

WEIGHING YOUR LIFE'S WORK

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“Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” (Matthew 25:13)

This is Jesus' command to us, just before he tells the Parable of the Talents. Too often, I don't notice the context in which we receive a Bible story. Here, Jesus first reminds us to stay awake, to be “at attention” for the opportunities to serve God. Then he tells the Parable of the Talents.

We know the story well: each servant is given a sum of money to use while the master is away. Even one talent was a large sum of money. The master went away and left each servant to decide what to do with what he had been given. Two of them invested their talents; one buried his.

After working in ministry for 30 years, I sometimes feel like one of those servants. If I attempt to weigh my life's work, I might ask myself how I've done as God's servant: What have I been given? What have I done with it? What difference has it made?

Each of us is entrusted with different gifts, but the call to use them well comes to all of us. Sometimes I wonder if my work has made much of a difference – after all, the world is still full of poverty and distress. After preaching a thousand sermons, I still see people worshiping other gods: money, power, celebrity, even their favourite sports team! The Kingdom has not come on earth, as it is in heaven.

But right after this parable, I believe Jesus shows us how to weigh our life's work:

“Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” (Matthew 25:34-36)

We are not responsible for bringing in the Kingdom; only Christ can do that. Instead, we'll be measured on how we've cared for our neighbours, one by one. Have we shared what we have with a neighbour in need? Have we welcomed and befriended a stranger? Have we shared hope with a person who was despairing? Have we stayed awake and attentive to God? These are the measures of mercy by which our Lord judges us.

And that is how Five Talents works for a better world: offering help, hope and a better life to one person - one precious child of God - at a time.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

How do you weigh the importance or value of your work?

How have you seen Jesus among the poor or those in need?

Take a moment to reflect on Jesus' words: “Truly I say to you whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did to me.” (Matthew 25:40)

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, open my eyes to see You among the poor and needy. Saviour, you have been so merciful to me. Help me to show mercy to others in Your Name. Amen.

