



Thursday

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Prepared for you by

Intern Pastor Jack Busche

Matthew 25:14-30

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Reading this passage, it is tempting to turn the message of the talents into a simple message of stewardship, that is, that we are given our time, talents, and money, and we should not hide them from the world but rather use them for the glory of God. This perspective on this parable is not wrong, nor is it even a stretch – it is just that it misses the point of who is investing in who in the first place. We read this passage, and we immediately turn our attention to the servants of the master, who invest much, invest less, or invest nothing of the little they started with, and we want to assign these roles to the people in our congregations and in our communities. *Those* people, the ones who hide their talents and treasure by our accounting, are shamed and those who look at their own accomplishments think of themselves as the wise investor who doubled the huge sum of the master. But who is risking more? The slaves, who did not earn the initial investment? Or the master, who is the one who stands to gain or lose the most from their actions? In truth, if God is the master, and we are the slaves in whom God invests, we are a losing proposition. Rather than a sure bet, guaranteed to double on investment, we are consistent and continual loss leaders for God. We are promised life, we are given a sure guide for behavior, and we not only bury what we’re given but we actively destroy it. God invests in us, and our response is that we insist that everything we have we achieved for ourselves. This parable is about using our gifts, and giving the gift that we have been given, but it reveals more about God than it does about us, a generous and abundant God who invests freely and is calling us to the work in the fields.