

You Are Called to Act and Invest

Matthew 25:14-30

Last Sunday the Word of God challenged us. We discussed the importance of taking risks. I hope you had a chance to search Esther's life and to see how God used her to bring salvation for her people and eventually for all humanity.

Today we will continue our sermon series with the theme "You are called to Invest" based on the Parable of the Talents.

I keep talking about the event of Peter's walk on the water, because I believe Christ keeps asking the church to get out of the boat and walk **towards him** (*salvation*) and with him (*sanctification*).¹

"But Badveli I love to come to church to be comforted."

Welcome to meet with God who will comfort us. God will give us inner peace and rest. Yet, if we stay in the "boat" too long, comfort will turn to be the most dangerous thing in our lives. We all like comfort after a hard day's work. But have we thought about the dangers of sitting too long in a La-Z-Boy?

Maybe we do not get out of the boat because we don't see the urgency of the call. Perhaps we are afraid of failure. What if we sink? What if we fail? But if we look at the story of Peter, we can ask ourselves, "Did he really fail?"

How many of you have experienced some kind of failure in your life?

All of us.

The first effective polio vaccine was developed in 1952 by **Jonas Salk** at the University of Pittsburgh. Salk's vaccine failed 200 times. Someone asked him, "How do you feel about failing 200 times?" He answered, "I never failed two hundred times in my life. I just discovered two hundred ways how not to vaccinate for polio."

Failure is not the enemy; it is the school of learning. Failure will remind us that God is in control and not us. Failure will remind us that we are humans and we learn from our mistakes. The key is not to contemplate on failure, but to learn from it and move on. Trials and tests will come our path and they will shape our faith, our character.

Let me ask this again. Did Peter fail?

In a way yes, once he lost his focus, he failed. Once he took his eyes away from Jesus, he lost it.

But do you know who are the real losers, or the failures? I don't think Peter is. I think the eleven who were in the boat. The eleven who did not risk, the eleven who did not bother to get out.

Jesus told this parable, the Parable of the Talents. We find two versions in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. According to Matthew, we have three characters who receive talents: five, two and one. **A talent is a large amount of money**, equivalent to three years of wage. Let us say one million dollars. The first two characters **invested** their talents and came back with results. The one with one talent kept it under the soil.

Illustration: Ladies love china. Let us assume someone gave you a valuable piece of china to be used for special occasions. You took this china and kept it in a safe place thinking one day that occasion will come and you will use it. You aged and died. Then your children inherited this china that was found under the dust and had never been used. How tragic it is to keep such a beautiful gift away from usage.

We are called to invest our talents; we are called to open our gifts.

-Jesus told this parable right after the parable of the 10 virgins. Some of these virgins who were waiting for their grooms were prepared with enough oil in their lamp. The others were careless and ran out of oil. At the end of this parable Jesus is warning his disciples to be ready for the coming of the "groom." (Matthew 25:1-13)

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. (Matthew 25:13 ESV)

Then Jesus continues his words with the parable of the talents.

“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. (Matthew 25:14 ESV)

The man (or the nobleman in Luke) is Jesus himself. The servants are we, you and I. He left and gave us a responsibility. Investing the talents means investing in ministries, in the lives of people, by loving them and helping them to come closer to Christ. (we will discuss more next time)

It is a call we cannot ignore.

Application of this parable:

1. CEO Jesus entrusted to us a talent, or talents; do not compare yourself with others.

Jesus entrusted to the servants talents, some five, some two and some one. It is not important how many you were entrusted. Whatever is given to you, gifts, or talents, is required to be put in use.

2. CEO Jesus entrusted to us talents; they are his gifts to us. We work for Jesus; He is our Master.

‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ (Matthew 25:20 ESV)

We have to remember that. It is his talent given to us to be used. So you don't own it. It is entrusted to you.

3. CEO Jesus rewarded the servants for their faithfulness.

Every time the servants gave a report, the answer of the master was:

Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' (Matthew 25:21 ESV)

-The world teaches us success.

-God teaches us faithfulness, trustworthiness.

God is searching and examining our hearts. He is looking if His servants are faithful in His field.

4. Not Opening your gift is not recommended

The answer of the man who kept his talent hidden was:

“Master, I knew you to be a **hard man**, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so **I was afraid**, and I went and hid your talent **in the ground**. Here you have what is yours.” (Matthew 25:24-25ESV)

How sad is that this servant has a wrong view of who the Master is. Just a hard man.

Actually, he was trying to find some excuse why he did not use his gift. Blame someone or something.....right.

How sad it is to be afraid of investing in whatever is given to you. How sad it is to not open the gift.

What is your view of the Master? Who is God for you? Describe who Jesus is in your life.

It bothers me when I give a gift to someone and the person ignores it and does not open it. It really bothers me. I love the person, and did everything to buy the best gift for that person, but the person took it and put it aside. My eyes are on the gift, thinking: “OPEN IT...OPEN IT...”

My God, my Maker, my Daddy, gave me and you and gift(s). How long we will ignore His call and not open the gift and invest it. This morning God is calling you: “Nerses...(put your name), open your gift... Redeem your gift...”

5. CEO Jesus rewarded the ones who were faithful and punished the lazy

Yes, as a reward, some got more talents. According to Luke, the CEO gave them new positions as governor of new cities and so on. And he gave punishment to the ones who stayed in their La-Z-Boy chair and found some excuse for not investing in God’s Kingdom.

What do you invest in? Does your investment has eternal value?

Illustration: Milt Rood worked for years and years in Spokane as a car salesman. He was also very active with the Union Gospel Mission work with young criminals. Week by week he'd patiently teach the Word and pray with young boys in trouble. One week Milt went into the Hospital for surgery. The doctors found he was full of cancer. They sewed him up again and sent him home. He died within a week. Do you know what happened at the funeral? No one talked about how many cars he had sold, but everyone gave testimonies about the lives he had touched. (John Underhill)²

We are called to be his faithful stewards.
We are called to be his faithful ambassadors.
The world will reject Jesus, and will reject us.
We will not stop from being His faithful servants.

1. John Ortberg, If You Want to Walk on Water, You have to get out of the Boat.

2<http://www.sermonsearch.com/sermon-illustrations/5081/faithful-servant/>