Rev. Janet R. Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
23 Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, November 1, 2026
Scripture: Matthew 25: 14-30
Sermon: Time, Treasure, Talent

The Gospel of Matthew, in chapters 24-25, records the Lord's heart of compassion and love. This section of scripture includes the Parable of the Talents, final warnings, prophecies, and encouragements to His people prior to His departure. Jesus is delegating to them the responsibility, as stewards, to care for His kingdom. The Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30, impresses on them the weight of that responsibility and the serious consequences of neglecting to understand and apply His instructions. This is also a message to all of us as well.

The Lord uses the term "talents" so it is reasonable to assume that the owner of the talents was a wealthy man. He is entrusting his wealth to three people who become stewards of his money. One receives five talents. Another receives two talents. A third steward receives one talent. Each is given a significant amount of money. These are stewards entrusted with the care of the money. The stewards must know the personality and character of their Lord. He expects them to know Him well enough to follow His instructions. Those that do are richly rewarded. The others receive judgment. The amount given is based on each steward's ability. The first two understand the instructions and the character of their Lord. They both use the resources by "trading" to gain a profit. Each of them makes a 100 percent profit. Fear and mistrust of his Lord motivate the third steward. He buries the money in the earth and returns the original amount. The profitable stewards are praised, given increased responsibilities and invited to enter into the joy of their Lord. The untrusting steward is scolded, rejected, and punished.

At the beginning of the parable, Jesus shows us a master who is personal and generous. The master is personal in how he gives to his servants. He calls each servant in and speaks to each one individually. In addition, the master knows each servant's abilities. He gives, "To each according to his ability" (verse 15). Not only is the master personal in ***how*** he gives, he is also personal in ***what*** he gives. The master gives them, "…his

property” (verse 14). This gift is gracious and generous. Years of wages are offered in an amazing act of grace and trust.

The parable opens with a generous, personal, gracious master who calls, knows, equips, and commissions his servants.

This is the God Jesus came to reveal His love and forgiveness in a world full of misconceptions about God. God is the one who created you and made you the way you are. He is the one who forgives you and claims you in Christ and makes you a member of His Kingdom. He is the one who provides you with gifts of His Spirit. He is the one who commissions you to serve where you can be productive.

When Christ returns, He will reward you for doing what He has created, equipped, and commissioned you to do. God has an overflowing generosity which is personal and powerful in our lives. He will not abandon the lost or break the broken. Rather, He invites all people to come to know the wisdom of His love and healing touch.

God is not our taskmaster. He is a Savior. Not only has He saved us from sin, but He has equipped us with gifts and given us talents according to our ability and promises to rejoice with us in those works when He returns.

Knowing God means we know ourselves as His children, forgiven of sin and equipped for service in the world. To know the joy of service in this world now is to know the joy of the Master both in this world and in the next.

The ministry of Jesus, however, reveals a different kind of God. God did not come to get. He came to give. In His ministry, Jesus proclaimed and enacted the year of the Lord’s favor. He cleansed lepers, healed the sick, cast out demons, and raised the dead. God did not come to get. He came to give.

Unfortunately, the religious leaders of the day used their power to get Jesus. Jesus died at the hands of a corrupt and abusive religious system. When God raised Jesus from the dead, however, He revealed the true nature of His rule: To bring forgiveness, life, and salvation to a fallen world.

The Church is the Body of Christ who gives. It should not be an institution that uses power to get from people, rather it is the place where God gives to His people who then gives to others in self-sacrificial love.

If you read the parable more closely, you will see this vision of God and His Kingdom. Notice how Jesus is less interested in stewardship and more interested in the relationship people have with their God. The error of the unfaithful servant is not that he did not use his money. It is that he believed a

lie about God. At the close of the parable, the unfaithful servant confesses his understanding of God. He says, “I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed” (verse 24). Can you hear his misconception? Instead of a God who gives, he believes in a god who demands and takes and fears God.

The tragedy of this parable is not the failure to serve. It is the failure to truly know your Savior. Because the servant did not know his master and his kind and generous heart.

Christ has entrusted His church with gifts and those gifts are to be employed for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and for His kingdom’s sake. We don’t belong to ourselves, we belong to Him, what we own doesn’t belong to us, it belongs to Him, all that He has given us, He has given us so that we might glorify Him and that we might do good to our neighbor. The point here is that Christ has furnished all his people with personal resources for the sake of building up His kingdom.

God gives us the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we might bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit and Jesus reminds us here the reason that God gives us resources is so that we might bear fruit. That’s why we were given resources in the first place. It’s part of an expression of our love and loyalty to the Lord who saved us by grace.

God wants our time, our treasure, and our talents as we serve Him. This is not some story about earning our salvation. To both of these faithful servants he gives a blessing and it’s a beautiful blessing, look at the end of 23, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

Notice the generosity of the master here. Jesus was telling his disciples that if you want positions of importance in my kingdom, then you be faithful with the resources that I’ve given you. If you really want to have positions of importance then you are to be faithful to me. As good stewards we are to take the resources that God has given us and use them wisely.

The two stewards or servants worked happily for the generous master. But the third one had a view of God that is hard, who thinks that God is unfair and unjust and reap where He does not sow so this steward is condemned not because of what he did, but because of what he didn’t do.

Let us with our lives, our time, our treasure, and our talents express our loving loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Well done, good and faithful servants! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

What we do with what we have reveals our view of God.

1 Peter 4:10 says *"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

Come to the Lord's table today as a faithful servant of the Lord ready to serve the Lord knowing the Lord is generous and loving and He knows your heart.