

Using Our Talents Brings Eternal Rewards

'We must all appear before the Judgement seat of our Messiah so each one may receive their wages according to what they have done in the body, whether good or bad' (2 Corinthians 5:10).

'Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him' (Colossians 3:17).

'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was about to take a long journey. He called his servants together and entrusted them with his property. To one he gave five talents, to another he gave two talents, to another one talent – each in proportion to his ability, then he left the country. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them and he gained five talents more, and likewise he who had received the two talents – he also gained two more, but he who had received the one talent went and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled his accounts with them. He who had received the five talents came and brought him five more ... His master said to him, "Well done, you good and faithful servant! ... Enter into the joy of the Lord." He who had the two talents came forward ... "Here I have gained two talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, you good and faithful servant! ... Enter into the joy of the Lord." He who had received one talent also came forward saying, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man ... so I was afraid and I went and hid your talent. Here you have what is your own." But his master answered him, "You wicked, idle and lazy servant! ... You should have invested my money with the bankers and at my coming I would have received what was my own with interest. Take the talent away from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will have an abundance, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away. Throw the good-for-nothing servant into outer darkness where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth"' (Matthew 25:14 to 30).

There are a few important facts in this parable. God entrusts us with His property ... our talents are His property! God allots talents according to our personal ability to use them. God is going to settle His accounts with each one of us individually. There is a principle in this parable; it is not the amount of talent God gives us that is important, but what we do with it, is what the Lord is interested in. He does not ask more from us than what we are able to produce, but He does trust us to use what He has given us. We can see in this parable, the third man was a servant, a believer, but he acted with laziness and therefore wickedness. He was a servant of the Lord or in our day he would be called a Christian, but he was sadly thrown into hell because he was lazy, disobedient and did not use his talents. That may seem very harsh, but it is scriptural. The man with the one talent believed God was too hard to judge righteously. We must remember God is the Righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4:8). Mr 'One-Talent' was so afraid of what he believed would be an unjust judgement, he did nothing with his talents but he buried them. God considers those who refuse to use their talents as wicked and lazy. Being fearful is no excuse. It is not unscriptural to receive interest on our investments. If your brother or sister is in need, do not ask interest, but if we are investing in a business venture, we are entitled to our share of the interest.

We can see in church where the talented people who choose to use their talents receive more and they increase their talents, whereas the ones who do nothing, lose even what they do have. We need to regard the 'one talent' person just as importantly as the multi-talented people. Not everybody is multi-talented, although some are. Often musicians can play several instruments and sing. Often though, the one-talent person thinks they do not have much to offer. They think they cannot have their own ministry or build a church, so they quietly bury their talent, sit in church, smile and leave early. The greatest danger is for the one talent people. If we do not have our own ministry, any great spiritual gifts, if we keep feeling unimportant and feel we cannot make a difference, or God is not asking much and we feel safer doing nothing, that can cost us our soul. We could be lost eternally just for that. Some people feel, because they cannot sing or preach then they are not worth much so they do nothing with the one small talent they do have. That is so wrong because once they begin to use that one talent, then God will give them more! He said so. God has given everybody at least one talent, so He classes the inactive servant as lazy and wicked. Using our talents, doing righteous acts, serving the Lord faithfully with good works, opens the way for the Lord to give us eternal rewards, but on condition we use our talents for the Lord and His Kingdom, not for the world.

This is an appeal to all the 'one-talenter' out there who feel they cannot do much. Do not sit there while your salvation slips away. Make up your mind to become active while you still have a chance. If that applies to you, in your quiet moment with God ask Him to show you what you can do. The reality is, a 'one-talenter' can do many things, but sometimes they do not because the fact is, they probably are a little lazy (I really cannot be bothered), or maybe they are a little selfish (I really want time to myself), or too proud (why should I?). If the one-talent people cannot do business for themselves, then they could 'give the talent to the bankers'. What would that mean? You can invest your talent in someone else's ministry, but choose a ministry that is

producing spiritual fruit. One of the hardest things for leaders to find is loyal staff who will serve the Lord with gladness. We all must be willing to be servants to one degree or another. When we serve faithfully, we receive the same rewards as the person we serve.

If you are genuinely at a loss as to what you can do, here are some simple ideas to help get you get started. To serve God within the church you could help with young children in the church; help the disabled in the church; help a busy mother give her baby a bottle; shake hands with people as they come into church; help clean the church; pray for the church leaders and others in the church; visit the sick; visit people in prison or write them encouraging letters; take charge of the 'birthday roster' in your church so those having birthdays always receive a card or a mention; help with after-service tea and coffee; take a cuppa to a person in a wheelchair; speak to people who are new to your church; offer to drive people to and from church; offer free haircuts to the elderly, disabled or financially struggling young parents; start a recycled clothes fund for the children within the church. When one child grows out of their clothes, the parents can go to your fund and swap the small clothes for larger clothes, then the smaller clothes can be passed onto smaller children; learn sign language so you can interpret sermons and songs for the deaf; draw the cover for the weekly newsletter; offer to type up the sermon for the pastor; serve communion; take up the offering or change the message on the notice board. There are so many other tasks that need doing, it would fill a whole page just listing them. There is plenty that a 'one-talenter' can do, so if you take up the challenge, you would find yourself so busy, you would wonder why you ever felt you could not make a difference. Every person has their place in the Kingdom of God – it is just a matter of finding it.

It does not matter if people do not know our name or what we do – God knows who we are and what we are doing, and it is He Who rewards us. 'They who plant and they who water are the same, but each will receive their own reward according to their own labour' (1 Corinthians 3:8). When Jesus was addressing the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, He knew what they were doing. Five churches were serving Him faithfully but two churches were half-dead and lukewarm. It is up to us to remain active, spiritually alive and spiritually red-hot. The last church mentioned in Revelation was lukewarm because they were wealthy and that made them complacent, spiritually poor and naked. "I know your works, your toil and your perseverance ... You have persevered and endured for My name's sake and have not grown weary" (Revelation 2:2 & 3). "I know your works, oppression and your poverty but you are spiritually rich ... Be faithful until your death and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:9 & 10). "I know your works and the evil city where you dwell ... but you hold firmly to My name and did not deny My faith" (Revelation 2:13). "I know your works, your love, faith, service, patient endurance and I know your last works are more than the first" (Revelation 2:19). "I know your works. You have a reputation of being spiritually alive but you are dead. Wake up and keep the things that remain which you were about to throw away, for I have found no works of yours perfected before my God" (Revelation 3:1 & 2). "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door no one can shut. You have a little power and have kept My Word and did not deny My name" (Revelation 3:8). "I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot but because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of My mouth. You say, 'I am rich and have gotten riches and have need of nothing', but you do not realise you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. I (the Lord) counsel you to buy from Me, gold refined by fire so you may become spiritually rich. Receive white garments so you may clothe yourself and the shame of your spiritual nakedness may not be revealed. Buy from Me 'eye salve' to anoint your eyes so you may see spiritual things. As many as I love I reprove and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent" (Revelation 3:15 to 19).

The 'eye salve' was to open their spiritual eyes to see the importance of spiritual matters. 'Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear' (Matthew 13:16). The white garments (wedding clothing) Jesus was speaking about here are the righteous works of faithful people. One of the rewards we will receive is a special 'wedding garment' to wear to the Lamb's Supper or the Wedding Feast that is to come after Judgement Day. All born-again believers are called to attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, but very few will be chosen to enter because they will not have used their talents enough to attain the appropriate garments. If we do no work for the Lord then we will not have a 'wedding garment' and we will be forced to leave. 'The wedding was filled with guests. When the King came in to see the guests He saw a man who did not have on wedding clothing and He asked him, 'Friend, how did you get in here not wearing wedding clothing?' He was speechless. Then the King said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away and throw him into the outer darkness where there is weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, for many are called but few are chosen' (Matthew 22:10 to 14). 'Let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Let us give the glory to Jesus for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready. She was permitted to array herself in bright, pure, dazzling fine linen, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of God's people' (Revelation 19:7 & 8).

Amen and God bless you.

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