

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus the Teacher: "After a Long Time"

Focus Passage: Matthew 25:13–30

Other Passages Referenced: John 21:18–22; Colossians 1:26–27;

Sermon Recap

Whether it's a traffic delay, a delayed flight, or a delay in receiving information, we generally do not like delays. Matthew 24 and 25 tell us about the return of Jesus to fully establish His Kingdom. The "It" of Matthew 25:14 refers back to Matt 25:1 about how the Kingdom of God will come. In Matthew 25:13–30, Jesus uses the parable of the talents to teach his disciples what they are to do during the delay of His return to fully establish His Kingdom. In the parallel truths between the parable and the gospel, Jesus teaches that the master's delay in returning from his trip gives the servant's opportunity to practice faithfulness. The parallel gospel truth for Jesus' disciples is that Jesus' delay is our opportunity to practice faithfulness. What does it look like for Christians to practice faithfulness as we wait for Jesus to return? The parable of the talents gives three examples. First, we are to immediately accept the assignments Jesus gives us "at once" without hesitation (Matt 25:16). The word translated "slothful" that refers to the person who buried the one talent entrusted to him by the master, should more literally be translated "hesitant." Second, we must resist the temptation to become disgruntled or distracted by comparing what we've been entrusted with to what other believers have been entrusted with. Each of the three persons in the parable was entrusted with ample but different amounts of assets to work with, each "according to his ability" (Matt 25:15). Third, practicing faithfulness means we must take risks because doubling a return on investment involves some level of risk.

What assignment do you need to accept without hesitation, what temptation of comparison do you need to resist, and what risk is Jesus asking you to take?

Interpretive Helps:

- A "talent" was a measure, usually of silver or gold. It was roughly 100 pounds and valued at up to 20 years of wages for an average worker.

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.
2. Discuss how it went as everyone tried to take steps of obedience to what they sensed God saying to them.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ Matthew 25:13–30

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the parable or sermon?

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. If our lives and all that we possess are entrusted to us by God to steward for Him, how does the parable of the talents speak to you? Do you have an idea of what the Master would say if He came to “settle accounts” (Matt 25:19) with you?
2. How does the biblical concept of “stewardship” align or not align with your concept of “ownership”?
3. When you consider all that God has entrusted to you to steward for Him (not just money, but children, time, abilities, relationships, etc.) how are you investing for a greater return for the Kingdom of God?
4. Is there an assignment you hesitate to accept because you fear the risk?

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray with/for you.

Further Resources – Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org