

Monday Morning Rewind – November 3, 2008

Good morning! This past Sabbath we learned another lesson about what it means to be ready for Jesus to come: Being ready for Jesus means being busy for Jesus.

Rewind to Matthew 25:14-30 and consider what Jesus is saying to you in the parable of the talents. The “man” in verse 14 going on a journey is Jesus. Jesus called his disciples to the Mount of Olives and entrusted His “property”—His newly redeemed kingdom to them. He entrusted them with the high calling of taking His message—His gospel—to all the world for a witness.

In the parable, each servant received talents—or a weight of responsibility—according to his ability. One received five talents, another two, and another one. From this we learn the first key lesson of the story: **We don’t receive the same talents, but we do receive the same opportunity to use them.**

The same is true of spiritual gifts. (See Romans 12:6; 1 Cor. 7:7; 1 Cor. 12:4-11.) The Spirit gives different abilities to the followers of Jesus—some more than others—but it’s not the quantity of gifts that matters. It’s how we use the ones we have.

And that brings us to the second key lesson to learn from the parable: **Being ready means making full and responsible use of what God has entrusted to us.** Of course this includes time, talents, temple, treasure, and influence. But it means so much *more*. What exactly has Jesus entrusted to us? Here’s my list:

- His authority (I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome **all** the **power** of the **enemy**; nothing will harm you. – Luke 10:19)
- His power (I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even **greater things than these**, because I am going to the Father.- Jn. 14:12)
- His message & teachings (“I gave them the words you gave me”- John 17:8)
- His reputation (“You will be my witnesses” – Acts 1:8)
- His Spiritual gifts for service (“When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” – Eph. 4:8)
- The full measure of His Joy (Jn. 17:13)
 - Finding the lost (Lk. 15:15)
 - Redeeming the world (Heb. 12:2)
 - Obedience to the Father (John 15:10, 11)

All of this, Jesus has entrusted to us to further His kingdom! Amazing! And what are we doing with His property?

Two of the three servants went immediately to work and doubled the talents they received. The lesson is clear for Christians who are waiting for Jesus to come: **We’re to put our Lord’s possessions—His authority, His power, His words, His message, His reputation, His spiritual gifts and His joy in saving the lost—to work and gain a heavenly return on His investment in us.**

The servant who received one talent, dug a hole and buried it in the earth. He didn’t *lose* his talent, he simply did nothing with it. How many Christians are guilty of the same thing? They’re not necessarily doing wrong things, they’re just not doing anything.

The wicked, lazy servant proved that he didn’t love the master, nor did he know him. He didn’t want to provide the master with a return on his investment, so he didn’t. We, too, must beware a Christianity without risk, and a religion of rules and ideas that is absent of active participation.

What are you doing with the talent God has given you? Many say, “I can’t give a Bible study,” “I can’t knock on doors,” “I can’t _____” Well, what can you do? Everyone’s been given a responsibility—what’s yours? Can you write a blue card? Can you greet visitors with a smile? Can you phone a friend and pray? Can you cook? Little becomes much when you place it in the master’s hand.

I want to challenge you today to be ready for Jesus to come by being busy for Jesus. I also want to encourage you to pray and ask God to show you what you can do to make a difference for His kingdom. You don’t have to speak, or teach, or write books, or travel overseas. Maybe it’s just giving a cup of cold water to someone who is thirsty. Maybe it’s something as simple as what Johnny the grocery store bagger did to change his store.

On Saturday night at our vesper program, I shared a true story I had seen on the internet about a young man with Downs Syndrome who worked as a bagger in a grocery store. I called him "Luke," but his name is given as Johnny. I'm attaching the link to the short video here in hopes that Johnny's story will inspire each of us to want to make a difference. May God help us all to make full and responsible use of the talent(s) He has entrusted to us. –Pastor Randy

Click the link to see the video: <http://www.stservicemovie.com/>

p.s. Thanks to Dan Moore, Stephanie Drechsel, and all the volunteers and helpers who made Slime Time and our Harvest Party such a smashing success! Well done, good and faithful servants!