

Our Talents Do Not Belong to Us

In Matthew 25 Jesus told a parable about a man who went on a journey to a faraway land. Before he left, he entrusted three servants with various “talents,” or money. Rather than letting his money sit in a vault, the master decided to divide it among three servants so they could invest it and his fortune could increase while he was away.

To the first servant the master gave five talents, to the second servant he gave two talents, and to the third servant he gave one talent.

The first two servants invested their money wisely, and it doubled in value. The third servant was concerned about the possibility of losing his talent, so he buried it in the ground. When the master returned, it was a time of reckoning. With the first two servants, the master was very pleased, but with the third servant who buried the one talent, the master was very angry. The master called him a wicked and lazy servant. He repossessed the one talent the servant had been given and had him cast out into the darkness, “where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:30, MEV).

I want you to notice the reason this servant gave for burying his talent. The servant said, “So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground” (Matt. 25:25, NIV). He buried his talent in the ground because of fear.

Fear causes many people to bury their talents in the ground. I’m not talking about the ground in your backyard. Genesis 2:7 says, God formed man from the dust of the ground—we are the ground! People bury their talents within themselves because of fear—fear of failure, fear of being mocked, fear of hard work,

fear of the unknown, spirits of fear, and fear of man, just to name a few.

I think one of the most tragic places you could ever visit is a cemetery, not because of the people who are buried there but because of what is buried within the people who are buried there: books and songs that were never written, sermons that were never preached, forgiveness that was never granted, inventions that were never developed—so much potential that was never realized. So much has been buried and lost for all eternity because someone was afraid of being hurt, afraid of criticism, afraid of rejection, afraid of financial difficulty or physical danger.

Evangelist Leonard Ravenhill said author and preacher A. W. Tozer once told him, “I’m not too worried about the judgment on my Christian life. It’s the things I could have done but didn’t do that worry me.” My friends, one day we are all going to stand before the Master and give an account of what He has entrusted to us. Oh, that we would fear that day above all and be willing to risk everything so on that day we would not be ashamed.

Notice that the servant was cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Scholars disagree about whether or not this verse is referring to hell, but one thing is certain (and I think it is the main point), it is talking about deep regret, sorrow, and remorse over something that has been lost forever and can never be undone.

Many people talk about the emotions they will feel when they arrive in heaven. There are popular songs about how we will dance and be overwhelmed with joy. But many will experience a very different emotion when they arrive in heaven—regret. In that moment all of their earthly fears will seem so impotent and distant, a hazy memory, like a dream that you can’t quite remember. But the impact of those fears will be felt for eternity. It will be too late to go back and do what should

have been done, and wave after wave of regret will wash over many people.

No wonder Revelation 21:4 says Jesus will have to wipe the tears from their eyes. {eoa}

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