

November 15, 2020 10:45 service
Sermon Series/Message: Why Give- Gifts Part 2
First Lesson: Psalm 90: 1-12
Gospel Lesson: Matthew 25: 14-30
Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

We are continuing with our Why Give sermon series; a series were we are looking at why we should give in the areas of our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness and this week we will look at the area of gifts.

So in the earlier service I raised an important theological discovery; that when the church invites us to give in these five areas, this is not just a random list of kind acts that leaders before us have discerned that Christians should just do for the sake of being a Christian; on the contrary these are 5 tools are a plan of action that will lead us into fulfilling our mission of loving God and loving our neighbor.

These five areas are the plan of how we will advance the kingdom on Earth as it is heaven.

So in the earlier message the charge that I raised for all of us to do is to a mindset shift to how we understand and live out our membership vows individually; to understand

that these five areas hold a tremendous weight to our bottom line.

These five areas are vital if we want love to prevail.

Because as I shift to today's times, as a church, as a people, we can see that right now it appears that evil and oppression is still prevailing.

Yes we have made some gains as a people when it comes to raising awareness on the issues that are threatening the livelihood of the kingdom on Earth as it is heaven, but we still have work to do.

And the biggest work that I believe that we have to do is on unifying our efforts as love and righteous seekers.

And as a church, some of our founding leaders have already done some of the heavy lifting for us, by laying out the spiritual plan for us, that if we can learn to come together in the unification of our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness, then we have achieved more than half of the battle.

And turning to our scripture this morning, the way I am seeing and experiencing this parable is that you and I are

seeing essentially how to prepare for the battle as it pertains to our spiritual vows of gift.

And so giving some background for our parable this morning, The Parable of the Talents is somewhat parallel to the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:11–28).

And so **Talents** refers to amounts of money.

Each talent was worth about a thousand dollars. Today the term “talents” is used to mean gifts or abilities—a fact which gives added though originally unintended significance to the story.

So comparing the two parables; in both cases, money is given to servants, the reports of three are recorded, the first two are commended, and the third is condemned for hoarding his money rather than using it.

On the other hand, the differences are numerous.

Here one servant is given **five talents**, another **two**, and another **one—to each according to his several ability** (v. 15).

In Luke, ten servants each receive a pound.

In Matthew, the first servant doubles his five talents, and the second doubles his two talents.

In Luke, the first reports that his pound has gained ten pounds, the second that his has gained five pounds.

Now the commendation is exactly the same for the two in Matthew, who did equally well.

The one who doubled his two talents was given exactly the same commendation as the one who had doubled his five talents, for they both had worked equally hard. The master said: **Well done, good and faithful servant** (vv. 21, 23). He did not reward them for their cleverness or skill. Only two things were demanded of them: that they be good and faithful.

Now the servant who did nothing blamed his master for his own failure (v. 24–25).

Because of his selfish, sinful attitude the master addressed him as **wicked and slothful servant** (v. 26). The second adjective literally means “shrinking, hesitating,

timid.” These attitudes can frustrate effective Christian service (cf. Rom. 2:11).

Verse 29 states a truism of life. The one who uses his talents gains more; the one who fails to use what he has soon loses it.

Making the ultimate lesson from this parable reveal that really valuable things in life can only be retained as they are employed and exercised. The one who fails to use his talents will gain only eternal loss (v. 30).

So transitioning this parable into the times we are in today as it pertains to our monetary gifts, there are many lessons that I believe we can learn.

The first takeaway that really resonated with me as it pertains to giving is that there is no gift that is too small for God.

In church tradition, it has always been stressed from my experience for people to give 10 percent of everything that they make.

What statistics have shown in churches across the globe is that there is normally only a very small percentage of church congregations who are able to do this.

As a result, those who can give, but is not at the ten percent mark, tends to hold onto their gifts like our man in our parable with the one talent who buried it instead of making a profit off of it.

They tend to hold onto their offering out of guilt that they did not give the ten percent offering; thereby deeming their smaller offering as useless or not honored by God.

However, scripture indicates not just in this passage, but in other passages such as the widows mite, that God is more interested in the giver's heart.

Therefore, if our hearts and intentions are to give cheerfully and earnestly to the mission of God, then the great God of the mustard seed will bless our offering, expand it and anoint it.

As I stated in my earlier message that to understand the potential of our faith, we have to understand the power of our seed.

Like every seed, it needs to germinate; the seeds that we will plant by way of our gifts will also germinate.

So when we give, all we have to worry about is giving with the right spirit.

You and I will never fully know or understand in this lifetime the full magnitude and impact of our gifts and that is ok.

For our role is not to understand the impact, our role as a church is to make an impact.

Which leads me to the main point that this parable teaches us is that if we do not invest in the areas of our faith not just monetarily, but in the other 4 areas of our spiritual action plan of prayers, service, witness and presence, then our work is in vain.

For the kingdom on earth will not advance;

The oppressive and evil systems will not be overturned;

And if I can be candid with you, as if there was ever a time

where I wasn't....but it occurred to me as I survey the land

around us and the times we are in, that evil always seems to

have a plan....doesn't it?

In fact evil in my eyes seems to be quite proficient in its plan. Sort of like in the story of Job chapter 1 when God and Satan is having a dialogue; The Lord said to Satan,^[c] “Where have you come from?” Satan^[c] answered the Lord, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.”

That story reveals to me just how proficient, effective and smug evil really is;

For evil to know that all it has to do is go to and fro the earth; that it would easily entice humanity; as easy as taking candy from a baby;

In fact from my perspective evil banks on humanity not being prepared for when it strikes;

Evil relies on humanity to be like that of the man who buried the talent altogether.

So if you are hearing the urgency in my voice is because I believe that we are in an urgent situation folks;

For evil seems to have no problem unifying financial efforts, plots and schemes to keep the world in its deceptive grips;

Now it is time for the church and all followers of love and light to do the same.

It is time that we unify our prayers church,

It is time that we unify our financial resources,

It is time that we unify our presence,

It is time the we unify our witness,

It is time that we unify our service and more to make a statement and stance that love is here and here to stay.

And the biggest takeaway for those who may find this charge challenging or intimidating is that the parable teaches us that when we make the time and effort to invest in our spiritual action plan in this manner, God meets us where we are and multiplies our investment.

God multiplies everything we invest in as it pertains to our faith and it never returns void.

So the work that everyone is talking about in today's time that we have to do as a country as it pertains to unification, I believe the church already has a solid plan on how to achieve this and it exists within our membership vows.

Now it is up to decide is our missional vision to share God's love to all and plant seeds that would bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; (Isa 61:1) worth the investment?