

Christian Responsibility

by Robert F. Adcock

Believers have a responsibility to use their gifts and talents for God's glory and should not be idle or disobedient in their Christian walk.

Duration: 39:34

Scripture: Matthew 25:14

Topics: "Stewardship", "Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the parable of the talents from Matthew 25. He emphasizes the importance of being faithful and productive with the gifts and abilities that God has given us. The parable tells the story of a man who entrusted his servants with different amounts of talents (a form of currency), and those who multiplied their talents were praised by their master. However, one servant buried his talent out of fear and was rebuked for his lack of faith and productivity. The preacher challenges the listeners to reflect on their own responsibilities as believers and to use their gifts for the glory of God.

Transcript

I'd like for you to look in your Bibles this morning, Matthew 25. We'll be reading several passages of Scripture, so keep your Bible handy. Matthew 25, reading from verse 14.

For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his ability, and straightway took his journey. And he that had received the five talents went and traded with the saints, and made other five talents.

Likewise, he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and dug in the earth and hid his Lord's money. After a long time the Lord of those servants punished and reckoned with them.

And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents. Behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee rule over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents.

Behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee rule over many things.

Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. And he that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee with art and hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not spread. But I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth.

Lo, there thou hast what is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and flawed servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not spread. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with interest.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him who has ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance. But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath, and cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And now take a look in Romans chapter 14, and let's read from verse 10 for the sake of time. Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou say not thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God. And now down to verse 17. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things which one may edify another. Now in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, reading from verse 1, now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore, I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus a person, and that no man can say that Jesus is a Lord but by the Holy Spirit. Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

There are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man as a prophet.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecies, to another discerning of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one, and the very same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. So we'll just look to the Lord again in a word. Our Father in Heaven, we thank Thee for the delightful privilege of fellowship with our people, and for the privilege of assembly this morning.

It's in the precious and worthy name of the Lord Jesus that we come to this place together, and we would speak of Him, and we would be made aware, O God, that You have provided this unspeakable gift for the salvation of our souls and the enrichment of our lives. We thank Thee, O God, that we have found in Him all that indeed satisfies the soul. We pray now as we look at the Word of God, and as we glean from these things that we've read, that the Spirit of God will divinely speak in power to each of our hearts, and challenge us afresh to be all that our blessed Lord will have us to be in His absence until He returns again, that our lives might be lived for the glory and honor of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior.

In His name we pray, amen. I'd like to talk to you this morning for these few minutes we have together concerning something that it probably won't be anything new. It may be rather challenging to some of you, and if it serves to challenge you and to remind you of your responsibilities as a believer in Jesus Christ, then a purpose for this message will have been realized.

When we think about idleness and unemployment and that sort of thing in the society in which we live, we know that that's not a very pleasant experience. It's never very pleasant to have individuals that have potential living non-productive lives, because we know that that's not natural, that's not normal. Idleness, and all of the things that are bred by idleness in our human life, indeed are well known to all of us.

Man was put on this earth for a purpose. Now, we believe it was to glorify God. Too often that isn't achieved in a life.

Too often, even in the lives of God's people, we're guilty of disobedience. Sometimes we plead ignorance. Lord, I didn't know.

I'm reminded in the word of God that there's no excuse for ignorance, not even in a court of law. Ignorance is no excuse, and certainly with the word of God so accessible to each one of us, and I speak especially to you that know the Lord in the experience of salvation. You realize you're not your own, you're purchased with a price, the precious blood of the Lord Jesus.

God never intended that you be just a bench warmer. That the extent of your Christian experience would be to come to a church service like this this morning, and sit on the pew, warm the seat for an hour or whatever, and then go back out into the world, and that's the extent of your Christian activity. Believe me, it is far more than that.

And we'll see, I believe, in just a moment as we look a little closer at Matthew 25, what we've read concerning spiritual gifts, that indeed there is a solemn responsibility pressed upon each one of us, and we may be thoroughly and completely satisfied with that wonderful work of salvation that's ours in Christ, but believe me, that's just the starting point in Christian spirit. At the cross, we receive as a free gift from God the forgiveness of our sins. A relationship was established.

We can now call ourselves the children of God. We're in the family of God. We're in the body of Jesus Christ.

It is incumbent upon each one of us to discover what my role and my place should be as a member of that body. No question about it, the local church and the church at large in the world today suffers the consequences of disobedience by members to the will of God for every true believer. I'd like to remind you at the very outset that in what we've read in Matthew 25, we're dealing with a situation and a story which at the very outset tells us that this man traveling to a far country which was a noble man, an owner of

property, a man of authority, he just called his own service.

And so, I'm not suggesting for a moment that if you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior, that you should be busy in God's service. First, God wants to save your soul. He wants you to become a member of his family, and then with that membership in the family of God, you will find that there is responsibility.

So, we're speaking to those that have had the experience of trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior. Now, God has something for you to do. No, we're not saved by work.

We denounce that concept completely. The salvation of an individual soul is a sovereign act of God. But, believe me, once we are saved, we are saved that we might perform good works, works that are indeed in keeping with all that God seeks to do by the work of the Spirit of God in our lives.

There's an instance that's found in the Old Testament, Exodus chapter 4, a familiar story concerning the challenge that was given, the charge that was given to Moses to be the leader, to be the one that would be the spokesman for the children of Israel, and to bring them out of the land of bondage. And, as you recall in this experience, this man Moses was rather hesitant to obey the commands of the Lord. He began to make excuses, really, for, I'm not fitted for that job.

I don't think that I fit into that role as that sort of leader. It's wonderful to me as you read that account, every excuse that Moses raised, you know that God met it with a solution. Each time this man responded and pleaded some sort of feeble excuse for not responding to this challenge that God had issued to him, and this commitment to be God's spokesman and leader to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, the Lord provided a solution.

So, as we proceed along these lines, and you think about what God has for you to do as a believer, and you remember that you've made some excuses, and you've raised some questions about not really being qualified, not really being gifted in that area, you'll find that if you turn to the Word of God you'll take those excuses away from you. He will remind you afresh that what he calls you to do he will empower you to do, and he doesn't issue any false calls. Moses was asked a question.

After he began to make some of these excuses, it's in the second verse of chapter four, he says, what's that in your hand? Of course, Moses had been a man that was a tender of sheep, and he said, obviously it's just a rod, just a plain shepherd's rod. He said, you take that shepherd's rod and you cast it upon the ground. When he did, it turned into a writhing serpent, and then he said, you take the serpent by the tail, and when he did, it turned back into a rod.

God did some spectacular things. He asked him to thrust his hand into his bosom, into his garment, pulled it out, and it was leprous. All with the purpose of impressing upon this man's heart that he is a God of miracles.

He is a God that possesses power, and that one that would serve God must be impressed with the power of God and what he can do in changing lives, what he can do in that service that we would render for him. No man that truly serves God serves in the energy of his own strength, no matter how talented he might be. We are sovereignly before God committed to that position that anything that he does in and through us for his glory will be in his power.

It's not in our strength. No matter how strong we may think we are, no matter how talented we think we might be, God provides what is needed to glorify his own name, and I believe believers, if we recognize this, we are entrusted with a stewardship. It's our lives, it's our talents, material possessions, spiritual gifts, and every privilege brings more responsibility to each one of us.

We are to act as channels through which God can work to achieve his will and purpose in this world. And, of course, this is what this study is all about. You and me, as representatives of the living God, we are ambassadors for Christ.

God is working in and through the lives of those that have been touched by his son, those that are empowered by the Spirit of God, filled with the Spirit of God for his service. And believers do have spiritual gifts, and they're to be used for God's glory. I want to give you just a few examples in the scripture to impress upon your mind if you think of yourself sometimes in a belittling sort of way.

You begin to downplay your importance. Perhaps you're not a denigrator. Perhaps you're not some great, notable person that is known in spiritual circles around the world.

Your name has never been mentioned, and so you kind of check yourself off as being of little or no importance as far as God's service is concerned. You can say, I don't really matter, I don't really count, but you know the one that is responsible for that sort of thinking is Satan. It's Satan, the one that would neutralize the power of God in a human life, in that each one of us would not respond to what God wants to do in and through us.

I think of an instance that is found in the Gospels where our Lord sat with his disciples one day as people were coming into the temple at the place of the treasury where they would reach up and put in their contribution, and this widow comes in and she puts in her mic, and you know our Lord characterized what she put in and what she did as being greater than all that was put in by all the others that had come, that was. Now, there must be something unique and different about what she did from all the others, and no doubt many, many handsome gifts were put into the treasury, some of maybe great amounts, but this lowly widow she gave all she had, and out of her need, out of her poverty, whatever it was, the heart and the desire to give something to God was something that God acknowledged. You read in the Word of God, God loves a cheerful giver, one that gives hilariously.

We read that one of the gifts is the gift of giving. There are some people that when they give, of course, be that gift a small mic, or be it a gift of some large proportion, the attitude of pride and where they are stimulated to praise God with the opportunity of giving is something that God takes the camera of. I think about the boy with the little lunch, the five barley loaves and two small fishes, and that wonderful experience of seeing the Lord Jesus feed 5,000 people, and then to take up the 12 baskets we left over, all because one little lad responded and he gave his little lunch, and the Lord multiplied it and used it for the blessing of many.

Just a small thing, just a small lad with a small lunch. I think of some notable men that we've known over the years. D.L. Moody was one of them.

He was not really considered to be a very promising prospect for the ministry. Some thought he lacked training and that sort of thing. He wasn't perhaps very eloquent as a speaker, although I believe there was something dynamic, and that dynamic that was revealed in his life, I believe it was the power of the Spirit of God upon him.

The man that dared to say, by purpose in my heart, that if God will move upon my life, and if he will empower me to go forth and to spread the gospel, I will solemnly before him determine that I will let him have his way in my life. A yielded life. There may have been many others that possessed far greater knowledge and comprehension of the scriptures than D.L. Moody.

There may have been those that could tell forth the story more eloquently. Here was a man, the full God, that was willing to let the Spirit of God work in and through him for the glory of God. You know how mightily he was used of God.

Well, in the case of the parish, we have to get to the parish. There were three serfs, and each was entrusted with goods, money, something that was provided by his master so that he could prove just how faithful he was in discharging his responsibility, in handling things that his master entrusted him with. You know God has entrusted each one of us as his blood-bought children with spiritual gifts.

You might be multi-gifted. I can tell you this, every person in this room. Now, remember I told you as we read that passage that the Spirit of God sovereignly gives to individual Christians spiritual gifts.

It's according to his will. Someone may get on their knees and pray, and pray, and pray, "O God, give me the gift," and name a gift, a spiritual gift. Well, listen, when you were born again into the family of God, the Spirit of God sovereignly gave you a spiritual gift, or gifts.

You may be multi-gifted. You may have five gifts. You may have two gifts.

You may have only one gift. But you and I have a spiritual gift that the Spirit of God has entrusted us with, that we might develop it under his direction and control, that it might be used for the glory of God. This story has a very sad ending.

That's why I said at the very outset, some of you, if it just generates a little concern into your heart and soul to know you've never developed your spiritual gift, and you're not using your spiritual gift for God, to stop just sitting and waiting for God to come in some miraculous way, move upon your heart, and make you a great evangelist, or to make you a great healer, or one that, as the so-called charismatics of our day, they evidently don't believe in all the gifts, because the only thing I ever hear is a cry for that gift that evidences the indwelling spirit to speak in other tongues. That's strange, isn't it? With all of these others about 18 or 19, if you can sit down and you can search them out, and yet their only interest is speaking in an unknown tongue or language, this being the evidence of the indwelling spirit of God. Well, I'm reminded in the word of God, if we have not the spirit of Christ, we're not his.

A man, when he is born again into the family of God, the spirit of God takes up his reverency in the soul of that individual, and he provides spiritual gifts to be used. Do you have five gifts? Do you have two gifts? Do you just have one gift? The big question is, what are you doing with it? In this instance, the spirit of God that is divided to every man severally as he will. I think it's notable that a one-talented or one-gifted man, if possible, could do far more if he really let the spirit of God take charge of his life and the development of that one gift.

He could do far more than the man with five gifts if that man was derelict in his responsibility to let the spirit of God direct and control his life and use those gifts for God's glory. You see, the number is not really important. It's what we do with what God gives us.

In this instance, a man that had five gifts, five talents, he was faithful in what he did. He went out, and he earned five more talents. He took his Lord's money, invested it wisely, and it multiplied when his Lord came back, and he looked, and he said, Well done, you did a good job.

You were faithful. Enter into the joy of thy Lord. You have my approval upon all that you did with the things that I entrusted you with.

He said the same to the one that had two talents. But, when it comes to this man that had one talent, you know he says some things that, right at the outset, they're going to be used against him because he had a very, very low concept of what his Lord was really like. In fact, he even expressed fear.

He was fearful. He had a right to be afraid because he had proved that he did not place a proper value upon what his Lord had entrusted him with. I can say the same thing to each one of us.

Are we placing a proper value upon that spiritual gift that God has given to us, a gift that God intended us to use? Remember, we're in a living body, the body of Jesus Christ. It has many members. We are members of that body, and if we're not functioning in our role as members of that body, and our spiritual gifts being exercised for the edification, the building up of the body, then we're out of the will of God.

The body prospers, the body flourishes, the body is healthy when the members are providing all that they can provide in the way of spiritual enrichment for their fellow believers. I tell you this, you're privileged to be in a fellowship like this where every member in this whole church is encouraged to develop and use his spiritual gift. There are many places in which only very prominent gifts are isolated, and all the emphasis is placed upon those gifts and the exercise of those gifts.

What about all those gifts of health? I think about all of the gifts sometimes that some say, I don't think I would pray for that gift, of being able to be merciful and show mercy, kindness. Think about the greatest of all gifts, which is love, and our Lord encouraged that above all else to love one another even as he loved us and gave himself for us. As I think about our responsibilities, I think about what we can do and the contribution that we can make to the body of Jesus Christ, this local expression of his body.

Indeed, what a tragic thing it is if I'm withholding what I can contribute under the directorship of the Spirit of God. He wants to build up this body, he wants this body to be strong, he wants this body to be a witness for God, and every member is important. Every member has been given spiritual gifts to make a contribution to keep it healthy and keep it strong.

When you think about hands that can be used for God, look at your hand. You know, Moses was told, look at what you've got in your hand. I've got a rod.

You know, I can ask you, what have you got in your hand? Are these hands just being used for the things of this world? Are they only in the pursuit of things that are in this world? These hands are God's hands. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. This is wholly unacceptable.

It's just our reasonable service. These feet of mine, they're God's feet. This tongue of mine, this mind of mine, everything that I am belongs to God and should be used in God's service.

It's my total being. I reminded you I'm not my own. I've been purchased with a price.

It's the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, and he does have something for me to do, for you to do. He's seated at the right hand of God. He's not in this world.

He left us in this world. He gave this blessed, holy comforter, the one that can empower to be a true witness for him. Here, this man that was entrusted with his master's goods, he's fearful of his master.

The word of God says that God has not given to us a spirit of fear. I respect and reverence my God, but I'm not afraid of him. I'm not afraid of him.

He is my heavenly Father. He ministers comfort and peace and joy to my soul. He doesn't want me to be afraid of him.

He wants me to come with boldness to his throne of grace. He invites me to come, and here is this servant afraid of his master. Why? He said, you are a hard master.

You reap where you don't sow. That's true. The whole domain that he ruled over, it was his, and he could have the final say as to what was his, what he wanted in the way of return and what was really his own.

And I can tell you this, all the creation belongs to God. Indeed, it's under the curse, and it groans, and we're a part of it, but it all belongs to God. And I reminded you in Romans 14 that there will be a day of reckoning.

Each one of us shall stand before God, and we shall give an account of what we've done with our lives. The spiritual gift that we have, that the Spirit of God has sovereignly given to us, what have we done with them? Have we acted wisely? If we have, we'll hear those words when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ. Our Lord will say, well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into all the joy of your Lord.

That's what we can hear. I'm not suggesting for a moment that what we had in this parable concerning being cast into out of darkness that a believer could ever lose his salvation, it only bespeaks to me of this severity. You know, when you get to 1 John chapter 2, verse 28, it says that I do not want to be embarrassed at his coming.

You know it's possible for Christians to be embarrassed when they stand before the Lord Jesus, because they're aware for the first time I've wasted my life, I've wasted my resources. That which the Spirit of God has given to me to serve the cause of Jesus Christ and his people, I didn't do it. And they were ashamed, they were embarrassed, and so it will be with us.

Listen, we've got to take very seriously this matter of taking our total being and presenting it to God and say, Lord, here I am. You saved me, and you saved me for a purpose. You saved me that I might glorify you here upon this earth, not that I might live for my own pleasure.

And you gifted me, you gave me a spiritual gift, and it can be used for the blessing of others. Lord, that's what I want to do. And if you've done anything short of that, you've disobeyed God.

And James says, he that knows to do right and doesn't do it to him, it is a sin. Now, brother and sister, face up to it. You may be sinning every day you live because you're unresponsive to the God that loves and saves you, and the Spirit of God that has sovereignly gifted you for the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Suffer these words of exhortation, receive them in the way that they were given, in love, and make whatever adjustments you have to make in your life that your life might be lived for the glory of God. Shall

we pray? Our Father in Heaven, we do thank thee again for the privilege of assembly this morning, and for the things that we've been able to look at in the Word of God. O Lord, use them to challenge our hearts and remind us that so often we can disobey thee.

Lord, if there's someone present here this morning, and for the first time there's that awareness that being a Christian is indeed a serious business, and perhaps for the first time they're aware that the Spirit of God has given to them spiritual gifts. They belong to the Lord Jesus, and they're those things that they could be performing, those things that they could be doing that would result in that wonderful commendation one day when they stand before our blessed Lord, and he said, well done thou good and faithful servant. Lord, we all want to hear those words and impress it upon our hearts that some dear soul present here has never received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

O, sovereignly by the Spirit of God, speak to their hearts. Awaken them out of that lethargy that they live in, and cause their hearts to be inclined toward the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this we pray amen.

Our brother has us all.

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