

Faithful Stewards of Peace | Matthew 25:14-30

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[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daly preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. All right, well, good morning, everyone. We're keeping warm, enjoying being safe with that ice and everything.

I absolutely love how I can see all the trees and the plants with all the little frost going on. You get some good pictures with that. So, well, today is the second Sunday of Advent, where we are, our theme today is about peace.

And I want us to open our Bibles today. I want us to go to, we're gonna go to, the Gospel of Matthew chapter 25.

And it's gonna be through verses 14 through 30. Couple of weeks ago, we did the parable of the 10 virgins, where we learned about, there is this scene of these virgins.

[1:14] Some of them had the oil that was necessary in preparation for the return of the bridegroom. And today we're gonna see a similarity with the parable of the talents, and this ties in to peace.

When we think of peace, we think of Christ as the prince of peace. We think of the peace, or at least we should, the peace that surpasses all understanding.

In knowing the Lord, there is a peace that comes from Him. When we think of those words, surpassing all understanding, a lot of us think of, well, how we try to understand everything.

We try to understand ourselves, other people, and how does that going? Let me think about it. But a peace that surpasses all understanding is the kind of peace that we all search for, something that we need that comes from the Lord.

What I wanna do, let's go ahead and pray. The title of this sermon is Faithful Stewards of Peace. And let's bow our heads and let's pray together.

[2:30] Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time and this opportunity for us to gather in your name. We know that you are here with us this morning, and we pray that truth is spoken here, and that lives are transformed.

We pray, Father, that there will be a moving of the Holy Spirit, and that we'll take to heart this idea, this advent theme of peace.

Be with us and help mold us into who you want us to be, and help us to recognize that you are the God of promises and fulfillment of all of your prophecies.

It is in times like this where we think about the Christmas spirit, we think of all, just all the busyness that goes on in the holidays, but may we focus and fixate our minds and our hearts on you in preparation and anticipation and waiting and expectancy.

And in the same way that traditionally we focus on the first coming of Christ, may we continue to rely on you, that you keep your promises, that you are the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that we need you, we rely on you, and may we fully trust in you all the days of our lives.

[3:59] It is in Jesus' name that we pray, and we all say together, amen. So let's turn to our ESVP Bibles. It's gonna be on page 987, Gospel of Matthew chapter 25, verses 14, so it's that next slide on there, verses 14 through 30.

And we start off, I want you to keep in mind the scene of what is going on here. Remember, in chapter 24, this is where Jesus was saying that no one will know the time or the hour in which he

returns.

And a couple weeks ago, I made a real fun joke for those of you who go to the plaza in for the Men's Bible study, you'll appreciate this joke. There is a book that's out there called 88 Reasons Why Christ Will Return in 1988.

And it's real good humor because when we think about it, you can make a lot of money by predicting unsuccessfully, the time in which Jesus will return.

Many people have said it was gonna be the year 2000 or 1999, and I just love that title, 88 Reasons That Jesus Will Return in 1988. And it's a book still out there, and it's something that we have got to remember when we think of scripture, that no one knows the time or the hour in which Jesus Christ will return, but we know that God knows when that time will be.

[5:33] And it will be done in such a way where it will fulfill the prophecies. So keeping that in mind, let's go to that verse 13.

It's kind of awkward if you think of starting a four, four it will be, what is the four? So verse 13, it begins, watch therefore Jesus is reiterating, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

So is it gonna be in 2040? Is it gonna be in 2032? No one knows the hour. In verse 14, it says, for it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted them to his property.

To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

He who had received the five talents went away at once and traded with them. And he made how many talents more? Five more talents. So also he who had two talents made how many more?

[6:47] Two more talents, right? But he who had received the one talents went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of the servants came and settled the counts with them.

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.

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.

And he also who had the two talents came forward saying master you delivered to me two talents, here I have made two more talents, so pretty self-explanatory. Verse 23, the 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. He also had received 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.

[7:58] So what was he? I was afraid. And I went and I hid your talent in the ground, here you have what is yours.

But his master said to him, you amazing and incredible servant. No, no what did he say? You wicked and slothful, some pretty harsh words right there.

Slothful servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed.

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.

So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the 10 talents. For everyone who has will be given and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away and cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness in that place where there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

And when you read this on the surface here, some pretty interesting language. And this parable is one that is used in reference by many pastors, many Christians through here.

[9:11] When we're considering the context of this, we have to think of preparation, right? Jesus is saying, no one knows the time or the hour for the return.

Then you had the parable of the 10 virgins, right? Where they were waiting for the bridegroom to return. When we are looking at this parable, we have got to consider the same concept.

That it is waiting for instead of the delay of the bridegroom, it is talking about the time in which the master returns.

So you have this scene, the master is entrusting money, these talents to these three servants. So you have this image here, right?

One has five, one has three, and one has one talents. And he goes away, he does his business, and it's this idea of using what has been given to make more, I mean, in a literal sense, to make more money, right?

[10:22] And to present it back when the master returns. We also have to think that when we are reading this that Christ is talking about being prepared for his return.

And living faithfully in the meantime, going out boldly into the world, and using what God has given to you.

Now, certainly this can mean money that God has given to you. But let us also consider, I like to call them the three Ts, our time, our talent, and our treasure.

So we have the master, right? He gives his servants according to their abilities before leaving on the journey, that's the first thing. And two of the three servants, they go out and they basically double their money, right?

And the third one buries it out of fear. And very often when we're reading verses like this, let us think about how scripture so much speaks of how we, how people in the Bible are not to be afraid.

[11:39] Think of another example of Jesus walking on water, the extraordinary event that's happening. Would you go out onto the water?

Or would you be afraid? There are times where we are, but yet scripture tells us to not be afraid and to go out boldly. So the master returns and he rewards the faithful servants and condemns the unfaithful one, calling him wicked and lazy.

And the reason for this is because of fear and because of inaction, because when we find in the scriptures, you still could have put this money into an investment.

You still could have, it could have still accumulated interest, but you didn't. And that's very hard. I mean, for many of us, when we read that, we don't want to be that third servant.

At least I hope that none of us want to be that third servant. It is for us to consider what God has given to us and how we are to use that.

[12:45] Do we go out boldly into the world or do we bury what God has given to us? And so the implication here, this is talking about preparation, having confidence in knowing the Lord when we're thinking about us.

When we have a relationship with Jesus Christ, there is confidence in knowing Him. There is peace in knowing Him. It is knowing that Jesus loves me, right?

It's just like the fundamental, the basics. How many of you were taught, Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. It's so elementary, right?

Children can know this, but it's so important. When we talk about John 3.16, that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whosoever believes shall not perish but have eternal life.

That in knowing that what God has given to you there is nothing to fear. And it's a call for us to use all that we have been given. It is again, time, talent and treasure and using it for the glory of God.

[13:58] And this is connected because when we're thinking of Isaiah, when we had our scripture reading, our Advent reading, there's the call for preparation, making way for the Lord, for the first coming of Christ.

When we think about preparation for Jesus entering the scene, we think of Christ entering as a child, the word being made flesh.

The Lord fulfilling all of His promises and His prophecies by Jesus being born. It's making straight paths for the Lord and being ready for His glory to be revealed and in the same way that we anticipate, we prepare and we ready the way for the Lord, for the first coming.

We think of future promises, the second coming. And just as the servants were called to act in readiness for their master's return, let us prepare our hearts for the Prince of Peace.

And so it goes in then. What does this text mean? So it's that next slide here. We think about... Can we learn and interpret?

[15:20] Let's go to that first one. It says that stewardship reflects preparation and readiness. The master entrusted talents to his servants and it's an illustration of how God gives each and every single one of us gifts and abilities, responsibilities to steward faithfully.

Very often when we think of stewardship, we constantly think of money and rightfully so, but it's also how are you stewarding your gifts? How are you stewarding your time?

I know we think of time management and how very often time can get away for us if we don't steward it very well. What about your gifts and your abilities?

How are you stewarding those? God gives all of us gifts and abilities and it's our responsibility to steward it. So we're thinking of readiness, readiness for Christ's first coming and also his return. And it's how we've got to use what we have been given. When we think of it like this, God has given you everything. Are you going to give back to the Lord?

[16:34] That's a question that only you can answer. The second thing then is faith over fear. So the faithful servants, they acted boldly in faith.

They went out into the world and they doubled the money. In this sense, when we think of our own situation, it's a call for us to boldly go out into the world.

Well, how do we do that? We share in the gospel message, right? We share in our testimony and also in our everyday life, our work, our interactions with school, with students, with our parents. How do we represent Christ in our everyday dealings? So these servants, they trusted in the master's return and the unfaithful one was paralyzed by fear.

Now how often we think of children, you want them to walk for a moment, right? You want to get them to crawl and they don't want to do it or they begin to walk and they fall a few times.

[17:44] We can think of that as a way of saying, we'll get them to crawl a few times. We can think of that for literal children, but we can also think of how, for us in our spiritual walk, very often we can be afraid.

And I know how difficult it is, even when I'm saying this, I'm thinking of how difficult it can be to not be afraid but to fully trust in the living God and to trust in his timing, in his promises.

fear yet we live in a culture that is full of fear and uncertainty. The constant news like when we had recently hearing about the assassination of that healthcare CEO, what do you mean don't be afraid. It may not always be the easiest thing but it's still a call for us to trust in him, rely on him and know that God's got our back. God is with us.

Fear very often leads to stagnation but when we consider our faith there is a push as it were for us to act upon our faith. The third thing then is reward for faithfulness in Christ.

Living faithful, faithfully in Christ, there is that peace, there is that confidence that comes from the Lord. And if you think about it, one of the things that we see as the encouraging point is the two servants that were told well done, good and faithful servant. I know at the end of my life, I want the Lord to say something like that to me and I hope for all of us we can get that pat on the back as it were knowing that we have done what is what God has called us to be. But let us also be reminded that in all of this, we've got to know who Jesus is first and foremost. We've got to have that relationship with him believing in Jesus as the death burial and resurrection of Christ knowing that who Jesus is, Savior and Lord believing in his promises. We've got to have that faith first and upon that faith be moved to action. You hear me say the words doing good in the name of Christ and I stand by what I say that we are called to go out into the world and make a difference in other people's lives representing Christ. So the master says well done, good and faithful servant. Peace is found in knowing that God is with you and also fulfilling God's purposes with what he has given to us. The next thing then is the consequences for inaction. Neglecting our responsibilities to God reveals a lack of transformation. It says the unfaithful servant's judgment. It's a warning for us. We have faith as our foundation. Just as I've mentioned before when we talked about the parable of the soils, you shall know them by their fruit. That's how you know who someone, if someone's a Christian or not. It's not about earning salvation, but it is about exhibiting transformation by God's grace. So I want to repeat myself here. Our salvation is not about what we do. It's about what has been done for us and knowing this, we should bear fruit. That's what the call is for. So then goes to well what do we do with this? So those are the lessons. So what do we do with it?

[22:04] The first thing is to steward all that God has given to you. Reflect on your time, your talent and your treasure. Everybody has different levels as it were. Some people have more time available. Not that you have 48 hours a day. We all have 24 hours. But how you utilize your time may be different. Your talent, your abilities, your giftings and also your treasure.

I know when you're a college student, you usually don't have a lot of money. I might be eating raw. I know for me I ate raw noodles. I know for many of us did. Rice and beans, whatever it is, situation may change as you get older, you find your career, you're calling in your life. So reflect on areas where God has given you with the time, talent and treasure and ask yourself, are you stewarding them faithfully? The second thing then is to live in faith and not fear. That's another big one. Replace fear with trust in God's provision and step boldly into his calling for your life. God desires that all of us know him.

Do you realize that you got to make that choice first and foremost, right? God also desires that you become more like him following in the footsteps of Christ. Think about that growing in the knowledge of this book, this Bible, it's an amazing book. Read it sometimes.

But also in our words and in our actions with other people, I can tell you in my own walk with the Lord and the times where when I look back at my life before I knew Jesus Christ, it was a mess. And to be very honest, my life is still a mess. But there's that peace and knowing that God is working on me, God will work in your life, making you more like him every single day. Now, I'm not going to tell you your life is going to be perfect, but God will work in your life. And there's that peace that surpasses all understanding and knowing who Jesus Christ is. That is a wonderful thing. Knowing that God is with me, God is with you. Encourage others in the same way. Maybe you don't know the Lord. Maybe you don't have there's that song I've got peace like a river. Some of you may know that one, right?

It's an old song. Got a peace like a river for my soul. If you do know the Lord and you have experienced that peace, why not share it with other people? It's a call for you.

[25:12] The third thing then is to be a peacemaker in your community. Let the peace of Christ flow through you. I have a typo there in your words, in your words and actions. Well, one of the few times I have a typo there, but in your words and in your actions, just as Isaiah, the prophet in our scriptural reading called for paths to be made straight, take steps to bring peace and reconciliation where there is conflict. How often do we know about people who don't exhibit peace to other people? Some of us like fighting, I get it. But we're called to be peacemakers, right? Just as scripture says, blessed are the peacemakers. For theirs is the kingdom of God. So look for opportunities to bring peace, to have those discussions with your friends or families. Have you already had family over? With your at your house, celebrated a dinner? You had that one family member that you just can't stand? We all have.

We all have. Let's be honest here, right? What an opportunity to share in the peace of Christ with others, right? What an opportunity. And so again, let the peace of Christ flow through you. And number four is to multiply God's peace. Peace grows when it is shared. Use your gifts, your time, your talent, your treasure to bring peace to others through acts of service, through encouragement or my favorite one is just being present with people. Do you realize the peace that surpasses all understanding that comes from the Prince of peace? That's what the world needs. It's just like when we think of any, when we've talked about the hope candle, the hope that is in Jesus Christ next week, when we talk, when we, when we talk about the love of Christ, when we talk about the joy that is found in him, when we think of all of these things, these are things that are beyond our understanding. These are things that are supernatural. They are from the Lord. So why wouldn't we want to share that with others? Let this be a call for you to share in the peace of Christ with others and multiply God's peace and be intentional to share the peace of Christ with others. Do you realize that our God is very relational? Do you realize that? And in the same way, the Lord is relational with you. You should be relational with others just as there's so many of these echoes, the peace that comes from the Lord we are to share with other people.

So let us do that and think about those family members or those friends or your neighbor or your professor, whatever it is. Let us think about that. And so this week, I challenge you to consider one gift for you to think about how you are stewarding. Maybe it's your time. Maybe you're spending too much time playing video games. I don't have time for that. I know there was a time, but not anymore. I have too many kids to play games. So maybe it's playing video games. Maybe it's, you know, I need to really spend more time in prayer. Maybe it's your talent. Maybe there is a talent that you're just not utilizing.

Maybe you're not using it all. Maybe you need to utilize it for the glory of God. Be a steward of that. And same thing with your treasure as well. So how can you use your gifts and your abilities to honor God, but also to exhibit the peace of Christ with others? And so in all of this, let us consider as we close the parable of the talents that we should be those faithful servants using out everything that God has given to us from this simple parable.

[29:47] The servants using their money in a good way. They doubled it and they moved on in their life. Let us not be like the wicked and lazy servant. I don't want God to call me wicked or lazy in any, in any part of my life, but let us be like those two servants. Everything that they were given, everything we are given, let us use it for the glory of God and let us steward it. Well, let's pray together. Father, we thank you for the peace that comes from your son. I pray, Father, that we, you will help us be able to be faithful stewards of your peace, but also stewards of all that you have given to us. Every good gift comes from you as scripture says. May we recognize that. May we honor that. May we steward it well. Father, we realize that every single one of us. We've all been blessed in so many ways and we thank you for that. And so we pray that as we sing in this last song that we thank you for all of these Advent themes, the hope that exists in you, the peace that surpasses all understanding, the joy that is inexhaustible and the love that comes from you. But let us most especially focus on that peace that comes from you, knowing that you are with us and knowing that even though it may be difficult for us to not be afraid, let us move boldly in our life, leaning into that peace that is supplied from you. In all of this, we pray and we all say together, Amen. Amen.

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May God's blessings be with you.