

# THE MASTER'S PURPOSE

Bishop Martyn Minns

“It will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them.”  
(Matthew 25:14)

Around the time when Five Talents was birthed, Angela and I were invited to tea with Queen Elizabeth II... along with a couple of thousand bishops, clergy, spouses and other assorted dignitaries. It was a splendid affair.

We were escorted in through the front gates of Buckingham Palace and everything was magnificent. The tea itself was superb. But there was something strangely disturbing about the whole proceeding. While I enjoyed being among the elite for a few hours, it all seemed unreal and curiously oppressive. There was something about the way in which people were lined up to greet Her Majesty that troubled me.

It seemed as if the faithful women and men who had lived sacrificial lives and who had risked everything for the Gospel, were pushed to the back of the crowd while those who simply knew the right people were at the head of the line. Everything around us reminded us that this was a very distinct hierarchy and most of us would always be at the back of the line... and that's the way it was meant to be.

The world of Jesus' time was not that different. Power and property were in the hands of a small elite and most people were desperately poor. But instead of organising protest marches or leading a bloody rebellion, Jesus announced a very different worldview. It was a kingdom with radically different values.

What king would ever sacrifice himself for his people? Kings usually sacrifice their subjects, not themselves.

What king would wash his servants' feet or befriend his most despised subjects? Most monarchs keep their distance.

What king would start his life in a borrowed manger and end it in a borrowed tomb? Most kings amass fortunes.

Jesus turned their world upside down. It was hard for his disciples to grasp the radical nature of his message. It still is.

And so Jesus told lots of stories – parables – to help us understand. He talked about shepherds and sheep, farmers in their fields, women at work, and businessmen going on journeys. He described a world in which there are no “little people” – everyone is of eternal worth. It would be a world where we are not called to rule but to serve. The abiding symbol of this upside down kingdom is not a jewel encrusted crown, but a bloody cross.

In Matthew 25, Jesus shares three parables about this radical kingdom. And so I invite you to go on a journey with us. Together let's explore Matthew 25 and the Parable of the Talents.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Take some time to read through Matthew 25.

What stands out to you?

Does anything seem “upside down?”

What do you learn from this chapter about the Master's purposes?

