. As we lift our voice before you, let us open up our love. Precious Jesus.

Precious Jesus. Gracious Father. Gracious Father.

We're so glad to be your children. Gracious Father. As we lift our voice before you, let us open up our love.

Gracious Father. Gracious Father. I'll just share a word with you.

Afterwards, with the others, we have something to share this morning. We long to come to that place where, from the time we gather, and all through our gathering, everyone recognizes the presence of the Holy Spirit. Not only His presence, but His desire to have His Lordship and in this.

We're pressing toward that end, we long for it, and we must never surrender that hope and vision we have. Coming to that place where the Holy Spirit is just here when we gather, in the place of Jesus. That's an awesome thing, but it's true.

That when Jesus was here, He would gather a handful of people about Him, and He would unfold the mind of God to them. He went away not to leave His people desolate. He says, I'm not leaving you without any comforter.

What He said in the Greek was, I will not leave you orfanos, from which we get our word orphan. I'm not going to leave you as orphans, but I will come to you. He's telling us so clearly that in going away in the natural, in the flesh, He would come again to abide in His Spirit.

The Spirit of God dwelling in His people, the Lord Jesus Himself, only in spirit form, abiding not in one person, but in many, with the same Christ. Not making you and I to be Christ, but we just being the temple, just the temple in which the glory of God should dwell. And, of course, it's one of our doctrines, but God grants that the day will be hastened, and it will not just be a doctrine, but a living reality in our midst.

Nevertheless, God does have to give us the understanding of His desire, otherwise we're not going to pursue it. There is no vision of people perished. God gives His people vision.

Not the glory and the vision, but that because of the vision we'll pursue it. That's the saddest commentary on end-time teaching, is the fact that people have a certain true knowledge of God and His ways and what He's going to do in the earth, a real vision, and yet, because of that, they're all caught up with the promise, with the vision, with the hope of what God's going to do. But oftentimes, not as a living hope, but something that's there in the mind, in the understanding, yes, we know God's going to do these things, but without the living hope and anticipation and expectation of it, we do not come to it.

So we need to encourage one another in this hope, because just having the doctrine of it, knowing God's going to do everything well, He's going to work everything out, don't worry about it, that kind of an attitude, you know, will land us in the same place that the Jews of Jesus' day landed in, when they knew that Jesus was coming, they knew the Messiah was coming, let's put it that way, because He was not yet born, and it was not yet named Jesus, but they knew that Christ was coming, and when wise men came and said, where is this one who is to be born King of the Jews? Oh, they said, over there in Bethlehem of Judea. And, you know, to show their knowledge, they quoted the Scripture, thus saith the Scripture, you know, Thou Bethlehem of Phrada, though thou be little amongst the tribes of Israel, yet out of thee shall he come forth, he shall be governor of my people. Wonderful, wonderful revelation, isn't this true? They never saw Him.

And I think we're in that day and hour when if we do not go on to pursue the vision until it becomes a part of us and becomes within us a living hope, the vision must become a living hope within us, otherwise we will not come into that fullness that God desires. And that's what John meant when he said he could have this hope in Him purify himself, not just the knowledge of the doctrines of the blood, the knowledge of the doctrine of justification, of cleansing, glorification, and of resurrection, all these things which God gives us as a vision to pursue until we catch up to it, catch up to the vision. But our problem is we pursue it and the vision seems to recede.

And we go after it and the closer we think we've come to it, the farther away it seems to be. And many are inclined to say, oh, it's a vain hope, you know, you're searching after a star, you're trying to attain to something that you can't attain to in this life. And true, we examine our hearts and we say that, you know, the more we gather for fellowship and the more I read and the more I pray, the farther away the hope seems to be.

And God does it that way. He just does it that way that we might continue to pursue, not to discourage us. Because all the while that we're earnestly following Him, there's an attraction that grows within us that we say, Lord, we're not going to give up.

If You slay us, we're still going to trust You. We must pursue the vision and think again of Sister Sims and the vision she had. She found herself following the Lord, but the way was rocky and strewn with great rocks.

Some of them she had to climb over and the Lord just kept walking on. He didn't stop when she'd come to a hard place. He kept going, and it meant she had to put in greater effort.

She was determined. She was going to follow on to know the Lord. But, Lord, why don't You stop and wait for us? You know, He wants a people who will love Him so much they will not take any hard place along the way as a sign that we're not supposed to go any further.

And nor when we come to the crossroads and we know we've got to go this direction and He seems to be going the other direction that we don't just wave goodbye. Thank you, stranger. Thank you for the nice talk we had.

Our hearts were really touched. And He starts to go down the lie of the road. He's just doing that so that we'll say, Oh, come.

Come and abide with us for the day is far spent. It's getting dark. We need You, Lord.

They didn't know His love for the Lord. But they knew it was a visitation of the word to them. Their hearts burned within them and they wanted to hear more.

God grant that He might have caused that. The portion of Himself that He's given us to increase and increase lest we despise the good gift of God because of the wrong attitude of our hearts. As Esau despised his firstborn for a mess of pottery.

Because he was faint, he was weary, he said, I'm going to die. I'm not going to make it. Give me some of that red pottery.

I'm not going to make it. God forbid that that attitude of Esau, though the thought might come to us at times, God forbid that it should take hold of me. Has it just taken hold of me? I just can't make it.

Demas said, I'm going back home. I can't stand this rugged life out here in ministry. I'll go back home.

Because he had a hankering after the things of this world that he wasn't finding out there serving the Lord. Demas hath forsaken me, said Paul, having loved this present world. I want to read a parable here that, oh, we know it well.

We've talked about it. I just felt to bring out a few more thoughts on it this morning. Matthew 25 follows right after the parable of the ten virgins.

These parables are warnings to God's people that he gives in love. He doesn't give these parables to bring fear upon us, but in love to caution us that because of the word of the Lord gripping our hearts, we'll be chastised in our spirit, convicted, chastised of the Lord, for whom the Lord loveth. He chastened us.

Let's not read the Scriptures with the thought that God is out to get me. God wants to judge me. God wants to defeat.

Bring me in to defeat. You know, that's an evil heart. It says, God, you haven't been good to me.

You haven't treated me right. It's an evil heart. Whenever we have a thought like that coming to us, God help us to realize it's the voice of the tempter trying to drive us away from the one who loves us with an everlasting love, the one who loved us so much.

He gave his life for us. He shed his blood for us. And died on the cross for us and rose again for us and is seated in heavenly places interceding for us, taking our position in the heavens as our heavenly barrister, our heavenly solicitor, our heavenly judge and lawyer.

He's both, judge and lawyer. How can you lose if the judge who's going to decide your case is your lawyer? You say, oh, that isn't fair. They wouldn't allow it here on earth, I know.

But somehow, Jesus is so one with the Father that though God the Father is the judge of all, Jesus is in such union with him that he's judge and lawyer at the same time. That's a remarkable thing. That when the accuser comes before the heavenly Father, there's one who's in total union with the heavenly Father who's become our lawyer.

And so though we might fear to go to God, the awesome God that we read of in the Bible, he revealed himself in a man like ourselves and is now seated at the right hand of God as our high priest and intercessor to take our cause before the Father so that we who can't do it in ourselves, we can do it through him. That's an awesome truth. But you know, it can become a doctrine and in times of stress and complaining, instead of turning it over to God, turning over to Jesus.

And I trust as Christians we don't bother with lawyers except perhaps for certain incidental business dealings that we don't know how to handle. But as far as getting lawyers to plead our righteous cause, let's forget that. Paul says, why not rather be defrauded? Why not suffer wrong? But if for some reason to handle some mistake or to handle some difficulty you have in business that you can't handle, you don't know how, and so you're calling a lawyer to do it, he's going to tell you, now you stay out of it.

You give me the information and then you stay out of it. I'll handle it. You don't go fooling around with things that you don't understand when it comes to the law.

So our high priest and intercessor says, now listen, you're coming to me for help. Are you going to stay out of it? Are you going to be meddling all the time? Are you going to stay out of it? And when we commit our way unto the Lord, God says, now you've committed yourself to me, are you prepared now to let me handle it? Or are you going to continue to put in your little bit of advice and counsel and you try and handle it yourself? You've got to commit it to me. He loves us with that great eternal love and he deals with us as his sons and he loves and he gives to us according to the wisdom of his own heart.

Now I want to read this parable. Watch therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh. That's the final verse of the previous parable concerning the conversion.

But it's applicable also to the parable that we're going to read, for the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man traveling into a far country who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one. To every man according to his several ability a

straight way took his journey.

And so the Lord Jesus, the man who's traveled into a far country, hasn't left us without divine help. But he gives unto his servants, as he sees fit, to some one talent, to some two, to some five. Every man according to his ability.

And our ability, of course, is determined by God's own plan and purpose in our lives. We're not all born rich or poor. We're not all born with great wisdom, great knowledge.

Or with great intellect. And that's determined by the Lord. And so according to what grace God has bestowed upon us, so he will give us certain gifts to enable us to function in life and in the work of the Lord.

He just gives us what he knows we can handle. And I know we look at ourselves and we look at others and oh, that great gift they got. And, you know, we feel a little bit deprived, I think, at times.

Here someone is saved and God sends him out as an evangelist and gives him great gifts of healing and great anointing. And he comes back with a glowing report of the tremendous results he had over there, you know, in India, Africa, somewhere. And his life is no better than ours.

In fact, we're inclined to believe perhaps he's lacking in a lot of grace. But somehow God does great things for him. We say, Lord, that's not fair.

We say it's not fair, Lord. So there's a danger of you and I, when we receive from the Lord little or much, either to think that if he gives us much it's because we're better or he gives us little because we're of no account. According to his own grace.

According as he sees fit. According to his own wisdom. And if we only recognize that when we say, Lord, you've given so much to this other man, you haven't given me much, you're judging God for lack of wisdom.

You're saying, God, if you really were, if you really had the fullness of wisdom and love and truth, you'd give me as much as you gave him. I deserve as much as he deserves. And God wants us to know we don't deserve anything.

We don't deserve a thing. It indicates a pride in our hearts. If we say, Lord, you gave him that great gift, why didn't you give me that great gift? I deserve it.

We think we deserve it. So we're proud in heart. I know the man who received five talents can become proud too.

In fact, I think he can become more proud than the man who received the one talent. Because we're inclined to think if God gives us much that we deserve it. Then why does the Lord reprove the man who received only the one talent? Well, we'll come to that later on.

But right here I want to mention that the reason the Lord gives this parable and all parables is like I said earlier, not to bring us under condemnation, but because he loves us. Because he loves us. He deals with us according to his love and according to his justice and according to his wisdom.

So if we feel we've received little from the Lord, if our hearts are right and we're truly humble, we say, thank you, Lord, that you gave me this grace from you. And that you didn't give me more than I can handle. You gave me what you saw fit for my life.

You gave according to your wisdom. I'm thankful, Lord, for this small thing that you've done for me. If we're truly humble, we just thank the Lord.

But you didn't give me a mighty gift of miracles and healing. When you saw that inherent problem in my heart and you realized that had you done it, I'd have made shipwreck. God's not saying there are more people in the earth who are faithful because they received five talents than the one who received only the one talent.

He's not saying that. But he gives a special warning to the man who feels he received little. He gives a special warning to those who feel they've received little.

Because he loves us so much, he goes out of the way to give us special instruction that we might learn from the mistake of this man in the parable. Don't think for one minute that you feel that God hasn't given you too much. It's because God doesn't love you enough.

Because God delights in giving to those who are in need. God delights in giving to those who don't have much. But because he's a God of great wisdom, he doesn't lavish upon the one who lacks wisdom and understanding, ability.

He doesn't lavish great gifts upon him because he knows that he would pervert it, use it to his own ends. He wants to nurture that one who is poor in spirit, that he might become rich in grace. He wants to nurture the poor.

There's a lot of emphasis in the scripture on how God delights in taking those who are nothing and have nothing and using them for his glory. And so here's just a little word of encouragement to you and I, if we've received one talent, to do what God said. To thank him that he was faithful in giving us just what we knew we could handle.

Crushing that proud heart that would say, you gave him five and me only one, I'm not going to serve you. God wants to crush that kind of pride. Which is there in the least of God's things.

But when they crush it, they'll discover that they can take that one talent and invest it for his glory. Not only make two, but they can invest the two and make four and invest the four and make eight and invest the eight and make sixteen and even surpass the man with the five talents. He loves us so much, he says, you're just not able to handle this.

I'm going to give you this little gift. Which is great in the sight of God, but you know, in our sight, because we're proud of heart, we say, Lord, I deserve more. Why didn't you give me more? Blessed is the person who will receive grace from the Lord and strength in their own hearts that you've got the greatest treasure in the world.

Because you have. You've got something from the heart of God. You've got something from the heart of God that God has deposited in you.

Isn't that the most of... Is there any greater revelation that we could comprehend or rejoice in than in the fact that we poor sinners of Adam's race, God saw fit to invest something of his own heart within us. I know it doesn't seem much to us because of our lack of wisdom and understanding and our lack of humility. We don't appreciate the great thing that God has done in that little thing.

What is that in your hand, Moses? God said, Moses is complaining. You're sending me on a task. You're telling me to go and deliver the children of Israel.

I've nothing to go with. Who sent me? I don't even know who sent me. God says, tell them I am has sent you.

In that name, there is everything that we need to do the work that God gives us today. Because I am. I am the life.

I am the resurrection. I'm the truth. I'm the power.

I'm the glory. I'm the wisdom. I'm the knowledge.

But what are you going to get me? God says, what's in your hand? Well, I just got a stick. I used to herd the sheep. But you see, he didn't despise it.

He didn't despise it. He needed to be taught of the Lord, but God was trying to show him that, well, Moses, you're just like that dry stick you got in your hand. Cast it on the ground.

Cast it on the ground and it becomes a serpent. More vile than ever. So we, you know, as God casts us down on the ground, we become a serpent, as it were.

We feel like a serpent. We feel we're nothing. God helped us to come to that place where we realize that this power that we want, this life that we want, is not by God showering it down from heaven upon us only.

He does that. But that we won't be able to appropriate that kind of power except as we learn weakness. Except as we recognize we're a dry stick.

Except when cast on the ground we become vile in our own eyes and vile in the eyes of the people. Vile in our own eyes and vile in the eyes of the people until taken again in the hand of God. And so this stick becomes a serpent and a rod of power in the hand of Moses to deliver a whole nation.

One talent that he gave Moses. Because he received it in humility and in obedience, he walked with the Lord. He did tremendous things.

I believe God would tell us that he's given us the little talent that if we'll walk in obedience with it, there's far more precious in his sight than in the five talents that he's given to others. He'll receive five more. You say, then why? Why does he seem to give more to the five than to the one? Why does he seem to bless them more than he bless the one? That's all in his own purpose, in his own wisdom.

But it's subordinate. And it's an encouragement, you and I. We appreciate the great gift of grace that he's given us, even in our lowest state. He that had received the five talents went and prayed it with the same and made other five talents.

Likewise, he received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received the one went and digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money. He despised it.

He felt you weren't fair, you gave the other more than you gave me. And he despised it. And after a long time, the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them.

So he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest me five talents. Behold, I've gained beside them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee evil over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents.

Behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant. He had the same word of praise for both of these men.

The same word of praise. You've done well. I gave you two, you doubled it.

I gave you five, you doubled it. Same word of praise. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew that thou art a hard man, weeping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.

I know that you don't really need anything from me, because you're God and you run the universe, and you get anything you want. You don't have to sow seed and bring forth a harvest, because you just reap harvest where no seed was sown. You can just create anything you want.

You don't need me. I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth. And lo, there thou hast it inside.

You don't need me. You're God, you're sovereign. You can do anything you want.

Somehow we rest in a thought like that, thinking we're honoring God. God, you can do anything, you've got all power. I know you've given me a little bit of grace perhaps, but it's not much.

Besides, you don't need it. The cattle in a thousand hills are yours. You've created the heavens and cast the stars into space.

Who am I? You don't need me. No, God doesn't really need us in that sense. But God is looking for increase.

God is looking for something in the universe that he can't just throw into space like he can a star. Do you realize that? God's looking for something in the earth that he can't just say let it happen and it happens. And so he puts a talent, he puts something of his own heart in people that he might have increase from it.

We say, oh God, you're great and you're powerful and you're wonderful and you're doing all things and you run the universe. You don't need me. And despite the gift of life and the gift of grace that he's given.

I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth. Lo, there thou hast it as thine. What a horrible thought to think that we could stand before the judgment seat of Christ and say, Lord, you gave me life in the earth.

You gave me the grace of life. And then in the process of time you imparted within me a seat of divine life. You made me to be an heir of eternal life.

But Lord, I've done nothing with it. I just come to you now, the man that you created in the earth, empty-handed. As Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not.

And gather where I have not straw. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, the bankers. And that at my coming I should have received mine own with interest, with usury.

Take therefore the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents. The teaching is that God wants us to invest what he's given. That's the simple teaching.

And the warning is, to you and I who feel we have little, not to despise it because we feel it's little and unimportant. I don't think God is saying that the ones who have received great gifts from me are going to be more in number than the ones who received the one talent. I don't think he's saying that.

He's saying I've given great gifts to many people and they've been faithful with it and I will reward them accordingly. But I'm warning you who receive little in love because I gave it and therefore it's precious in my sight. I'm just warning you to search your hearts that you don't despise it because it's little because you too can invest that and double it.

And then that which is doubled, you're going to invest that and double that. And you're going to invest that and double that. And if you're faithful, you'll be able to reap much more than the man who's received five talents and is content with doubling it.

It's a warning to God's people because he loves us. The scriptures are written to his people. The scriptures are for God's people.

Paul tells us that the scriptures are for those to whom it was sent. God sent the word to Israel and so God says they're going to be judged according to the scriptures because God gave them the scriptures for them. We're so inclined to take the scriptures and readily apply it to somebody else.

Israel did it. The human heart does that. What's this speaking of? Oh, that's speaking of somebody else over there.

But if this scripture is given to us, it's not for you and I to say, well, the man with the one talent, that's that Jew back there that Jesus had to deal with in the New Testament. He's now given it to us. Given it to us that we might learn from it.

That I profit from it. That I benefit from it. Seek the Lord earnestly lest we despise that little grace we have because we think it's not enough.

He hasn't given us enough yet. But God knows the principle of the divine seed that he's imparted within our life. He knows that principle.

And he knows that the principle of and the law of the seed is reproduction. And if what God has given us is something from his own heart, there is within that gift from God the ability to reproduce that in the end for his glory. And so the challenge is simply this.

That God has given every one of us something. Not to sit around waiting for the Lord to come but to seek the Lord earnestly that that little that he has given us might be nurtured in the soil in which he has planted it in order that it might bring forth for his glory. It might be nurtured in the soil of this earth to bring forth for his glory.

And so Jesus said in John 15 that he wants his people to be fruitful. And he shows us that the only way we're going to be fruitful is by abiding in him, walking in obedience, hearing his voice and learning to just abide in him then we'll be fruitful. But the fruit will not be unto ourselves but unto God.

Only God will give us all that true spirit of the vine. The spirit of the vine is to bring forth fruit unto the gardener. Bring forth fruit unto him.

Who are we to judge ourselves and say I'm not doing as much as somebody else because God hasn't blessed me as much. But rather to thank the gardener that he saw fit to graft us into this vine that we might be a part of a fruit bearing vine for his glory. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself.

And we're not laying upon anybody any condemnation saying why aren't you bringing more fruit. We're saying God help us to abide in him. For it will be revealed in the day of Christ that many who are doing great things in this life and to all appearances in this life are being fruitful and multiplying.

In the day of Christ it will be revealed that having been the works of man and not the fruit of the Spirit. And if it's not the fruit of the Spirit it will not survive the burnings of that day. Only that which is born of God's Spirit will come up for approval in that day.

So how can I invest in the earth? The first thing we have to learn is that we cannot retain what God has given us. Wrapped up in ourselves is some special gift that God has given me. We've got to learn that that which God has given me is for the benefit of us.

And we'll never benefit others as long as we're saying Lord I don't have enough yet when you give me enough then I'll go out and I'll try to minister for you. We can only benefit others if we've received a small talent by investing that little bit of grace in it. And so there's a rest in it because you're not striving to be like the man with the two talents or the five talents because you've only got one.

You're not trying to be like him. You're saying Lord I just thank you so much that I who am worthy of nothing you've seen fit to give back to me a portion of your own heart and life. God let me not despise you.

Thank you for that great gift of life that you've given me and helped me to so let that life work in me that because your life is working in me that manifestation of Christ in me will be an investment in the lives of men. It will be an investment in the lives of men. God worked his grace in us to such an extent that the time will come when people will come around and say I want to know more.

I want to know more about you. What is it? Where do you go to church? What are you reading? What is it that makes you different? Isn't it a sad commentary in our lives that we can mingle amongst men and often times we pass off as one of them instead of being recognized as something different. A lot of talking about it generally drives them away.

It doesn't attack them. We're not encouraging witnessing. We're encouraging people to come into union with Christ so that they might become witnesses.

There's a difference between witnessing because it's the Christian thing to do and becoming witnesses. The difference between doing and becoming. A different thing works having the life of Christ in us.

So you know, we don't advocate much witnessing. We encourage people to come into such union with Christ that you become witnesses. If we become witnesses then what we say will be a true witness of Christ.

But if we're intent on witnessing though the words might be right and the life wrong we're not bearing faithful witness to Christ. For our words are not nearly as loud as our actions. Somehow there has to come this selflessness prepared to lose her life.

We've got to come to that. It's going to take that if we're going to invest this talent, you see. We're going to show it in the earth.

That talent's in me. But I want to hang on to what God has given and increase it. Let God show us the way.

He discovers that the way to the way to keep our life is to lose it. He that findeth his life shall lose it. He that's trying to keep his life it's going to, it's not going to it's going to wither away.

And so this matter of investing it's a case of living down your life. Not a case of I want to become more spiritual and I want to get more gifts and I want to get more power. I want to become more like Jesus and oh yes, I know that we do want to be more like him.

But we're not going to do it by striving after it. Lucifer said, I want to be like the Most High. He strove after it because the Most High was a God of great power and authority and I want to be like that.

He wasn't desiring to have the heart of the Most High. What he wanted to have is authority and power. And that spirit is horribly present in the church today.

I want to be like God. I want to have that kind of power and authority. You hear it in all the kingdom teaching that's coming out.

A lot of it. We're gods. We're kings.

We're kings on the earth. We're going to rule. We're going to take over.

We want to be like God. God is going to have a kingdom on the earth and he has a kingdom on the earth. But it's the priesthood kingdom.

The priest is not a dictator. He's one who stands there in the presence of God on behalf of others. We've been talking a lot about the priesthood aspect of the kingdom.

God grants that that aspect of it will grip our hearts until we truly desire to be kings but priestly kings. We want to have authority with God and with men by becoming priests. And God help us to know that if we're going to rule and reign as kings we're not going to do it unless we're priests on the throne.

Unless we're priestly in heart. Unless we have hearts of love. Hearts of compassion.

Hearts of understanding. Hearts that are not concerned about vindicating myself and maintaining my rights and being recognized by others. But a heart that's so in union with the heart of our high priest that

we're prepared to give ourselves.

Lay down our lives. Not seeking our own. And this will issue forth in fruit.

This will bring forth a doubling of the talent. By laying it down. By investing it in the banks.

In God's people. And if we don't invest what God has given us in others we're going to lose it. And I don't mean by that we go around looking for people that we can buttonhole and make Christians out of them.

I simply mean by that that as we follow the Lord and obey Him and do His will therein we're making an investment in the earth. Didn't Jesus make an investment in the earth when He turned away from the people and set His face as a flint to do the will of God and went to Jerusalem and died? Lord Jesus You laid down Your life. We wanted You to help Israel.

We wanted You to deliver this nation. And now You're turning aside from the nation and going to the cross. But that's all You're redeeming.

That's all You're redeeming the world. Doing the will of God. So no matter how we might look at it God's requirement of you and I is simply to do His will.

Not considering self and the mind. Not considering our welfare. Considering His glory and the welfare of others.

That makes you a priest. A priest in this earth where we are. A priest right here in this little group.

A priest, a true priest, is selfless. He knows that he's there on behalf of God for the people. God gives them glory, yes, but He knows that that glory that sparkles on the twelve stones of the breastplate is the glory of God on His priest who caused the stones in the breastplate to be a reminder unto God that He must be faithful to the children of Israel.

For on those stones were written all the names of Israel. And as you stood before God those names would shine forth in the presence of God's glory. Reuben, Gav, Simeon, Judah, Benjamin, Joseph, those names would... He was carrying them before God.

These are the ones I'm concerned about, said Levi. Said Aaron. Not actually, but I believe in the purpose of God.

I bear the cause of your people on my heart. I don't stand before you for my own benefit. I stand before you because of Levi, because of Simeon, because of Reuben, because of Gav, because of Naphtali, because of Zebulun.

I stand before you bearing their names before you. I believe that we're going to see prayers answered when we can truly lose ourselves and invest our lives in His service. God is pleased when we lose that selfishness.

I'm talking, and I'm not talking so much about material things. I'm talking about spiritual things. We're going to lose that selfish ambition we have just to be a top Christian, to be a spiritual Christian, to be a gifted Christian.

Losing that and just knowing God's given me something and I just want to be faithful and do God's will so that that little that He has given me might become much in the life of others. Come here to the Lord. Bless this work of our hearts.

We're not going to close the meeting, but we're going to pray that God will do these things for us. Lord, we just thank You so much. We are Your people and the sheep of Your pasture.

You love us with an everlasting love and You love us so much, Lord, that You've given us a parable that has become a warning to the poor, to the meek, a warning to those who feel and know that they're not very much. Bless even we who have little. Because of the little we have, rise up in pride of heart.

Say, God, I won't serve You because You haven't given me much. Help us to realize, Lord, that with the one talent You've given us, something out of Your own heart. You've given it to us that at Your coming You will not receive back that which You have given us, but something that has brought forth an increase in the earth as we invest it in the lives of men.

And yet, Lord, we know as we go to men, they don't want to receive this word. And so sometimes we get discouraged and frustrated and say, what's the use? But help us to know, Lord, that as we're prepared to forsake our own ways and walk with You and do Your will, that though it might seem death to us, we'll discover that when I am weak, then am I strong. That when we have this treasure in earthen vessels, it's not to magnify the earthen vessel, but for the shining forth of Your glory.

We thank You, Lord, for the revelation of this secret, that we live by dying. We keep our life by losing it. We grow rich in You by investing the little You give us in obedience to Your will.

We become wise, not just because You've given us a gift of wisdom, but as we're prepared to recognize that in ourselves we are foolish and have so little that You're able to bring forth out of the weakness of our flesh Your own glory, Your own might, Your own power, Your own wisdom. Help us to know and to embrace the work of the cross in our lives, which we can't do by trying to crucify ourselves. By walking around in a morbid condition, trying to crucify those evil things we see in our heart, the only way we're going to bring fruit into You is to be prepared to walk in obedience.

For as we walk in obedience, You will set before us a cross. We don't go looking for a cross that somehow we might try and crucify ourselves, but help us, Lord, to simply do Your will and to seek You so earnestly that You'll be able to reveal Your will to us. Otherwise, we'll still go our own way.

But reveal Yourself to us, Lord, in such a way that we will know what Your will is. And then, Lord, give us grace in that hour when we're confronted with a decision. Am I going this way or am I going Your way? We will not stop to count the cost in terms of human value, but we'll count it in terms of the cross upon which Jesus died.

We'll face the decision. Will I go to Jerusalem and be heralded as King of the Jews and sit on the throne of Herod or of Caesar? Or will I do the will of the Heavenly Father and go to Jerusalem and surrender myself and lay down my life? Because He laid down His life. He found that life in the fruit of the earth in a people that have been conformed to His image.

And now at the right hand of God exalted, He's sending forth gifts to His people, graces, blessings, portions of His own heart. They're telling us that we too will triumph and we too will reign in life if we're prepared to do the will of God and go to our Jerusalem, not to sit on thrones, but to be true priests offering

up a sacrifice unto God. And Lord, we have discovered that in this new covenant there's only one sacrifice we can offer.

And that's not the works of our hands. It's not churches that we might build. It's not ministries that we might present to You.

For those You gave to us, the only sacrifice we can offer to You that's acceptable is presenting our bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto You, which is our reasonable sacrifice. And I pray, Lord, that You'll continue to work this grace in our hearts that we might truly be priests in the earth, priests who are prepared to show compassion, forgiveness, that we'll weep over the erring ones, not condemn them, because they fall and fall and fall and we're not able to help them because of the hardness of our heart. Give us priestly compassion, Lord.

We might cry unto You, Lord, for those who are weak and are stumbling and falling. Rather than committing them to the devil for his chastisement, we commit them to You, Lord Jesus, so that that heart of compassion will break Your people. We might weep over the fallen ones and lift up those who are not able to lift themselves.

We pray for Hubert at this time, Lord, that there might arise priestly ministry from Your people on his behalf, because we realize the accuser of the brethren is coming against him with accusations from the devil himself, declaring he's going to die and hoping that he's going to die, that they might be vindicated. God, give Your people priestly compassion that we'll be prepared. Lord, if it were possible that we'd be prepared to take his affliction, we'd be prepared to take his affliction, if so be he could be delivered from it.

Cause us to know, Lord, that we cannot pray affectionately until we're prepared to take the judgment and the desolation that comes upon the needy one. That we're not going to be able to deliver man until we're prepared to step on his shoes and take all the judgment and devastation that he has inherited because of the fall. Oh, Lord Jesus, You did that at the cross.

We can't do it because we're sinful and we deserve any judgments that come our way. Somehow in priestly ministry we would draw so nigh to Your heart that we would have the same attitude, the same heart that You had when You went to the cross to die for us and will be in us. That we too will be prepared to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Not as an atonement for their sin, but in compassion that somehow we might release the flow of grace and mercy that's in Your heart. That we might bless them and not curse them. That we might bless and not curse with a priestly heart, Lord.

Rather than dictatorial hearts, priestly hearts are prepared to go to the brazen altar and see ourselves slain there in the brazen altar in order that Your people might be delivered. Help us, Lord, to invest. Show to us the hearts of Your people.

In seeing the hearts of Your people we'll be able to meet with those of You. Show compassion to those who are distressed. Show love to those who are tormented, cast about by Satan, accused with many accusations.

Cause us to see the heart of Christ that says, Forgive Him. Because of the bleeding wounds He bears at the throne, He's able to say, Forgive Him. Oh, forgive.

They cry, Lord, let that be answered. And the world, Lord, is in chaos and devastation. And prison houses, because they know not the compassion of our high priest, because he's in the heavens.

Lord, You went to the heavens that that same priestly ministry that functions there might function in the hearts of Your people in the earth. Which, my dear Lord, I am so comforted by. Those who are bonded, those in chains, those in captivity, those in prison houses, derive new hope as they see priestly ministry desiring to take their place, if so be they might be set free.

Rather than saying, serve Your own. You've got what's coming to You. Cause us to know, Lord Jesus, that if that was Your attitude, we would still be lost in our sins.

We'd stand to take our place, even though we deserve eternal judgment. Then You took our place, laying down Your life in the ministry of Your love. The people here, Lord, that gather from time to time, as we go away, Lord, their presence will be much greater.

That's everything. Know that You'll break their hard hearts in this. Break them.

That soil, Lord, that's rotten. Break it, Lord. And surely, if our hearts were right, there'd be much freedom in this.

Break the hard hearts, Lord Jesus. Break up the fine ground. Truly, as You said, You desire to have a fruitful people.

You will have it. It is time, Lord. Don't cut us down yet.

Give us time. Let the gardener prune us and dig up our roots. Cultivate us.

Fertilize us. With the breath of God and with the feelings of God that we might be a garden that's fruitful to You. We don't want to come to the ground uselessly, living in this city all our lives and making no impact in the hearts of men.

Fertilize us, Lord. Cut around our roots. Nurture us.

Give us a little more time that You might bring forth fruit for Your glory. God forbid we should stand before You on that day and say, Lord, here's the life. You gave me eternal life.

Here I am. I've done nothing. I've not walked in obedience, but here I am.

Hear those awesome words depart from me. We don't understand all the implications of it. We know we're saved by Your grace, Your grace alone.

God, help us not to take out the teeth out of Your Word in order that it will not hurt us. Let us bruise this, Lord, where we need to be bruised in order that You might give health, and strength, and life for us to be a possible and fruitful people in the earth. God says if we fall on the stone, we'll be broken.

So in every desire that God has in His heart, He also gives us a certain responsibility to respond. I can't break myself. You can't break yourself.

We can sit back. God, if You want to break me, You can break me. But God says fall on the stone.

Fall on the stone. Give up. Surrender.

Fall down before Him. Total helplessness. God, I can do nothing for God.

Why does He play with the smiting of the cross? Well, from God, God is God. I might come forth and run. Out of death.

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