

Kingdom Stewards 2018

22nd Nov 7 pm to 24th Nov 1 pm

Day 1 – 21st November – Wednesday	
Time	Session Title
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	01- Stewardship – Introduction
8:30 PM	Dinner

Day 2 – 22nd November – Thursday	
Time	Session Title
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	02- Morning Devotion - Believing, Belonging and Becoming
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	03- Stewardship- Life Priorities
11:20 AM - 1:00 PM	04- Stewardship- Your ministry
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Lunch
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM	05- Interactive Session – Life Priorities discussed
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM	Break
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	06- Stewardship- Talents
8:00 PM	Dinner

Day 3 – 23rd November – Friday	
Time	Session Title
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	07- Morning Devotion - Peace of God
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	08- Stewardship- Physical Family

11:20 AM - 1:00 PM	09- Stewardship- Spiritual Family
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	<i>Lunch</i>
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM	10- Interactive Session – Q&A and Money
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM	<i>Break</i>
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	11- Stewardship- Our Gifts and Talents
8:00 PM	Dinner

<i>Day 4 - 24th November – Saturday</i>	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Session Title</i>
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	12- Morning Devotion – Connected and United
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	13- Stewardship- In the light of second coming of Christ 14- Stewardship - Tongue
11:20AM – 1:00 PM	15- Closing session - Kings Return

<i>Extended schedule optional for those staying back in San Antonio on Saturday.</i>	
<i>Day 4 - 24th November - Saturday</i>	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Session Title</i>
6 PM to 8 PM	Social gathering – at any picnic spot around San Antonio
<i>Day 5 - 25th November – Sunday</i>	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Session Title</i>
8.30AM to 11.00 AM	Worship service at a near by church

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Stewardship 2018

1. Stewards of Kingdom of God

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, ¹ Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.



The theme for this year's conference is Stewardship in the Kingdom of God.

Meaning of Stewardship

"Utilizing and managing all resources God provides for the glory of God and the betterment of His creation."

Origin of the word and its understanding.

We normally tend to think about money or tax or business when we hear the word 'economics'. It also involves all our resources such as society, children, education and all other materials along with the polices related to govern them.

The Greek word for Economy or economics comes from the word '***oikonomia***'

Oikonomia consists of two parts namely,

Oikos = house or household

Nomos = law

So, together it means as "law that governs the household or house law".

The same word can also be translated as 'Stewardship' in our English Bible. So, there is no distinction between the household law or economics and stewardship.

A person who has been given the responsibility with authority to rule/ manage over the household affairs.

Genesis 39:1-6, we can see Joseph managed the affairs of the household of Potiphar.

There is also another word used in the New Testament for the word Stewardship which is '***epitropos***' which means "manager, foreman, or steward." This word is translated and used in Galatians as guardian.

The word *Oikonomia* is used 8 times and *epitropos* is used 3 times.

Most churches these days talks about Stewardship in terms of money! However, Stewardship is about every part of your life not just money!

So, I would earnestly request you to kindly erase that idea that its only about money.

The secular world associates prosperity with success and happiness. Therefore, society constantly struggles to acquire as much wealth as possible. Christians should view money differently unlike the secular world.

Let us first get the biblical order of stewardship.

God is the owner of all things!

Genesis 1:1, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Acts 17:24, God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

Deuteronomy 10:14, Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it.

*Psalms 24:1, The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.*

*Psalms 89:11, The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all its
fullness, You have founded them.*

*I Chronicles 29:10-14, Therefore David blessed the Lord before all the assembly;
and David said:*

“Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.

¹¹ Yours, O Lord, is the greatness,

The power and the glory,

The victory and the majesty;

For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours;

Yours is the kingdom, O Lord,

And You are exalted as head over all.

¹² Both riches and honor come from You,

And You reign over all.

In Your hand is power and might;

In Your hand it is to make great

And to give strength to all.

¹³ “Now therefore, our God,

We thank You

And praise Your glorious name.

¹⁴ But who am I, and who are my people,

That we should be able to offer so willingly as this?

For all things come from You,

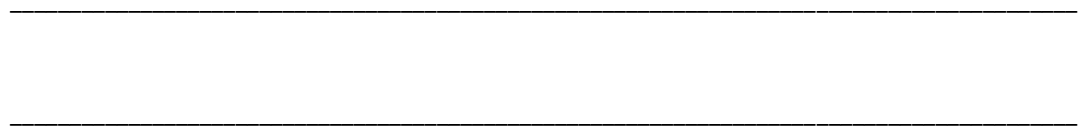
And ¹⁴of Your own we have given You.

From the above scriptures it is very clear that God is the owner of all things!

We can get the right understanding towards stewardship only when we understand this.

Man's relationship to God

Human relationship to God will be perfectly understood if you know the true meaning of stewardship.



Genesis 1:26-28, Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

- 1) God showed Himself as the creator.
- 2) God created the human being in His own image.
- 3) His call for the image bearer is to be fruitful and multiply. This is nothing but a command for the mankind to be productive in their existence. This is nothing but stewardship.

In the New Testament, Jesus teaches and calls His people to be fruitful in the kingdom of God.

- 4) God commanded Adam and Eve to have dominion over the earth, which is owned by Him. So, God delegated His authority to Adam and Eve as His deputies to manage His creation. God had not granted independent ownership of the earth but still it is His possession.

God called Adam and Eve to exercise their authority over the animals, plants, seas, rivers, sky, and the environment. God made them stewards of the earth, who were to act in His name and for His glory.

Everything is owned by God.

Psalms 115:16, The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; But the earth He has given to the children of men.

Finally, God did command mankind to work and keep it going.

Genesis 2:15, Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

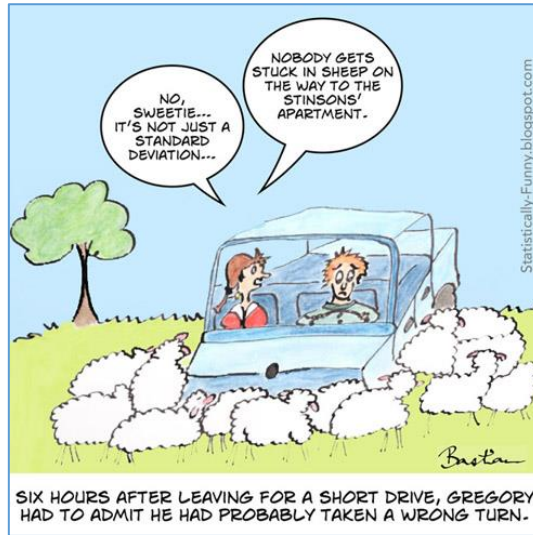
- It's a privilege to be in the image of God!
- It's a privilege to be called as son of God!!
- It's a privilege to have the authority over the earth!!!

But if we don't understand the responsibility that comes with the privileges then we will not be a good steward.

So, the order is God owns everything!

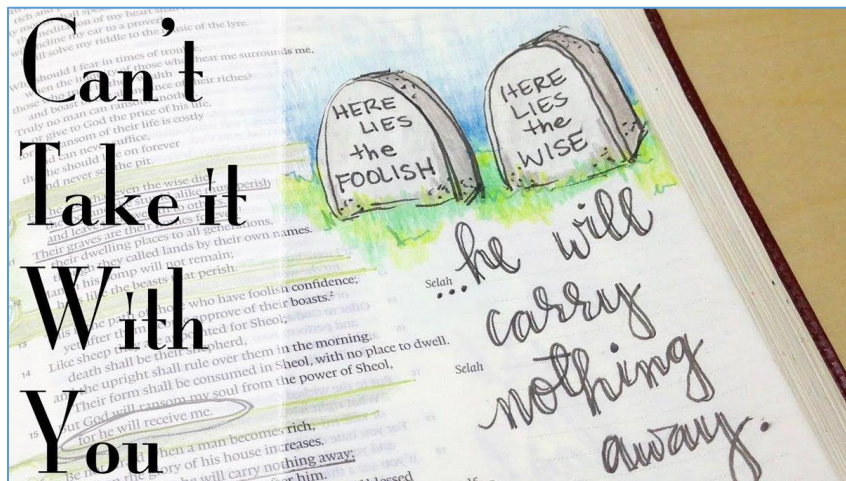
We have been given the authority and responsibility to manage it well for Him.

If we don't understand this basic concept, then it is like buttoning the top button of the shirt into the wrong hole. It will mess up all other bottom buttons as well.



steward = one who was entrusted with the master's household to consistently manage it in the master's absence.

You don't own anything!



In every funeral service we learn that we don't take anything with us.

The dead people preach a powerful sermon saying that you don't own anything!

Rich or poor all go empty handed to the grave!

One of the richest and wisest men of the Old Testament times was none other than Solomon, he writes,

***Ecclesiastes 5:15**, As he came from his mother's womb, **naked shall he return**, To go as he came; And he shall **take nothing from his labour** Which he may carry away in his hand.*

We see a similar statement from the righteous man named Job, whose story was the first written book in our Bible.

***Job 1:21**, And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord."*

*Psalms says in **Psalm 49:17**, For when he dies he shall **carry nothing away**; His glory shall not descend after him.*

Apostle Paul writes the same to his spiritual son who was taking care of the church at Ephesus.

***1 Timothy 6:7**, For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

(Story of getting things from the store for an hour is free, end up losing his life.)

The material possessions that you have is NOT your own!

Your spouse is NOT your own!

Your children are NOT your own!

***Psalms 127:3-4**, Behold, **children are a heritage from the Lord**, The fruit of the womb is a reward. ⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.*

Children are a gift from the Lord. They are God's possession, not yours. God has temporarily placed them under your care. Your children are "on loan" from the Lord so to say!

Let us get this right.

Everything you have is owned by God. You have been given a responsibility as a steward to take care of that.

Once we are called and have been placed as a fellow member into the body of Jesus Christ, our stewardship does not take place on our own abilities or talents or power.

The stewardship should come out of the strength and the power of the Holy Spirit who has been bestowed in us by God. So that we will be able to manage our lives and grow through the divine guidance. Then we will live to please God from which we will draw strength from God alone.

If we try to do it in our way, then we will end up as a threat to others and lose our purpose.

Value of Biblical Stewardship

Biblical stewardship does not advocate a Christian to despise money or not to earn.

Money is a necessity for our basic living.

1 Timothy 6:10, For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The Bible does warn us that the love of money is the root for all kinds of evil.

Hence it is important for us not to allow money to become the center of our life. When money is not the focus of our life then the object of our love and devotion shifts from earthly things and to higher things.

Money does not offer good value in life. But the bible offers much value to a person's life.

Proverbs 11:28, He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like foliage. (NKJV)

Trust in your money and down you go! But the godly flourish like leaves in spring. (NLT)

The righteous will flourish but not the rich. But how do the righteous flourish without riches? They flourish because they understand and possess what holds a higher value.

Again, Solomon writes in Proverbs

Proverbs 22:1, A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favour rather than silver and gold.

What should be the goal of a righteous person?

Should be a pure reputation in life.

***Character lasts.
Money cannot.***

So, every Christian should set their life goal to have a pure life rather than the accumulation of wealth.

Knowing God and understanding his love are the true eternal riches.

Hebrews 13:5-6, Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

Money does not love, and it does not hang around with you always! It is God who stands by you and blesses you, not money.

Our focus must be only on God and eternal riches

Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

*Where riches hold the dominion of the heart God has lost His authority." **John Calvin***



An older lady was determined to be prepared if incase she was threatened by anyone. One day she went for shopping and after finishing her shopping she returned to her car.

She found four men inside the car. She dropped her shopping bags, drew her handgun, and screamed, "I have a gun, and I know how to use it! Get out of the car." The men got out and ran like crazy.

Somewhat shaken, she loaded her shopping bags and got in the car. But she could not get her key into the ignition. Then only she realized that her car was similar to this car and it was parked four or five spaces away! So, she loaded her bags into her own car and drove to the police station to turn herself in.

She found in the Police station, where four men were reporting a carjacking by an old woman with thick glasses and curly white hair, less than five feet tall, and carrying a large handgun.

2. Believing, Belonging and Becoming - Devotion 01

One of the new trends in evangelizing is to run different community based activities and invite unbelievers to them. For example Mothers and Toddlers group, Language course, Zumba, Scout etc.,

Then they encouraged to come and experience the church service to come and belong to the church before fully believing in Gospel.

This can be compared to the practices of the software companies who offer their products before their clients buy them.

What is the end result we see now?

“Unbelievers” become “seekers,” rather than unbelievers. They become fellow travelers on the journey with us, just at a different point.

So now they belong to the church but they are not believers.

However a local church must be a community of believers who are committed to God and put their trust in Jesus Christ. Who love to obey and pursue holiness and grow on to maturity. Show the love of God by loving one another.

This confuses Christians as there are people in the church who don't share the same zeal for God. Since they are in very different levels and they come up with many excuses. So there is a categorization of serious, moderate and practicing and non-practicing Christians.

Jesus preached only about following Him by having a clear, radical break from their former way of living.

Matthew 12:50, For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

Matthew 10:38, And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

The danger in this approach is that, it can dilute the Gospel and confuse the people about the cost of discipleship.

Second, belonging before believing confuses Unbelievers too.

There is no clear distinction between the believer and the unbeliever. When an unbelieving person is a part of the church and he/she falls into sin, its mainly their attitude in obeying the word of God.

For these people the gospel was not about repenting and believing. Instead, it was about belonging to the church family, being accepted, and having the opportunity to express your own gifts and interests. Accountability does not come into their mind, and neither did commitment.

When unbelievers are never told that they are unbelievers, but are instead taught to think of themselves as “fellow travelers,” “seekers,” or “people at different stages of the same journey. Then it’s easy for them to become confused about what it really means to be a Christian and to trust in the gospel.

People may lead someone to sign up for Jesus community(church), but never really sign up to repent and believe in Jesus.

Third, belonging before believing fundamentally redefines the local church. The local church is a community of believers who are committed to God and put their trust in Jesus Christ, who love to obey and pursue holiness and grow on to maturity. Show the love of God by loving one another.

John 13:35, By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Paul taught.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7, Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

2 Corinthians 6:14, Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

Peter taught.

1 Peter 2:12, having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Apostle John taught,

1 John 2:5-6, But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

The power of the church's witness is to see sinners whose life are being radically transformed by the love of God and the good news of the Gospel. This love is then



translated by each member of the church by loving one another that can be explained by:

a) the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and

b) the holiness and the truth of the Gospel.

So to have a credible structure for the church the people should have faith in Lord Jesus Christ.

Belonging before belief fundamentally redefines the church,

which in the long run undermines the gospel and the power of the church's witness.

Grace Davie, a British sociologist in religion published a book 'Believing without Belonging' in 1994, on the rise of secularism in Britain since 1945. In the book, she suggests that most people who do not belong to institutional religions have some form of belief about God.

Italian scholars have attempted to argue that a large number of Italian Catholics belong to the church without really believing in what the church teaches.

Abby Day, another British Scholar, in her book, Believing in Belonging, suggests that actually people believe because they want to belong to a group that gives them identity.

Why do we belong to this church?

How do we look at someone who does not belong – someone who is not one of us?

What if this someone who is not one of us believes, shows a greater commitment to Christian values, and even has some visible gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Do we want to capture the God of the Universe in our little enclosures (both physical and social) and not allow the Spirit to blow as He wills (John 3:8)?

Let us look at couple of incident one in Old and another in the New Testament!

Numbers 11:16-30

*Numbers 11:25-29,*²⁵ Then the Lord came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. ²⁶ But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸ So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" ²⁹ Then Moses said to him, "**Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!**"

Two men, Eldad and Medad had stayed back in the camp while the Lord God descended in the form of cloud on the Tent of Meeting. Even though they were not among the seventy elders who were initially chosen by Moses, the Spirit descended on these two men and they began to prophesy. Moses was magnanimous enough to discern the will of God.

Joshua wanted to see the action of God within the leadership of Moses, but Moses himself had a very broader perspective.

Numbers 11:29, Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that **all the Lord's people** were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!"

Another incident took place in New Testament we will see,

*Mark 9:38-41,*³⁸ Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." ³⁹ But Jesus said, "**Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.**" ⁴⁰ For he who is not against us is on our side. ⁴¹ For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name,

because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Apostle John, who was close to the heart of Jesus, saw that there were some people who were not followers but were using the name of Jesus to heal.

If we study from the book of Luke Jesus chose 70 disciples and sent them out. (Luke 10:1)

Jesus tells them not to stop them! Not only that He also says if they perform miracles in His name they may not work against the Kingdom.

Jesus reminds us that his Kingdom is not about territories, or institutions, or in the church or the unchurched, but it is about hearts of people. God has all the possibility and propensity to work within hearts of people, as He desires.

So you do allow God to be God, even outside the group you belong to!

What is your attitude towards people who are outside the visible confines of the Church?

Since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 10:34-35, Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

Let us not make any judgement as to who is saved and who is not but let us be faithful in what God had called us into.

Belonging

I would like to describe the church with two images.

First River



Characteristics:

- Tiny spring way up in the hills starts flowing one drop after another one.
- Thousands of drops form and becomes a trail.
- Many streams join and starts flowing as river.

Second Tree



Characteristics:

- The tree begins with a single seed.
 - Seed falls into the earth, alone and vulnerable
-
-

- Shoot into the air to get light
- Root into the earth to nourishment and water
- Spreads its branches and roots
- From single trunk many branches grow

Comparison with Church:

In the book of Revelation Apostle John sees in a vision people from every nation, tribe and tongue coming together as one in worshipping the Lord.

All the people started differently in different place but yet they join together as one stream.

The church consists of people from the “widest possible variety of backgrounds, they belong to one another, and are meant to be part of the same powerful flow going now in the same single direction. **Diversity in Unity!**

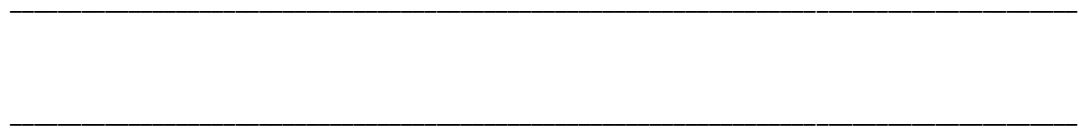
The church is like a tree. The single seed, Jesus himself, has been sown in the dark earth and has produced an amazing tree. Branches have set off in all directions. Some pointing almost directly upward and some reaching down to the earth and some heading out over neighboring walls. Looking at the eager out-stretched branches, you can hardly know they were all from the same stem. **Unity in Diversity!**

In Revelation 22, we see that where the river and trees comes together as part of the New Jerusalem.

The river comes from a single source and the trees all bear leaves with the same healing power.

In both images the idea of “family” is evident. The early Christians did their best to live as an extended family, caring for each other. They called each other “brother” and “sister” and really meant it. They lived and prayed and thought in that way. Children of the same father, following the same older brother, sharing goods and resources where need arose, living as a single family and mutually supporting community.

The church is not simply a collection of isolated individuals, who follow their own paths of spiritual growth without reference to one another. It may sometimes look like that, but each of us is called to respond to God’s call at a personal level. Apostle Paul calls this as body! Every member of the body needs to connect, depend and work with one another.



Becoming

"If God is our father, the church is our mother." John Calvin.

Galatians 4:26-27, but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband."

The church exists primarily for three closely correlated purposes.

- to worship God
- to work for his kingdom in the world and
- to love one another (demonstrated by encourage one another, to build one another up in faith, to pray with and for one another, to learn from one another and teach one another, and to set one another examples to follow)

You can and must worship, and work for God's kingdom, in private which is unique to yourself and also we must work together to have fellowship with one another.

To simply put it across in an easier way

- Worship
- Work
- Fellowship

Conclusion

Jesus described this John 13. As a community that profoundly believes the gospel and it's life marked by the love for one another. Jesus said such community will provoke those on the outside not only to recognize they are outside, but they would desire to come in and be part of it.



Imagine a bakery on a cold snowy day that sends out aroma of delicious bread, coffee and other pastries with a barrier of glass on the window pane. And a child has his nose pressed against the window pane. That glass is a barrier. Without the glass barrier the warmth and delicious smells would soon disperse in the cold wind, and no one would know there was anything good to be found there. But it's a transparent barrier, allowing that child to see the good things inside and invite him in. And there is a way in, a narrow door that he must walk

through. Until he does, he can see and appreciate what's inside, but it's not his to enjoy. Once he walks through, it's his for the asking.

When unbeliever encounter the church it should be like standing at that window.

They should feel the warmth of your love.

You welcome them and engage them as people made in the image of God.

They should see the depth of relationships.

They should witness people who have no reason to care for one another go out of their way to serve.

They should taste the richness of the gospel.

God's word is preached and taught in a manner that connects with their lives.

And they should hear the inviting sounds of a joyful community, as they listen to the praises and prayers of people who worship our crucified and risen Lord.

My dear brothers and sisters, so go out of your way to create a community that welcomes the outsider.

Consider the language you use.

Be deliberate in your hospitality.

Be strategic in your transparency. Like a bakery that pumps the delicious aroma of its bread outside, publicly celebrate the stories of grace and transformation that are happening in your midst.

Make the gospel clear and invite people to respond to it in repentance and faith.

Call them not to walk in an aisle, but to enter through the narrow door, and join with you in the riches of faith in the Gospel.

3. Priorities

Matthew 25:14-30

1. God owns everything

Matthew 25:14, “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

James 1:17, Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

2. God trusted you with what has been given to you.

Matthew 25:14-15, “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵ And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

Jesus’ words in Matthew 7 also confirm this:

Matthew 7:11, If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Let us take a moment to take stock of what God had given to you!

- Body
- Family,
- Children,
- House,
- Work/ Business
- Ministry

Are you conscious of the good things God bestowed upon you!

3. You are accountable to God, at any time.

Matthew 25:19, After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

Luke 16:2, And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

2 Corinthians 5:10, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

In the opening session we dealt with the meaning and the definition of Stewardship. Now in this key verse let us look at the primary quality required of a stewardship, that is being Faithful

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, ¹ Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

4. You are accountable either to Increase or not

Matthew 25:16-18, Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷ And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. ¹⁸ But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little things is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much."

The problem is in many of the church and organizations are in a maintenance or auto pilot mode! Even many people seem to put their personal life also on auto pilot mode.

Faithfulness

As a steward, you might not be,

- the smartest person,
- the most talented person
- the most gifted person

God expects you to be FAITHFUL to what He had entrusted to you!

V 2, it says "Moreover it is required"

God says that He has a requirement for the steward that is to be Faithful.

What kind of employee is the hardest to find?

A faithful one!

Faithful means trustworthy, you could trust him.



Sometime back I did refer that ministers of God are like the waiters in the restaurant. Waiters don't have to do anything other than serving the food from the kitchen. Just deliver what has been cooked in the kitchen, there is no need to add any spice or to be creative or innovative just have to pass it on.

The problem with many is that they have the mindset of the person given ONE talent (how much is NOT the issue ... it's what you DO with what you've been GIVEN!)

Reliability (Which comes through faithfulness, trustworthiness over time) is the one necessary virtue that is required for all the servants and stewards in the things of God.

The ministers of Christ should make it their hearty and continual endeavour to approve themselves trustworthy; and when they have the testimony of a good conscience, and the (approval) of their Master, they must (minimize) the opinions and (criticism) of their fellow-servants: - **Matthew Henry**

Faithfulness is Not Optional

When two people get married they expect one another to remain faithful until death. Faithfulness is a part of the marriage. So also, with God. Faithfulness is not an option that we choose. God expects us to be faithful to Him, and He also seeks men and women who will live to consistently carry out His will.

1 Samuel 2:35, Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.

We show God our faithfulness by obeying Him.

- His heart becomes our heart
- His mind our mind
- His will our will.



One cannot be faithful to God if they do what they please.

God actively looks for faithfulness in His servants. It is one of the qualities on which He judges His people. Jesus tried to help us understand God's great interest in our faithfulness.

Matthew 25:21, His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Matthew 25:23, His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Everyone does not have the same opportunities. Nor do we all have the same abilities. But we all have something. We have the capacity to be faithful in our own giftings or capabilities. Yet all people do not prove to be faithful when tested. Jesus was reminding us of this fact.

Let us look at some of the people who are commended by God for their faithfulness.

Faithful Role models

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the supreme example of faithfulness. He always did God's will and spoke God's words. He had only one desire, that is do the will of the Father.

*John 6:38, For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but **the will of Him who sent Me.***

Even when He got to go to the cross He prayed and did what the Father wanted Him to do!

*Luke 22:42, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless **not My will, but Yours, be done.**"*

How did Jesus learn this obedience?

Jesus' obedience did not come naturally. This we are told in the Book of Hebrews. Even for Jesus, faithfulness was something to learn.

Hebrews 5:8, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

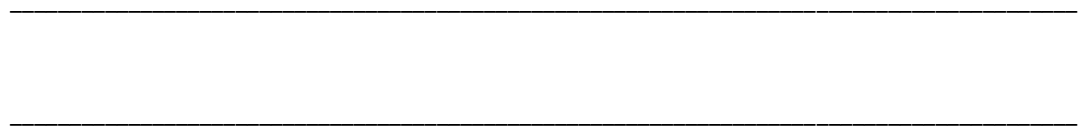
As we grow more faithful in one area of our life, that faithfulness can carry over into other areas. Faithfulness toward God begins with faithfulness toward family, faithfulness on our job, and faithfulness in financial dealings. We can't wait to show our faithfulness until someone trusts us with something big. We must be faithful now with whatever has already been entrusted to us.

Moses

*Numbers 12:7, Not so with My servant Moses; he is **faithful in all My household.***

For a moment bring back to your memory the context in which God declares about Moses Faithfulness!

Miriam and Aaron, they criticised Moses because of his marriage to Cushite women. So, God comes down to Moses defence and declares him as faithful in His household.



The author of Hebrews picks this and compares Moses with Lord Jesus Christ in his faithfulness to God.

Hebrews 3:1-2, Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, ² who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

Hebrews 3:5, And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,

What made Moses Faithful to God apart from other Old Testament saints?

Moses was focused on his role and even when God wanted to destroy the Israelites he interceded with God and made Him to change His mind.

Timothy

1 Corinthians 4:17, This is why I have sent Timothy to you. He is my dearly loved and faithful son in the Lord. He will remind you about my ways in Christ Jesus, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

We may not be able to understand if someone is faithful to God or not, only God knows it and He honors that! What a commendation for young Timothy!

I will also show you some minor characters (people in the bible) which you may not even have noticed or remembered.

Epaphras

Colossians 1:7, as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,

Tychicus

Colossians 4:7, Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.

Just be faithful.

Don't pervert it.

Don't twist it.

Don't handle deceitfully.

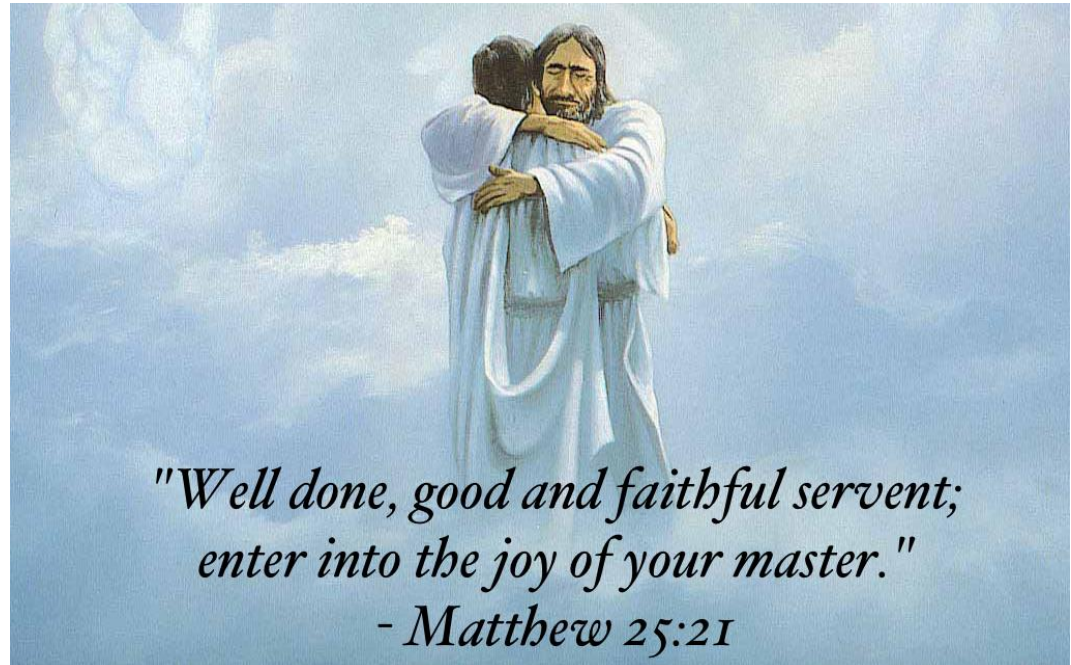
Don't corrupt it.
Just give it out the way it came.

Conclusion

When Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth, what does He just want to find in His servants?

He wants them to be Faithful.

Not successful!



Luke 18:8, I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Matthew 24:45, "Who is a faithful and wise servant whom his Lord has made ruler over his household to give them food in due season? Blessed is the servant whom his Lord, when He comes, shall find so doing."

All God wants out of YOU is you to be Faithful.

What does faithful mean?

It means just do what I tell you to do.

We, too, can learn faithfulness.

Luke 16:10-12, *He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.¹¹ Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how will you commit to your trust the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, how will you give you what is your own?*

Will YOU be faithful to HIM from this day forward?

Will you learn to obey and satisfy Him alone?

4. Your Ministry

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, ¹ Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Identity

First of all, we need to figure out who we are in the Kingdom of God to be an effective steward of the Kingdom of God.

Now if you look at your English Bible, you won't find that word very often. If you look at the Old Testament in the King James, you will find the word "slave" once. But the Hebrew word appears 800 times in the noun, and nearly 300 in the verb. There is a word in the Old Testament for "slave" that appears eleven hundred times, but in your English Bible it's translated as "slave" once.

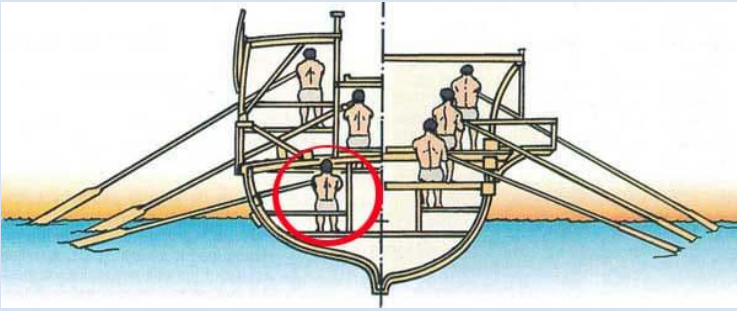
The New Testament, the Greek word 'doulos' for "slave" is mentioned about 150 times in all its forms but you will find it translated as "slave" only a few times. The translators only translate the Greek word for slave "slave" when it's referring to an actual physical slave, or when it's referring to an inanimate object, like "slaves of sin" or "slaves of righteousness."

Greek word 'doulos' word means "slave" and never means anything but "slave."

It doesn't mean "servant"; or "worker"; or "hired hand"; or "helper."

There are six or seven Greek words that mean "servant" in some form. Doulos never means "servant."

Greek word	Meaning and Translation
Doulos	<p>Meaning: slave</p> <p>Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ a slave, bondman, man of servile condition➤ a slave➤ metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests ➤ a servant, attendant
diakonos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master, a servant, attendant, minister ➤ the servant of a king ➤ a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use ➤ a waiter, one who serves food and drink.
pais	servant
Oiketes	house servant
huperetes	<p>Meaning - galley slave</p> <p>Translation - servant</p> 
Therapon	servant

In Summary:

The word in Greek 'oiketes', which means a domestic household servant.

The word in Greek 'doulos', which means a bond slave, somebody in chains.

You have the word diakonos, which means just simply an employee or a servant. Somebody who obeys the commands of another.

Greek word 'huperetes' literally referred to the person who rode on the lowest level of the galley. The bottom group of guys who moved the oars that pushed that big hulk through the sea were called 'huperetes'.

We will be looking at two words in detail, 'doulos' and 'huperetes'.

John 15:14-15, You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you slaves anymore, because a slave doesn't know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father. (HCSB)

So whatever Jesus taught prior to this needs to be applied in this context with this meaning.

Think of few examples!!

Slavery

How the slaves were bought and sold?

You go to slave market, the slaves are kept in a block!

When you go over to buy a slave, you go over to the market and you pick the one you want to buy.

Ascertain how much it will cost you? Negotiate??

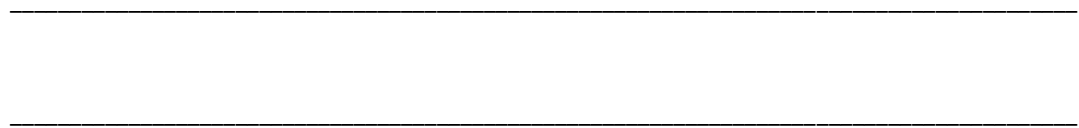
Pay the price and the slave becomes yours.

You own the slave then,

- You will train the slave
- Provide for his/her needs
- Assign his/her responsibilities
- Discipline the slave

Just for a moment please do apply the same process for our salvation!

- You were bound in chains as a slave of sin,
- God chose you!
- He bought you with His precious blood as the price for your release as the redemption, (not by gold or silver which are perishable)
- God protects you
- God provides for you
- You are not your own
- You obey to Him so that He is your master and Father
- God disciplines us



Matthew 20: 20-25, ²⁵ But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.²⁷ And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The early church had the perfect meaning of this statements that’s why they obeyed the word of the Lord and went and preached the Gospel everywhere.

Matthew 28:19-20, Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

In the early church they have been threatened but they did not waver to the commitment they have had towards the Lord.

Acts 4:29, And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that **Your slaves may speak Your message** with complete boldness,

Romans 1:1, Paul, **a slave of Christ Jesus**, called as an apostle and singled out for God’s good news

Colossians 4:1, Masters, **supply your slaves with what is right and fair**, since you know that you too have a Master in heaven.

Colossians 4:7, Tychicus, our dearly loved brother, faithful servant, and **fellow slave in the Lord**, will tell you all the news about me.

Colossians 4:12, Epaphras, who is one of you, **a slave of Christ Jesus**, greets you. He is always contending for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills.

Philippians 1:1, **Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus**: To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

Titus 1:1, Paul, a **slave of God** and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to build up the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness

2 Peter 1:1, **Simeon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ**: To those who have obtained a faith of equal privilege with ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

James 1:1, **James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ**: To the 12 tribes in the Dispersion. Greetings.

Revelation 1:1, The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave Him to show **His slaves** what must quickly take place. He sent it and signified it through **His angel to His slave John**,

How can we understand this? Until we apply this on the life of Jesus Christ we may not be able to understand.

Philippians 2: 3-10, Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. ⁴ Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **⁵ Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus** ⁶ who, existing in the form of God did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. ⁷ Instead **He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave**, taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a man in His external form, ⁸ He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death— even to death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow— of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth—

Though Jesus was Son, yet He chose to become a slave!

His identity is Son, but His assignment is slavery!

So, my identity is a Christian, the son of God, but my assignment is slave to my Lord Jesus Christ.

With this thought kindly look below the passage.

Luke 17:7-10, ⁷ “Which one of you having **a slave tending sheep or plowing** will say to him when he comes in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’? ⁸ Instead, will he not tell him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat, get ready, and serve me while I eat and drink; later you can eat and drink’? ⁹ Does he thank that slave because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ In the same way, when you have done all that you were

commanded, you should say, *'We are good-for-nothing slaves; we've only done our duty.'*"

We are good-for-nothing slaves!!

So, what is my ministry?

Let us look at what Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.

In chapter 3, Paul has been talking about the human leaders in the church.

In effect he puts of the argument that I am Apollos, Cephas etc., saying that everyman in the New Testament are equal. There is no one who is greater or smaller.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, ¹Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

So here we are commended by God to be good steward of the mysteries of God.

Here the word used in Greek is 'huperetes'.

Our English bible translated this as minister of God, and we as society, made it into something very dignified, very great, something very wonderful and something with a whole lot of honor.

If only they had translated as slave "Let a man regard us as slaves of Christ." There is no great dignity in the term. Slaves of Christ is the first term of identification.

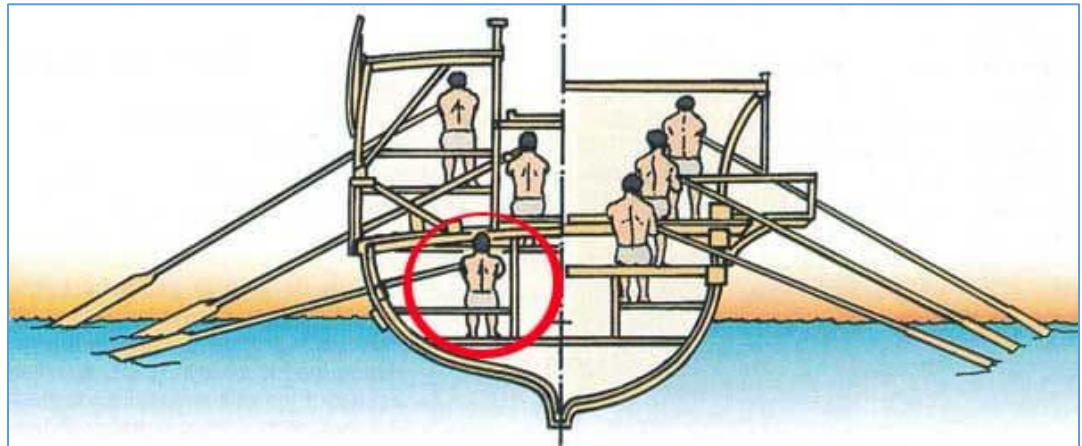
So, we are commanded to be slaves of Christ. How will you show you are a slave to Christ? By simply serving His people.

When I serve Christ, I will be serving the people. There is a slight difference in serving people by serving Christ and serving. But the motive becomes very different.

When a man's focus gets shifted towards meeting and fulfilling their needs of the people he may end up violating what the Lord wants him to do. He may compromise the spiritual principles in which God called you to do His ministry.

I have learnt this lesson from the life of Moses, when he led the people of Israel from Egypt his focus was always on meeting the needs of the people and failed to focus on God.

Sometimes it's hard to keep your focus upon what God wants you to do when you have so much of needs all around you.



'Huperetes' were the bottom rank of the people. They were subordinate and were considered as low, and the most menial person doing the simplest manual task and very common slave. When you think of the pastor, he is considered in the Scripture as the lowest level of the slaves. Paul says to consider us as galley slaves, under rowers, the lowest. You don't exalt them.

Galley slaves are people who works very hard, typically performing menial or thankless tasks.

You don't exalt one galley slave over another. We are slaves of Christ. We are the lowest of low servants.

So, when Paul was asking the question who is better? Paul, or Apollos or Cephas? They are all nothing but slaves of Jesus Christ, galley slaves. The only thing is that the Lord chose us!!

There are few instances Jesus calls them as galley slaves to name the disciples.

The word 'huperetes' used by Jesus and His apostles will give us the perfect understanding of the whole counsel of God.

John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus. "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here

Luke calls the apostles as huperetes.

Luke 1:1-2, Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us,² just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us.

Apostle Paul says that again,

Acts 26:16, But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness of what you have seen and of what I will reveal to you.

1 Corinthians 9:16-17, For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason to boast, because an obligation is placed on me. And woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷ For if I do this willingly, I have a reward, but if unwillingly, I am entrusted with a stewardship.

Colossians 1:25, I have become its servant, according to God's administration that was given to me for you, to make God's message fully known,

Application

God's Word is nothing but God's revelation about Himself and His will for our lives.

The Bible may not comprise everything that the Lord has in store but its complete and sufficient for the mankind to know about Him and His will in our lives.

Sufficiency of the Scriptures

2 Peter 1:3, ³ His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

So, to be a good steward we need to,

- Study the Word of God,
- Know the Word of God,
- Meditate the word of God,
- Memorize the word of God,
- Obey the word of God and

- Proclaim the word of God

Study the word of God

2 Timothy 2:15, *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.*

WE should not just listen to message or Sunday sermon but should individually spend time in studying the Word of God.

Use a personal copy of the Word of God not the electronic media types but a hard copy.

Know the Word of God

2 Peter 3:18, *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

Psalms 119:169, *Let my cry reach You, Lord; give me understanding according to Your word.*

Wisdom comes to you by knowing the Word of God.

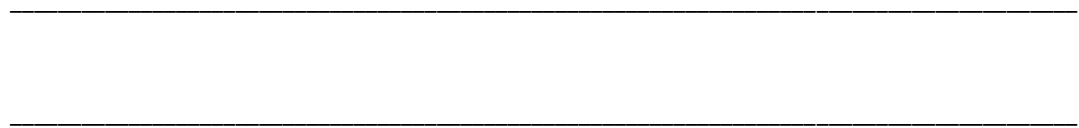
When you know the Word, you can make decisions based on biblical truth, not on your feelings or desires.

John 17:3, *This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.*

Meditate on the Word of God

1 Timothy 4:15, *Practice these things; be committed to them, so that your progress may be evident to all.*

Psalms 1:1-3, *How happy is the man who does not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path of sinners or join a group of mockers! ² Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted beside streams of water that bears its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.*



Joshua 1:8, *This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite^[c] it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.*

Psalms 119:148, *I am awake through each watch of the night to meditate on Your promise.*

In the last conference we spoke on the subject of *selah*...

Memorize the word of God

Psalms 119:11, *I have treasured Your word in my heart so that I may not sin against You.*

Psalms 37:31, *The instruction of his God is in his heart; his steps do not falter.*

Colossians 3:16, *Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly among you, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

Obey the Word of God

James 1:22-25, ²² *But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.* ²³ *Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror.* ²⁴ *For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.* ²⁵ *But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but one who does good works—this person will be blessed in what he does.*

What does it say of our lives when we know the Word of God, but we do not obey the Word?

By not obeying we are telling God that

- I am rejecting your authority
- I am smarter than you are
- I don't care about the redemption

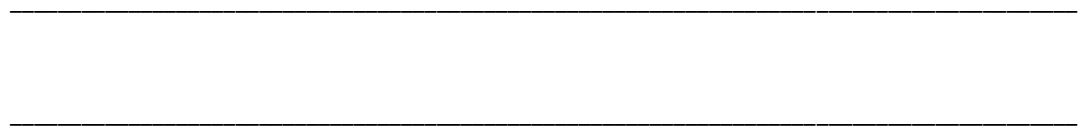
Proclaim the word of God

*Psalms 118:17, I will not die, but I will live
and proclaim what the Lord has done.*

Great commission commanded us to go and proclaim the good news.

*John 17:8 &14, because the words that You gave Me,
I have given them. They have received them and have known for certain that I came
from You. They have believed that You sent Me.*

*I have given them Your word. The world hated them
because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world.*



5. Life Priorities Interactive

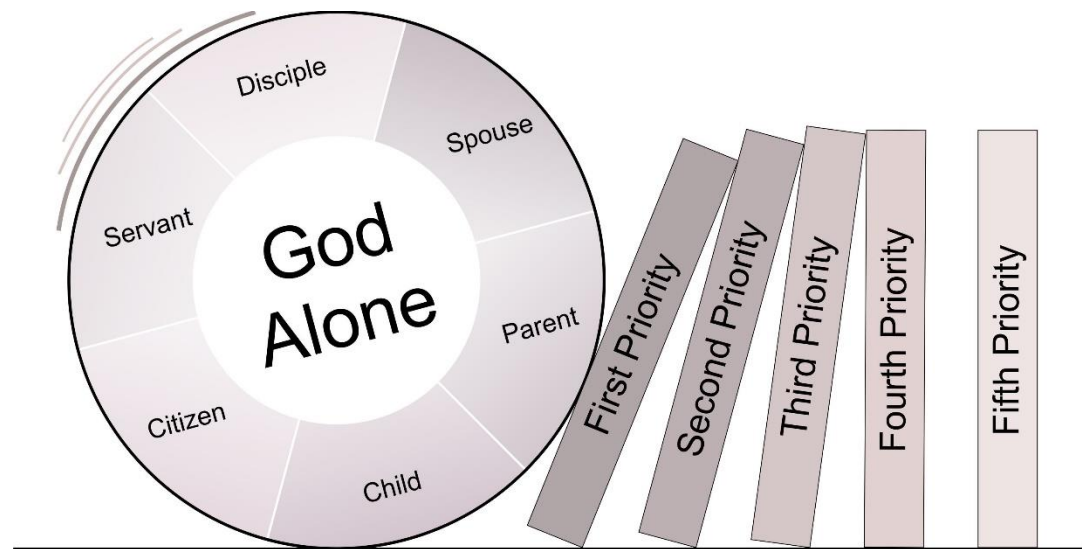
1 Corinthians 4:1-2, ¹ Let a man so consider us, **as servants of Christ** and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Ecclesiastes 3:1, There is an occasion for everything, and a time for every activity under heaven:

There is a time for everything and we need to have a schedule. Also, we need to accept the schedule of another person. Don't try to change or alter their schedule but accept them and leave what you cannot do. Please do Not cramp your schedule trying to accommodate everyone schedules.

The life in 21st century is very demanding, no one has time for anything. We live in an instant world, we can't wait for anything.

Some of them don't even have time to eat or to rest sufficiently. Some wish that they have 26 hours in a day rather than 24!



Role model of Jesus Christ

Mark 6:30-31, Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. ³¹ And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and **rest a while**." For there were many coming and going, and **they did not even have time to eat**.

This is the status of the disciple of Jesus Christ. So, Christ had asked them to come to deserted place so that they can rest and eat.

How do we manage our time as a better steward?

Let us look at the life of Jesus Christ.

Christ lived only for 33 and half years. His ministry was only close to three and half years.

Let me shock you with these two statements.

- **Jesus did NOT do all that He wanted to do!**
- **Jesus did NOT do all that the people wanted or expected Him to do!!**

Please do take a moment for this to sink in you.

John 6:38, For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me

John 4:34, Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

John 17:4, I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

Jesus did only what the Father God wanted Him to do!

How did He manage to do?

Mark 1:35-39, Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. ³⁷ When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." ³⁸ But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." ³⁹ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

He could have spent His time to heal and minister to the people non-stop, as there were so much of pressing needs.

This is the starting point of the ministry of Jesus Christ, so He could have happily settled there so that people would come to know Him.

But Jesus took time to be alone with God.

Spending time alone with God is the key priority every one of us should learn from Jesus Christ.

By spending time alone with God, Jesus was able to understand what the Father wants Him to do. Communication with God is the principle thing.

The disciples who were with Jesus asked them to teach one thing which is nothing other than prayer.

Luke 11:1, Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

They did Not ask Him,

- How to heal the sick,
- How to multiply the bread,
- How to raise the dead,
- How to preach,

But they asked Him to teach how to pray, the reason that they could see the difference in the prayer life of Jesus Christ.

Perspective of Eternity

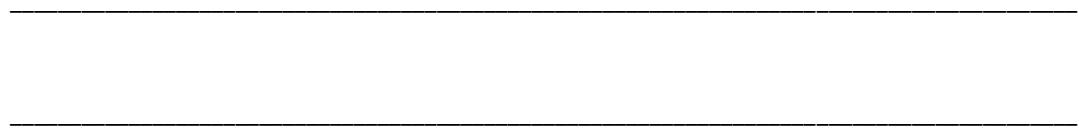
Doing everything in the perspective of eternity.

God had set eternity in every man's heart.

Ecclesiastes 3:11, He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also put eternity in their hearts, but man cannot discover the work God has done from beginning to end.

God has a perfect plan.

2 Peter 3:8-10, But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering



toward ^[c]us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Please do understand we are part of the perfect plan of God not God becoming part of your plan!

So, God has prepared a good work for us in advance, we ought to walk in them.

Ephesians 2:8-10, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Live in the light of eternity

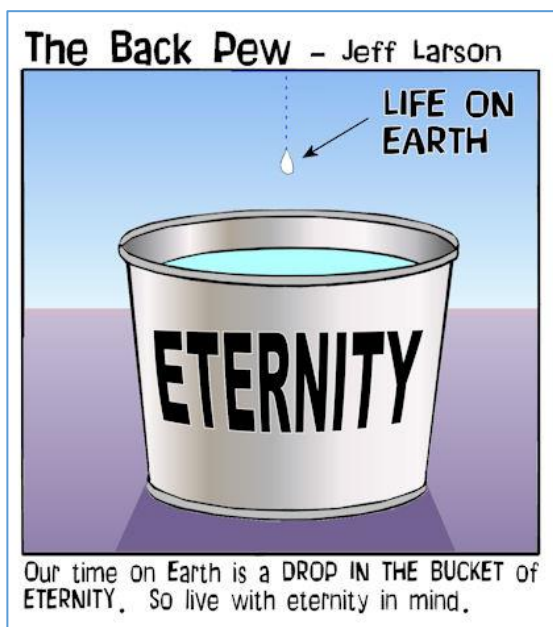
We are spiritual being going through this human experience, our stay here on earth will be very less compared to eternity.

James 4:14, whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Psalms 39:4-5, "Lord, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. ⁵ Indeed, You

have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah

Psalms 90:10-12, The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labour and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. ¹¹ Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. ¹² So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.



God expects us to live with eternity in our forefront while we live here on the earth, the reason being our life here is too short when we compare to eternity.

What causes you to be busy?

1. Greed

People are not happy with what they have got. They want bigger house, bigger car, bigger TV and latest gadgets etc., So they are not happy with their salary. They want to make more money, to earn more take more working hours, or take job at different destination, or work overtime during the weekends, or travel for few hours there are many reasons.

Bible says contentment is the great virtue we need to learn.

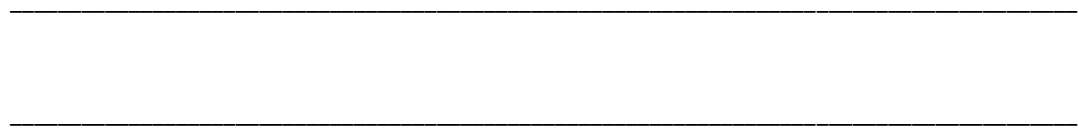
1 Timothy 6:6-9, Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

2. People tend to please men

Acts 6:1-7, Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, ⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

⁷ Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.



The early church was confronted with the huge demand of meeting the needs of the people. There they set their priorities right. Not to please people but focus on God.

Instead of adding this job to their present responsibilities, they delegated the task to others. God's will and our priority must determine our activities rather than the wants or even the needs of people.

No point in pleasing the people.

3. Don't be lazy in wasting your time

Proverbs 6:6-11, Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, ⁷ Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, ⁸ Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest. ⁹ How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? ¹⁰ A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep— ¹¹ So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.

Proverbs 12:24, The hand of the diligent will rule, But the slack hand will be put to forced labour.

Proverbs 13:4, The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.

Proverbs 18:9, He also who is slack in his work Is brother to him who destroys.

Proverbs 20:4, The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.

Proverbs 21:25, The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work;

Proverbs 26:14, As the door turns on its hinges, So does the sluggard on his bed.

Matthew 25:26, "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

Only the man who was lazy did not use his talents and was punished for not being a good steward.

Planning and schedule

Luke 14:28, For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it

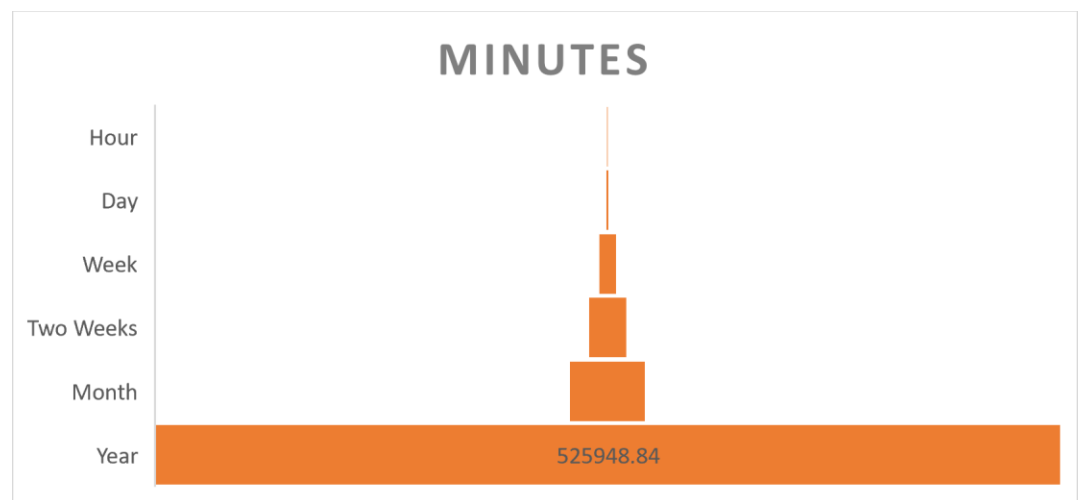
Jesus spells the condition to be His disciple in this passage. One of the key thing He told us that you ought to be good planner.

1 day = 24 hours / 1 day = 1,440 minutes

1 week = 168 hours / 1 week = 10,080 minutes

1 month = 730.48 hours / 1 month = 43,829.07 minutes

1 year = 8 765.81 hours / 1 year = 525,949 minutes



1 Corinthians 14:40, Let all things be done decently and in order.

So, let us make a schedule of your existing day... be honest with yourself. If possible join with your spouse and make fill this chart.

<i>Start Time</i>	<i>End Time</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
06:00	06:30	0:30	

<i>Start Time</i>	<i>End Time</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Purpose</i>

Now simply your schedule in the following way in the descending order.

<i>Number of hours</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
7 or 8 hours	Sleep
	Work
	Travel

<i>Number of hours</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
	Cooking
	Eating
	Exercise
	TV
	Reading
	Writing
	Praying

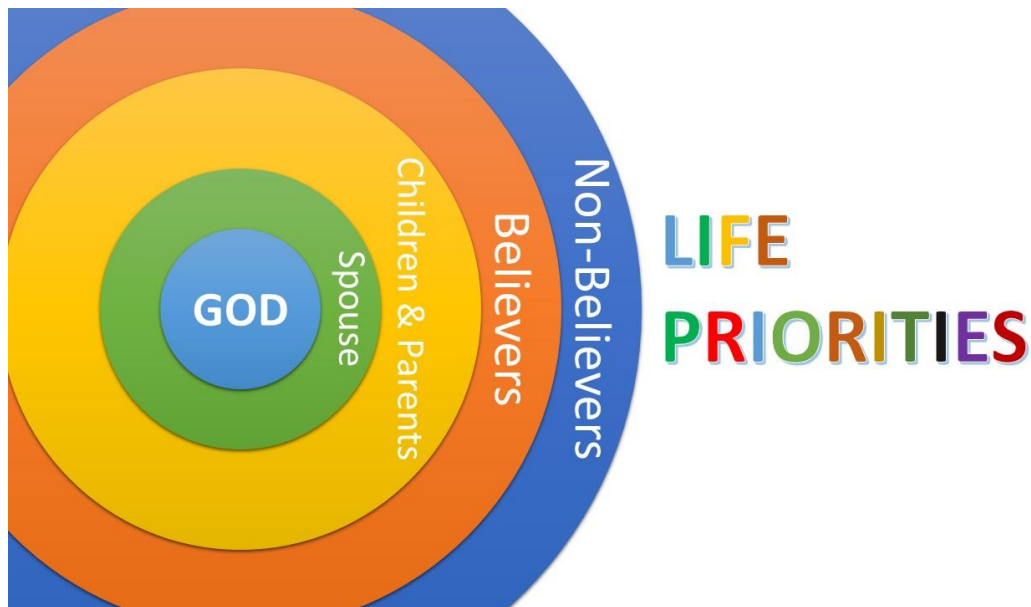
Today we have so many preachers talking about tithing of money, do you spend 10% of your time to God?

I want you to ask these hard questions on yourself.

1. Is my time spent in the light of eternity?
2. Does God get priority in my life?
3. Am I spending my time wisely?
4. Does this reflect what I wanted or desired to do?
5. What are the things I can delete/ cut from my schedule immediately?

I let you prepare a time sheet for your day.

Priorities first



Time with God will reflect your relationship with God

Will this impact the time I had set aside for building my relationship with God?

Can I / should I adjust my time with God to help meet this need, or should this need be met by someone else?

Only you can do: Spending devotional time with God, studying His word for yourself, memorizing Scripture, fasting, repenting, etc

Time with spouse the second biggest responsibility

How will this impact the time I normally spend with my husband, children, or parents?

Only you can do: Being intimate with your spouse, having a face-to-face conversation, helping him/her with responsibilities he has delegated to you, working out to stay physically fit, eating healthy food

Time with kids / parents (depending upon your life season)

Do I really need to spend this amount of time carting my kids around to activities that are not promoting eternally significant goals or improving our family's life?

Would it be better to let someone else do this thing or is this a thing that only I can / should do?

Only you can do: Tucking your children into bed, discipling your children, honouring your parents.

Relationships/Responsibilities to believers

Does this event affect my ability to carry out previously scheduled serving opportunities in church?

Is this something that could be delegated to someone else so that I can focus on what only I can do (Exodus 18:13-22)?

Only you can do: Fulfilling a serving opportunity that you signed up for, continuing a conversation that you started with an elderly member of your church

Relationships/Responsibilities to unbelievers

Will this event allow me to have time developing my pre-existing relationships with unbelievers?

Will this event allow me to meet and be able to focus on new friendships with unbelievers?

The work that God has given me to accomplish today/this week/this month (job outside the home, tasks within the home)

Letting your light shine with the neighbours that live next to your house, submitting to your boss

Start Time	End Time	Duration	Purpose
06:00	06:30	0:30	

Have I been realistic in the amount of time I have scheduled to complete this task well but not perfection?

6. Talents

God can and will use every little thing in your life. One may consider something worthless, but God can use that for His glory and make it yield harvest for His Kingdom.

1 Peter 4:10, Just **as each one of you has received a special gift** [a spiritual talent, an ability graciously given by God], employ it in serving one another as [is appropriate for] **good stewards of God's multi-faceted grace** [faithfully using the diverse, varied gifts and abilities granted to Christians by God's unmerited favour]. (AMP)

Everyone of you have some talent, ability and a spiritual gift that you have received from God. We ought to put it into use in the Kingdom of God.

Moses

Let me start this simple illustration from the word of God.

Exodus 4:1-4, Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.' "

² So the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

He said, "A rod."

³ And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. ⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), ⁵ "that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

A shepherd's staff, which every shepherd uses in those days, at first look you may think it's of very little value.

It is little only in the hands of a shepherd but it is much in the hands of God.

God performs a great miracle through the rod which was in the hands of Moses. As long as it was in the hands of Moses it was just a rod but when he dropped it and picked it up it becomes the rod of God.

Remember that rod was enough to take care of the needs of 3 million people in the wilderness for 40 long years!

God uses what we see as little insignificant value and brings a great increase to glorify His name.

So, let us ponder in this lesson what God had deposited to you in your hands?



Ephesians 4:11-16, And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

God has designed it in a way some people are chosen to represent Him in a specific way.

This is a great portion to understand that God has clear intention of every believer should come to

- the unity of faith,
- matured man,

- no longer be children,
- fullness of Christ,
- speaking truth in love,
- grow together and
- edifying in one another in love

We have looked at the gifts in our previous years conference, which you can watch it on YouTube.

Apart from that everyone has been joined into the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:11, But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

It is His choice and He chooses.

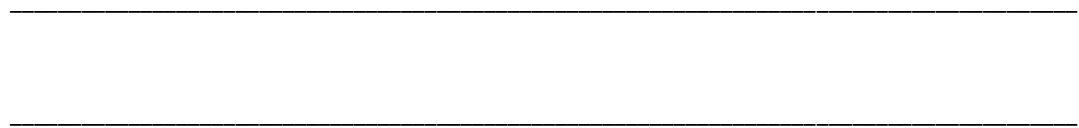
1 Corinthians 12:18, But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

There are many roles to play in the kingdom.

- Evangelism,
- Worship,
- Preaching,
- Music,
- Teaching,
- Administration
- Writing,
- Singing,
- Prophecy etc.,

Same thing we can see in the local body there are wide variety of gifts which can be used.

- Welcome ministry,
- Evangelism,
- Choir
- Music,
- Setting up the church,
- Cleaning
- Computer,



- Sound system,
- Worship,
- Preaching,
- Teaching,
- Making coffee tea
- Serving
- Cleaning etc.,

Everyone is gifted in some special way for some special task. And an essential part of our stewardship is to discover what our talent and spiritual gifts are, then to put that talent to work “for the good of others”. So that the whole “body,” that the church, may grow and be built up through love.

Everyone, those who are sitting here and those who will be watching this video has some special gift/talent.

Matthew 25:14-15, “For it is just like a man going on a journey. He called his own slaves and turned over his possessions to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents; [c] to another, two; and to another, one—to each according to his own ability. Then he went on a journey. Immediately

In this parable Jesus says about the slave.

The slaves were defined as, “ones who had given themselves up for another’s will, devoted to the other to the disregard of his own interest.”

This is exactly what God calls us to do.

2 Corinthians 8:5, It was more than we could have hoped for! First they gave themselves to the Lord; and then, by God's will they gave themselves to us as well. (GNT)

The fact that the text says they were His (God’s) possessions reminds us that God own everything, and He had given us this stewardship.

Talents, were sums of money or property value.

But of course, this parable has wider implications than just the management of capital investment and portfolio.

Each one was given “according to his own ability”

God who gives us our talents!

When talking about the Spiritual gifts it is God who gives as HE desires.

1 Corinthians 12:18, But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

Not only has God entrusted us with spiritual gifts but in addition God made each of us exactly the way He desired. He gave us the talents and abilities He desires for us to invest for His Glory.

Right from our creation. When the scriptures explain to us about how we have been created.

Psalms 139:13, For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.

Jesus knew and clearly taught that persons differ in talents. There are diversities of gifts. Some are chosen for greater purpose, but some are for lesser purpose, everything is essential.

Every gift/talent/capability is important to the life of the church.

The church body is composed of many members who have been entrusted with various and diverse talents. Each and every one is essential to the health of the whole.

1 Corinthians 12:14, For in fact the body is not one member but many

1 Corinthians 12:26, And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

God gives talents both spiritual gifts and abilities for the common good of the body.

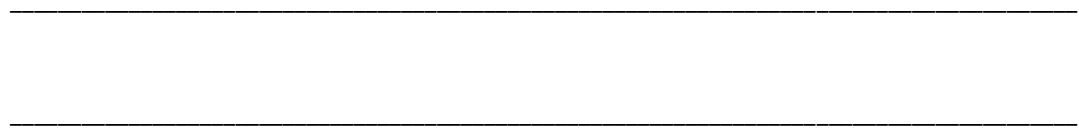
1 Corinthians 12:7, But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

So, what stops you to recognise your gift and using them?

Let us go back where we started!

Moses had talents and abilities but then he didn't realise it for a long while.

When God told Moses to go to Pharaoh he gave all kinds of excuses in the end he recognised that he had the leadership skill.



Moses ran away from Pharaoh, that fear was crippling him. Secondly, he knew they will have no respect for him.

Moses, What's in your hand?

Only a shepherd's rod
A weak, frail stick for guiding sheep.

Moses drop the rod!

Becomes snake
It's become a living thing!

What you have, give it to the Lord, what was dead in you will become alive.

Christian, what's in your hand?
Some simple, little thing?
Some gift neglected, even despised?
Still, if you will bring
Your gift, and lay it at the altar,

Moses took the shepherd's rod, but it never called as shepherd's rod but as "rod of God"

*Exodus 4:20, Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses **took the rod of God in his hand.***

*Exodus 17:9, And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with **the rod of God in my hand.**"*

So, when you give your insignificant thing then God will use it and make it significant.

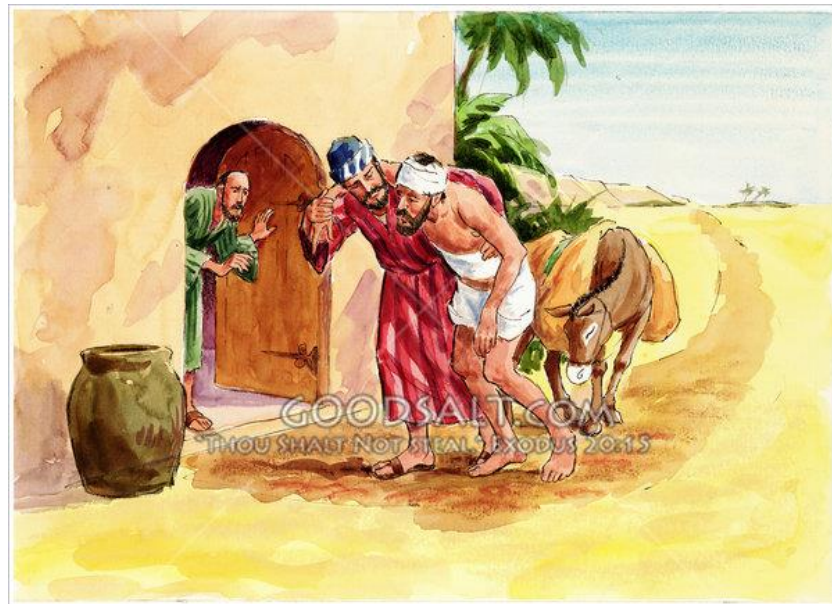
Let me give you another illustration from the bible who used his talents for the glory of God.

Good Samaritan

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:30-37, ³⁰⁻³⁶ And Jesus gave him the following reply: "A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He fell into the hands of bandits who stripped off his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead. It so happened that a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came on the scene and when he saw him, he too passed by on the other side. But then a Samaritan traveller came along to the place where the man was lying, and at the sight of him **he was touched with pity**. He went across to him and **bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine**. Then **he put him on his own mule**, brought him to an inn and **did what he could for him**. Next day he took out **two silver coins and gave them** to the inn-keeper with the words, 'Look after him, will you? **I will pay you back whatever more you spend**, when I come through here on my return.' Which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbour to the bandits' victim?"

³⁷ "The man who gave him practical sympathy," he replied. "Then you go and give the same," returned Jesus. (PHILIPS)



Let me set the stage for you.

Samaritan had

- Donkey,
- Wine,
- Oil,
- Cloth,
- Money and
- Heart filled with kindness

If we transfer the same setting today, then we can say he is like one of the Middle-class person like you and me.

Donkey	Transport car
Wine	Luxury
Oil	Luxury
Cloth	First aid kit plus plenty of spare clothes
Money	Spare money, cards
Heart filled with kindness	Christ is in you

The Good Samaritan used everything.

Poured wine on the wound	Antiseptic
Oil	Healing
Clothes	Used to bandage the wounds
Donkey	to take him along with him, possibly he put the man in the donkey he may have walked along, going extra mile
Money	He paid for the accommodation
Did all he could do for him	Every resource has been used
Extra cash	he paid extra two coins for the future
Assured	he even assured if anything extra he will pay for it in when he returns

Can you see what an example of stewardship! Everything what he had he used it for the glory of God.

Let me show one verse in the Old Testament which God spoke through Moses when He led the Israelites out of bondage.

Exodus 10:26, Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the Lord our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there."

Bring everything and we don't know what the Lord will require from us!

Do you have such attitude?

Application

Take time as a family to think through your stewardship plan for the treasure God has entrusted to you.

We think about how we spend our time and how we invest our talents.

Healthy stewardship is about money. In our day money is very important to us and to our society. Money is our most obvious "treasure."

What we do with our money reveals where our heart leads us.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Now, concerning what you wrote about the money to be raised to help God's people in Judea. You must do what I told the churches in Galatia to do. ² Every Sunday each of you must put aside some money, in proportion to what you have earned, and save it up, so that there will be no need to collect money when I come. ³ After I come, I shall give letters of introduction to those you have approved, and send them to take your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems worthwhile for me to go, then they can go along with me.

Paul's advice is simple.

Set aside a time to give which is Sunday.

Set aside the money according to your income.

Save it and invest in the Kingdom.

Focus on the purpose of your giving, here in this case Paul is collecting from all the churches in Macedonia and in Galatia for the needs of the Jerusalem church.

The best place to give your offerings is where the Lord leads you.

Recognizing that stewardship is a form of worship reminds us of the blessings we have received from God.

With gratitude from what God has done for us.

With hope for what God can do through us. And with generosity as we open our purses to take the opportunity to share with others what we have received from God.

7. Peace of God - Devotion 02

God guides us through His peace which resides in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Just hours before Jesus was crucified he was concerned about the peace, joy and faith of his followers. If you knew that you were to be killed tomorrow the most gruesome death, will you be concerned about other's peace or your own?



Jesus said that He is giving His peace.

John 14:27, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

"Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid. (GNT)

In the world peace is the absence of trouble or wars or problems. But the peace that Jesus mentioned is about His presence.

Having the peace of Jesus Christ should cast away every kind of trouble, fear, anxiety, stress and panics.

John 16:33, These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The one who overcame the world had given His peace to us.

John 20:19, Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

John 20:21, So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

John 20:26, And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

Why this is so important?

When you lose your peace the enemy attacks you in three major areas which affects your Christian life and will deter your stewardship.

1. First love towards God
2. Your identity
3. Your creativity

Let us go back to the garden of Eden and we can learn from that the enemy's trick is the same right from the beginning.

God created Adam and made Eve out of him and made them as husband and wife.

God gave them authority over everything and also access to eat anything except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15-17, Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

When the serpent came first his attack was to separate them and let them loose their first love for God by first disobeying Him.

So, look carefully the line of attack of the Satan.

Genesis 3:1, Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

Did God say?

Secondly attack on their identity,

Genesis 3:4-5, Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

They were made in the image of God and they were living in the glory realm of God but here Satan says when you eat only then you will become like Him.

Thirdly, when you lose your love and identity then you become fearful and lose all your God given creativity. Fear kills your creative imaginary skills God had deposited inside of you.

Genesis 3:9-10, Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings (Genesis 3:7).

So, in our everyday life God wants to lead us, but we are not able to get into that realm, because we don't realise we lose the ability to realise His presence.

Our tongue plays a major part in holding and possessing the Peace of God.

Proverbs 18:21, Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

You can either solve your problem or make it bigger. The power is within you.

When you keep voicing your problems then you are making your problems stronger and you start believing in your problems more than God.

Faith comes by hearing!

Romans 10:17, So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Relegate the Anxiety

Apostle Paul gives us the lesson for us to learn and have spiritual stability.

Philippians 4:6-7, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the

peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Anxiety affects your love!

Reaction to the information what we receive, makes us anxious it may be either good or a bad one.

Just for a moment think everything you were ever anxious about it came to nothing!

The way you handle problems, temptations, trials, difficulties, reflects your view of God. When you know the Lord, all His power, His promise, all His resources and purposes and plans toward you, then you understand that He is always near.

Where's the cause for anxiety?

What are you going to be anxious about?

God is sovereign, God is loving, God is in control of everything in your life for His glory and your good, then you will know and understand that there is nothing beyond the purview of God's control.

God is orchestrating everything for eternal purpose and you rest in that confidently in faith, then you will be stable in the most serious times.

"God has a purpose in this, this is the Lord's doing and We must see the Lord's purpose." That kind of faith will hold you through the gravest difficulty.

David prayed in Psalms 31

***Psalms 31:1-5**, O Lord, I have come to you for protection; don't let me be disgraced. Save me, for you do what is right. ² Turn your ear to listen to me; rescue me quickly. Be my rock of protection, a fortress where I will be safe. ³ You are my rock and my fortress. For the honour of your name, lead me out of this danger ⁴ Pull me from the trap my enemies set for me for I find protection in you alone. ⁵ I entrust my spirit into your hand. Rescue me, Lord, for you are a faithful God. (NLT)*

Prayerlessness causes many trouble. Two sides of that coin are like this, one we don't ask second we don't replace it with good things in our thinking.

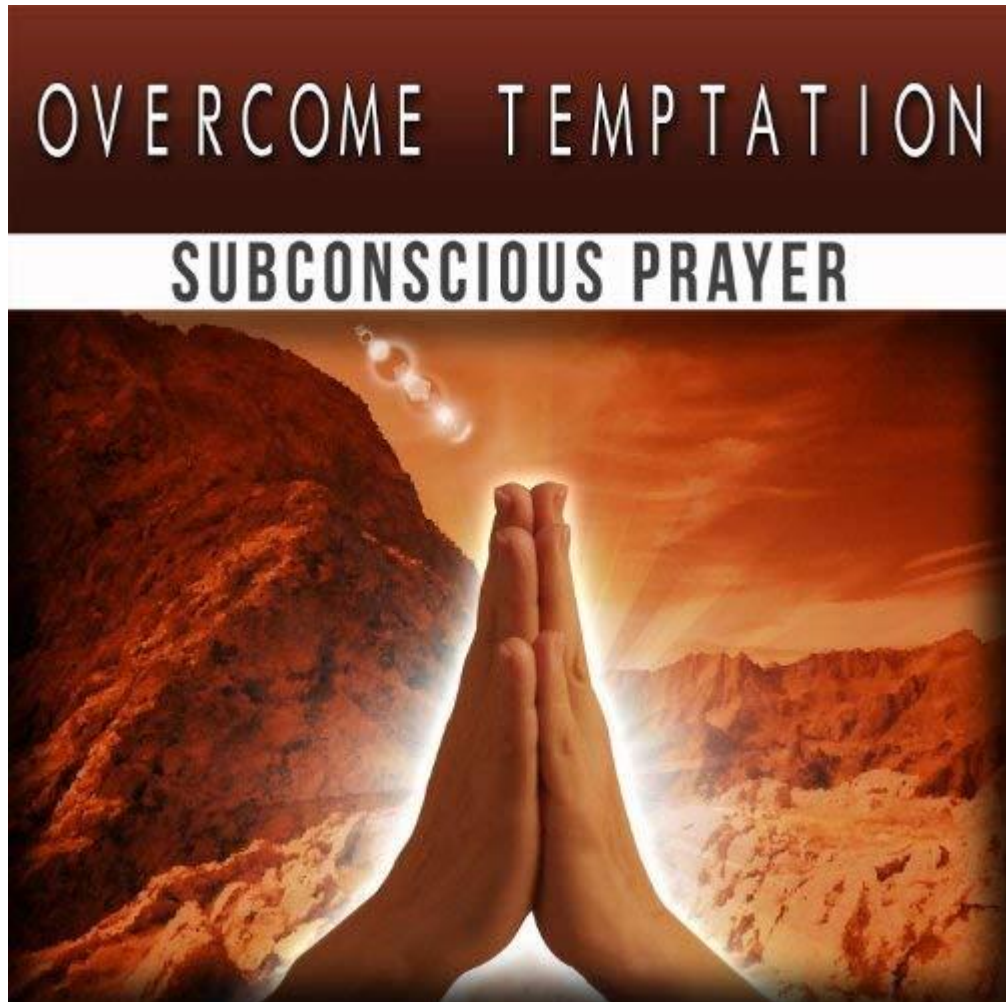
At times the lack in our life comes because of lack of prayer.

***James 4:2b**, Yet you do not have because you do not ask.*

You have not because you ask not

The other side is protecting you from all kinds of temptation. Pray so that you will not enter into temptation.

Matthew 26:41, Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."



Prayerlessness creates a situation where you will be tempted but you may be able to come through.

One need to replace the anxiety with good things!

Remember when Jesus compared man's heart as a house and gave a parable. A house which was cluttered with all kinds of things once cleaned then it must be replaced with new things.

Matthew 12:43-45, "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. ⁴⁴ Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

When you lose the peace we need to go back where we left and restart from there. You need to constantly check what happened during the day which caused you to lose the peace then go back to the place repent of it and regain it from the Lord.

Replace it with Truth

When you remove the anxious thoughts in your life then you ought to replace it with good things!

Philippians 4:8, Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Truth is what sets you free!

*Psalms 1:1-4, Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

Creativity flows out of the peace



Zechariah speaks about creativity to defeat the four horns, God answer for that, was four artisan in **Zechariah 1:18-21**

When Zechariah lifted his eyes and saw the four horns, which is nations or national powers. Zechariah sees four ruthless powerful, national powers when he sees the four horns. In the 19th verse he says: "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." Or perfect translation would be, "Shall scatter Judah, Israel and Jerusalem."

V20, "And the Lord showed me four artisans for four smiths, four workers in metal or wood who will wreck and destroy the horns. That's exactly what they are going to do for the horns who scatter Jerusalem.

Now what we can see is when the enemy rises up to scatter, God used the creativity of the artisan to destroy them.

When you live in the perfect peace of God you will have the creativity skills works in you to destroy the enemy plan in and around you.

Let us look at this in the life of Jesus Christ.

- Jesus finished His public ministry of 3 years.

- He was speaking here the previous night before His arrest to be crucified.
- He knew the betrayer, Judas, and He was going to wash his feet too.
- Going to carry the punishment of the sins of the whole humanity.
- Jesus was facing the most gruesome death.
- Going to be ill-treated very badly.
- Mocked, scourged, beaten, ridiculed etc.,

Let us see how Jesus managed these circumstances at this juncture.

John 13:1-5, Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.² And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,⁴ rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Jesus knew that this is His hour for Him to be crucified.

V3a, Jesus knew the Father had given all things to His hands.

We knew Jesus had everything with Him before He became a Man. It belonged to Him.

Now Jesus knew that He was going to have everything back to Him, rather He is going to inherit everything as a Son of Man. But at that point in time He was going to die on the cross.

How?

V3b, and that He had come from God and was going to God

He came from God and He is going back to God.

Eternal purpose and eternal destiny!

For eternity the things were with Him and He is going to gain once again everything as a Son of Man, so He was able to be at peace and serve the people.

He was able to wash the feet of the disciples by humbling Himself as a lowest form of a slave.

In ancient times, feet of the people accumulate lot of dirt with dusty roads or muddy roads or damp roads. Before every house, there was a water pot in the front of the house because you didn't go carrying mud into the house. So, there was a water pot/ small tank outside the house for the foot washing. It would fall upon the lowliest slave or the lowliest servant to do the foot washing because it was the lowliest task. Very unskilled and not the most enjoyable duty, but very necessary.

So, Jesus could humble himself to the lowliest of lowly because He knew by lowering Himself He will be exalted by God.

Conclusion

Many were not able to humble themselves or go low because their identity is wrapped up in their title or their position. But Jesus was able to go low because His focus and identity was on the eternal value.

As we have been seeing in this conference that everything is owned by God.

God had given you according to your measure of faith and ability.

You have been given the stewardship of using the privilege and the opportunity to make it increase or waste it.

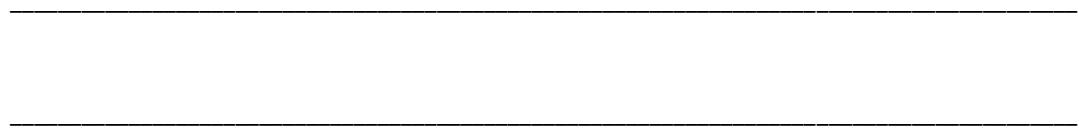
You are going to be with Lord one day face to face.

There will be a reckoning of all that God had placed in your hands.

Can you amend your ways!

Keep eternity on your focus!!

Humble before God and Let the Peace of God guide you always!!!



8. Family - Physical

Ephesians 3:15, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

I would like to bring to your attention there are two families we need to handle it.

1. Physical Family
2. Spiritual Family

So, in this lesson what we learn should be applied to both your Physical and Spiritual Family.

Many Christians do NOT realise that we have a greater responsibility to manage both in right perspective to be an effective steward of what the Lord had entrusted with you while you are here on this earth.

God had adopted you to be part of His family, for a reason.

John 15:16, You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.



As a follower of Christ, you now have been deposited with the ability to live a life that is fruitful. Through which you will be able to make an impact and a difference in this world. By blessing and helping others to glorify God that will make a difference not only now but for eternity.

Role always revolves:

In our entire life's journey, our family will take many forms.

For a child, the family is parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins, godparents and individuals with significant roles in the child's life.

As the child matures, gets married and gets a spouse, then their family gets expanded with children and relatives.

When the adult becomes responsible of parents as they were. The responsibility of aunts, uncles, cousins and more.

As the role within the family evolves, one become stewards of the authority and influence which holds in the family.

So, we are called to encourage and support our family members to grow in the faith.

We are also called to encourage and support them in developing their God given gifts and talents to the full for the glory of God.

Spouse:

This requires balance tempered by love and respect.



Loving your spouse, the way they feel most loved and them doing the same for you can play a major role in a successful marriage.

Proverbs 18:22, He **who finds a wife finds a good thing**,
And **obtains favour from the Lord**.

Genesis 2:18, The LORD God also said, "**It is not good for the man to be alone**. I will make for him a suitable helper."

God's divine plan is marriage and Family!

Proverbs 19:14, Houses and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

The marriage is from the Lord!

The spouse you have, either arranged by family or love but it all happened because of our Lord.

Genesis 1:28, God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth."

Genesis 25:21, Later, Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD heard his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived.

Joshua 24:3-4, ³ Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. ⁴ To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

Psalms 113:9, He settles the barren woman in her home, as a joyful mother to her children. Hallelujah!

Psalms 127:3, Children are indeed a heritage from the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is His reward.

Children are gift from the Lord.

We can see from the scriptures that your spouse and your children are from the Lord. The Lord God has trusted you and has given you the family!

Bill Hybels, pastor of one of the largest churches in the United States, wrote, "Lynne and I have never hidden the fact our marriage requires a tremendous amount of work—more than many marriages do. We have been married for nearly 2 1/2 decades, and still it seems we have to struggle for every tiny step of progress we make on the path toward marital joy. Personal woundedness, personality differences, and pressures of a highly visible lifestyle compound our challenges. But we pray, we talk, we seek counsel, we discipline ourselves, we grow, we change, we promise, we apologize, we confess, we adjust our expectations, we remind ourselves of our commitment, we look to the future, and we refuse to give up. We are in this marriage

for life—we have chosen to stay with the spouse ‘of our youth’—and we thank God for each step that brings us closer to rejoicing.

Bill Hybels, Making Life Work (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998)

We can see that marriage is a great challenge and these days the attack is on the institution of Marriage which God created at the very beginning in the garden of Eden.

The marriage has been redefined in many countries as its between two adults, irrespective of their sex, which is completely against the word of God.

We, Christians, ought to understand that the attack is more on the family.

1 Timothy 4:3, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

Living together is a very popular concept! People want to try everything before they buy but none of them buy the trial car or demo piece as it is!

So, a greater amount of stewardship needs to be taught among the younger generation about the marriage.

Good steward of Family:

As we look around in our homes, we can see that most items within, have a specific purpose.

- The chair is for sitting.
- The dining table is for eating.
- The window is for light to see and for fresh air to breathe.

Just as these “things” are put in our houses for a specific reason, God has also placed us men in our families because He has a purpose for us.

A chair with a broken leg is useless in the house. Though it takes up valuable space, it cannot be sat upon.



People living in the house and all the visitors, must be protected from sitting on the broken chair or they will likely hurt themselves by crashing to the floor!

Ephesians 5:21, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ"

Though I have preached over 18 messages about Family, I will still list few important things connected to this subject.

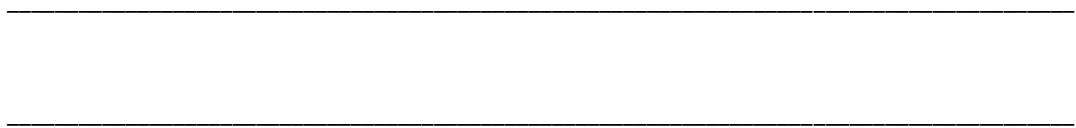
Role of a Husband:

1. Lead

Ephesians 5:23, For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body.

Jesus Christ leads the Church, so men are to lead their families. Jesus Christ's leadership was not self-centred. He sacrificed Himself to serve others. Why? Because of the Love!

Culture, traditions, society and of course parental expectations must be put aside, and Biblical culture needs to be established above all.



2. Love

Ephesians 5:25, Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Ephesians 5:28, So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

Ephesians 5:33, Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

In this short passage God spoke to us three times that men ought to love his own wife!

A Christian man is to nurture love for his wife and family. Jesus Christ continually loves His Church, so men are to always love their families. It does not matter what any family member does either good or bad.

3. Loyal

Ephesians 5:31, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

Jesus Christ stands by His Church through every experience of life, same way each man is to do with his wife. Loyalty means showing lifelong commitment and integrity of character.

Word of God prohibits polygamy, adultery and pre-marital sex. Standards of society may vary but it must be measured against the standards what our Lord had set in His word. Men ought to choose to live the Godly way.

4. Living as an Example

Ephesians 5:1-2, Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ²And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

So, we ought to live as an example for all, especially to the household.

One study involving 994 couples with children, researchers found that children who spent more time with their fathers had fewer behavioural problems.

In another study involving 14,700 teenage girls, researchers found that the closer a relationship a girl had with her father, the more likely she was to delay sex and the less likely she was to use drugs and alcohol.

5. Learn and Live

1 Peter 3:7, Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Christian husband will be always learning about his wife. The better you get to know her by the things they live through together, the more you realize how thankful you should be to God for His gift of her to you.

Men and women are not only physically different, and they are emotionally different too. This does not make one of any more value than the other. But it does mean that men and women require different treatment. What pleases me may not please my wife, so I must learn to bring her pleasure.

A word of praise or encouragement can mean as much as a bouquet of flowers. A “Thank you” or a “Well done” from you may make this the best day of the week! She knows you have noticed her and appreciated what she has done.

Role of a Wife:

1. Submissive

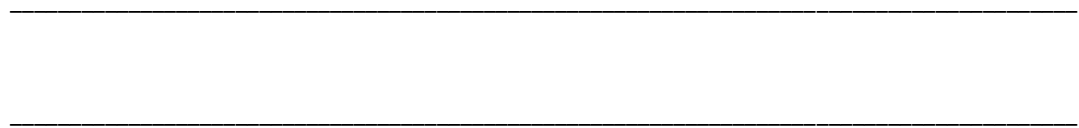
Peter addresses the problems of various submissive relationships.

a) Slave

1 Peter 2:18-10, Household slaves, submit with all fear to your masters, not only to the good and gentle but also to the cruel. ¹⁹ For it brings favour if, mindful of God's will, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if you sin and are punished, and you endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favour with God.

b) Christ, as an example

1 Peter 2:21 & 23, For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:



²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

c) Same way, wife must submit

1 Peter 3:1 &5, Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,

⁵For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

Being submissive is not male chauvinist attitude, That's the order in which God instituted the family.

2. Helper

*Genesis 2:18, And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him **a helper comparable to him.**"*

Man Needs Help

Purpose of woman's creation is to help her husband.

Bible portrays One is helper and another is helpee.

Ways in which the wife can help her husband.

1. Love your husband,

*Titus 2:4, so they may encourage the young women to **love their husbands** and to love their children,*

2. Be a companion,

Malachi 2:12, Yet you say, "For what reason?"

*Because the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet **she is your companion** And your wife by covenant.*

Proverbs 2:16-17 & 31:12

3. Satisfy sexual desires

Hebrews 13:4,

1 Corinthians 7:2, Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

Help husband avoid fornication.

1 Corinthians 7:4, The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

No authority over own body. (Exception to husband's authority, his body. Wife has authority over husband's body.)

1 Corinthians 7:5, Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

No bargaining, motivating, paying back.

No unscriptural separation

4. Child bearing

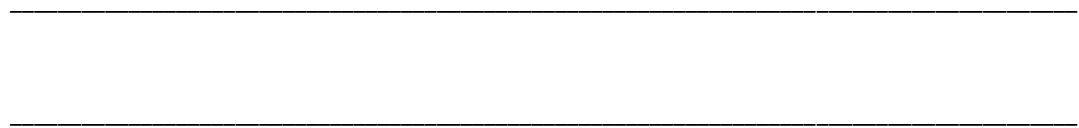
*1 Timothy 2:15, Nevertheless she will be saved in **childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.***

5. Manage the Home

1 Timothy 5:14, Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Manage the house under as an executive but under the authority of husband.

Titus 2:5, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.



Roles of Parent and Children

Ephesians 6:1-4, Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: ³ “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Colossians 3:20-21, ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Parents to look after the children as God given gift and be good stewards in bringing the best in their life.

Parents need to focus on five major areas in children’s life. Love, example, discipline, consistency, and the father’s involvement in the family.

Children should obey their parents and understand the God given plan for the family.

As I started this lesson I told you that the role is always revolving, so one must take heed the advice very carefully.

9. Family- Spiritual

Ephesians 3:15, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

I would like to bring to your attention there are two families we need to handle.

3. Physical Family
4. Spiritual Family

So, in this lesson what we learn should be applied to both your Physical and Spiritual Family.

Last lesson we looked at Physical family now let us look at the Spiritual Family.

We use the term as born again in the Pentecostal circle, but it has a profound meaning attached to it.

We are born physically into a family, but when we are born again we are adopted into the family of God as His children.

John 1:12, But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

Romans 8:14, For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

While Jesus was ministering here on earth when Mary, His mother and His brothers came, He made it clear about the Spiritual family.

Matthew 12:46-50, ⁴⁶While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. ⁴⁷Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

⁴⁸But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" ⁴⁹And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!" ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

But Jesus never lost sight of His physical family either.

John 19:25-27, Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman,

behold your son!"²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

The savior of the world carrying the punishment of the whole world, even at the cross He took time to make sure His earthly mother was being taken care of and not left alone.

We can understand from this we have a role as physical being as well as steward in the Kingdom of God.

Another metaphor of this relationship throughout the Bible we can find is that, we, Christians are the bride of Christ and He is the Bridegroom. We have been betrothed to Him and waiting for our wedding to take place.

*2 Corinthians 11:2, For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin to Christ.***

With this view we need to look at our previous lesson on the roles of a family so that we will understand the stewardship of spiritual family.

Role of a Husband, Christ:

Ephesians 5:23, For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body.

1. Lead

Jesus Christ is the head of the body, which is the Church.

*Colossians 1:18, And **He is the head of the body,** the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

*Ephesians 1:22-23, And He put all things under His feet, and gave **Him to be head** over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

Jesus Christ's leadership was not self-centred. He sacrificed Himself to serve others. Why? Because of the Love!

2. Love

*Ephesians 5:25, Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ also loved the church** and gave Himself for her,*

Romans 5:6, For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:8, But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:10, For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

God showed His love by sending His only begotten Son to die on the cross to redeem us.

3. Loyal

Jesus Christ stands by His Church through every experience of life!

Matthew 28:19-20, Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

John 14:18, I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

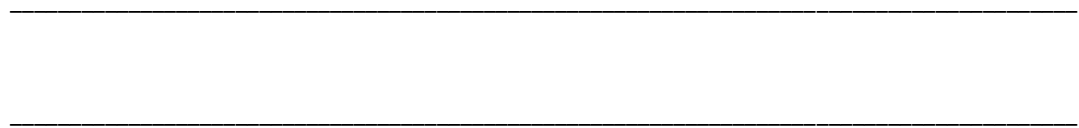
4. Living as an Example

Ephesians 5:1-2, Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

So, we ought to live as an example for all, especially to the household.

1 Peter 2:20-22, For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²² “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;

1 John 2:6, He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.



5. Learn and Live

John 13:13-17, You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Jesus Christ though He was the Lord and Savior yet He role modeled us how to live, so we can learn from Him to live like the way He lived on this earth.

Your role as a Wife:

1. Submissive

Peter addresses problem for various submissive relationships.

a) Slave

John 15:15, I do not call you slaves anymore, because a slave doesn't know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father.

Not being equal with Christ but serve Him as s slave does!

b) Christ, as an example

1 Peter 2:21 & 23, For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

c) Same way, wife must submit

1 Peter 3:1, Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,

James 4:7, Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

John 14:15 & 23, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commands.*

²³ *Jesus answered, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

If any of you say that you love God then you ought to submit to God.

2. Your role as a Helper

Romans 12:4-5, *For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

1 Corinthians 12:12, *For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*

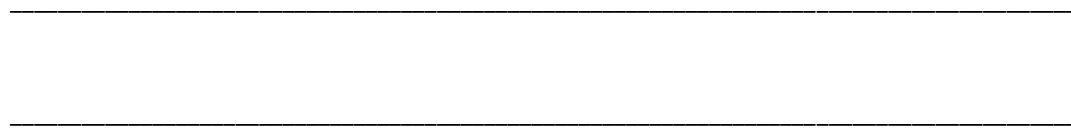
1 Corinthians 12:14- 27, *For in fact the body is not one member but many.*

¹⁵ *If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? ¹⁸But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where would the body be?*

²⁰ *But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²²No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. ²³And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, ²⁴but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, ²⁵that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*

The head is Christ.

We are all individual members in the body.



The head needs all the body parts to work together for the body to function perfectly. The interdependence with Christ should be greatly developed.

Our role to support the husband, Christ

Purpose of our creation is to help our husband, bridegroom, Christ.

Bible portrays One is helper and another is helpee.

Ways in which you can help your husband.

1. Love your husband,

John 14:15 & 23, "If you love Me, you will keep My commands.

Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

2. Be a companion,

We are the part of the body, so for effective work of the body every member should cooperate with one another. Then only the greater purpose will be achieved.

*We can do nothing without Him. (John 15:1-4)
We can do all things through Him (Philippians 4:13)*

3. Satisfy the desires

*2 Corinthians 11:2, For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin to Christ.***

You have been betrothed to one Husband, so you can't fool around. Being faithful to the one who you have been betrothed.

Your only desire is to satisfy the needs of your spouse, Christ!

Knowing Him intimately is the key in our relationship with our Lord.

4. Child bearing

John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Every living thing must grow and produce its kind. When you have the union with Christ it's your natural responsibility to produce of your kind.

Genesis 1:11, Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so.

God had blessed you with that ability, so if you are a Christian then you must give birth to another Christian spiritually. When you are a church you must give birth to another church.

5. Manage the Home

*Zechariah 9:16-17, The Lord their God will save them in that day, As the flock of His people. For they shall be like the jewels of a crown, Lifted like a banner over His land
17 For how great is its goodness And how great its beauty! Grain shall make the young men thrive, And new wine the young women.*

Reflect the beauty of the one who saved on this earth.

Never borrow for any ministry needs!

Will you spend more than what you earn? Same way this is God's house so don't ever borrow for the needs of God's ministry, let Him provide for the needs.

Zechariah 10:12, By my power I will make my people strong, and by my authority they will go wherever they wish. I, the Lord, have spoken!"

Our responsibility to manage it according to His strength.

1 Timothy 3:5, (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)

Roles of Spiritual Parent and Children

First our role in the family also changes, we become a parent within the body of Jesus Christ to give birth to spiritual children.

1 Corinthians 4:14-21, I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. ¹⁵ For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. ¹⁶ Therefore I urge you imitate me. ¹⁷ For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

¹⁸ Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power. ²¹ What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

Paul has referred to himself as a farmer, builder, galley slave, and steward. In this section he changes metaphors again and refers to himself as a spiritual father.

A spiritual father warns his children in love, in the verse he says my beloved children. If you are a spiritual father or mother to someone, you need to warn them of the dangers that they may not see since they may not have the knowledge and the experience in the Kingdom.

A father exhorts his child in many ways. You may exhort you children to

- Keep his room clean,
- Use his manners with guests,
- Learn and study
- Dress neatly
- Be respectful toward adults.

Same way you need to exhort your spiritual children in things like

- trusting God,
- repenting of sin,
- obeying the Word,
- using their spiritual gifts,
- serving others,
- forgiving those that have wronged them,

- persevering in trials,
- praying without ceasing,
- studying the Word,
- sharing their faith, and
- giving to the poor.

We need to know others well enough that our exhortations flow naturally from a heart of love for their spiritual welfare and progress.

Spiritual fathers are to be as an example. Imitate me that I am willing to be a fool for Christ,

- to be weak and without honour in the eyes of the world,
- to be hungry,
- poorly clothed,
- homeless,
- toiling,
- working with our hands,
- blessing when we are reviled,
- enduring when we are persecuted,
- reconciling when we are slandered
- willing to lose your lives for Christ's sake,
- dying to a life of ease,
- comfort for others the sake of the gospel, and
- responding in a Christlike way to your enemies.

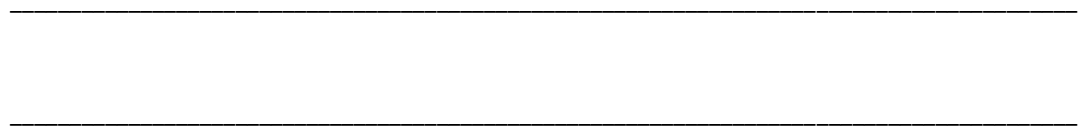
All for the sake of the kingdom. Imitate us!

A Spiritual father disciplines his children.

Paul gives them the option of how he would act towards them when he comes.

If they follow his counsel in this letter and listen to what his spiritual son Timothy's ministry among them, he could come to them with love and gentleness.

If they would not repent of their arrogance and division, he would have to come with a rod. He would not hesitate to rebuke or administer church discipline if necessary.



Spiritual Children need to obey

Ephesians 6:1-4, Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: ³ “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Colossians 3:20-21, ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Parents to look after the children as God given gift and be good steward and bring the best in their life.

Parents need to focus on five major areas in children’s life. Love, example, discipline, consistency, and the father’s involvement in the family.

Children should obey their parents and understand the God given plan for the family.

Conclusion

My role in the family revolves according to the circumstances in a similar way as it is in the Kingdom as well.

I am a father to my children but a son to my parents. Same way you may be a spiritual father to someone but still be a spiritual child to someone else.

I am father and son but still I have brothers and sisters, whom I have accountability and responsibility.

Similar way you have spiritual brothers and sisters whom you have accountability and responsibility.

Realise this and understand your role according to the place and the person whom you are with and fulfil them as the scripture teaches us.

Comparison table of Physical and Spiritual children

Physical Family	Spiritual Family
Submit to your husband	Submit to the Lord
Loyal to your husband	Loyal to the Lord
Love your spouse	Love the Lord
Lead by the husband	Lead by the Lord
Live as an example	Follow the example of Jesus Christ
Learn and live	Learn from Christ and imitate Him
Be a helper	Be part of the body
Be a companion	Companion to Christ
Child bearing	Bring forth spiritual child
Manage home	Manage Church
Obey your parents	Obey God
Disciplined by Parent	Disciplined by God
Revolving role	Revolving role
Husband is the head	Christ the head

10. Money

“A wise man should have money in the head, but not in his heart.” Jonathan Swift

Mark 12:41-44, Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. ⁴² Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. ⁴³ So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; ⁴⁴ for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”



One day Jesus was on the courtyard of the temple and people were putting their offering. The sound of the metal coins would declare to everyone who gave what. Large, heavy coins sounded loudly throughout the courtyard.

Then a widow arrived, she just put two coins, lightweight coins into the common pot, hardly you would have heard any noise.

How could two small coins outweigh significantly larger gifts?

As for as Jesus is concerned, the issue was not how much the woman contributed, but whether the money possessed her or she had control over her money.

Luke 12:15, And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

The poor widow willingly gave up all her financial possessions. This woman understood that she was totally dependent on God for everything. Her habit of not being dependent upon her money became a model for all persons who follow Jesus.

1 Timothy 6:10, For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Does money rule you? Or,

Do you rule your money?



Jesus told, either money controls you or you control your money.

Some of you, like the wealthy people in Jesus's experience at the temple, give spare change while others, like the poor widow, give all you have.

Preachers/ Pastors are often uncomfortable talking about money. Many Christians do not like to hear a sermon or a bible study about it.

- Jesus talked much about money. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables were concerned with how to handle money and possessions.
- In the Gospels, one out of ten verses (288 in all) deal directly with the subject of money.
- The Bible offers 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions.

This session is to help you understand the art of stewardship of your money and possessions.

Many people evaluate their lives by the money they have accumulated.

Most people believe that if they had just a little more money then, their lives would be more fulfilled.

Our society's ultimate report card on us often appears to be how much money we possess.

For an ice breaker I would like you to imagine this...

A wildfire is rushing toward your house. You have five minutes to take the three most valuable objects in your home. Your family is safe. Size and weight are not a factor.

- What objects would you save from the fire?
- What objects are most important to you?
- What do your choices say about you?

Money is not evil, but the love of money is evil.



The question is not about what we own, but about what owns us.

If all our attention is spent acquiring, using, and protecting our money, then there is little time and energy left to cultivate a relationship with God. God must, and He only be the desire of our heart.

Possession of money and how we use our money, influences almost every aspect of our lives.

- where we work,
- what we eat,
- what we wear,
- where we live,
- how we care for our family,
- whether we can retire, etc

When it comes to money people are very private but on the other hand they are very free to talk about politics or sex.

Some of you may be in good financial shape and some may be not. People who manage their money well are not necessarily the people with the most money but those who control their money prudently.

May be some of us are in financial crisis.

Do you know? Money is the number one reason couples get divorced.

More people worry about money than about their self-esteem, jobs, marriage, or anything else. Women worry more about money than men.

One biblical word for a false god is “Mammon.” Mammon may also be translated as “money” or “wealth.”

Is money your god?

Many people spend more than they earn! So, borrowing takes place. Then they will live in a life style which they can't afford on a long term.

God asks us, do we invest our treasures in earthly things that can waste away or be stolen?

Or do we invest in heavenly treasures?

Where our treasures are, there our hearts are also. Being ruled by money is very different from the Christian vision of life.

God is impressed not by the size of our bank accounts but how we share what God has entrusted to us.

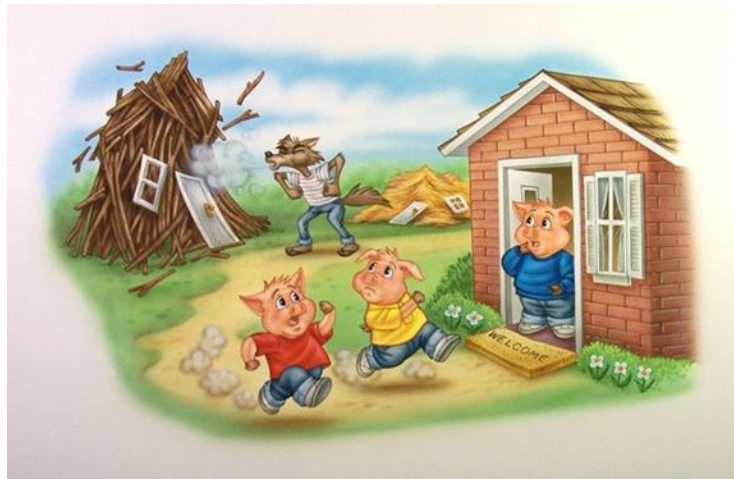
God holds us accountable for how we stewardship our money.

Are we wise or foolish steward's of God's gifts to us?

Do you have a Budget planner?

Luke 14:28-30, For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'?

Many Christians fail financially because they fail to plan how to use their money.



Too many households live without a budget. We live paycheck to paycheck. Without a plan,

- we invest poorly,
- we save too little,
- we live beyond our means,
- people find themselves worried about money more than anything else
- your money masters you.

What is a budget?

The word “budget” is both a noun and a verb. Another word for a budget is “plan.”

A budget can be a document, either on paper or in your computer that details how much you earn and how much you owe.

Specific: Clearly name your goal.

Measurable: Mark your progress.

Attainable: Assess that your goal is possible.

Realistic: Your benchmarks are feasible.

Timely: The timeline can be met.



Make plans for one month, one year, and one decade at a time.

Income

Start with what you earn now. (Do not take your gross income; You have taxes, insurance, and other items taken out of your pay check before you ever see what you have earned. Pay the government, insurance bills, and other payroll deductions faithfully)

Other income: (such as interest, over time, bonus etc.,)

Expenses:

1. To God

Proverbs 3:9-10, Honour God with everything you own; give him the first and the best Your barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over. (MSG)

Romans 11:16, For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

How much?

2 Corinthians 9:6-8, But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

You give how much you have purposed in your heart! No tithe! We have detailed study on the YouTube, you can watch it later.

Attitude: Be cheerful!

Where to Give:

Wherever the Lord leads you to give!

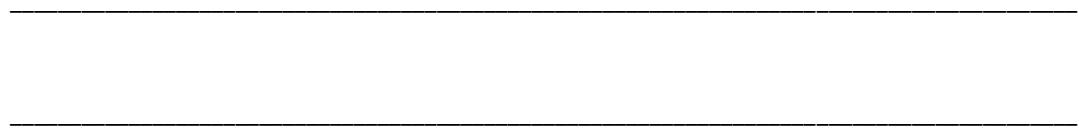
1 Corinthians 16:2-3, On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. ³ And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

2. Savings: 5 to 10%

Let us move on to the next spending. Your first spending should be SAVING.

There are plenty of wrong motives for saving money. If you are saving money out of fear of the future, it shows that you are not really trusting God to provide for all your needs. God promised us that He will care for you and supply all your needs. **(Philippians 4:19)**

Saving money allows us to be prepared for the future and being prepared for anything the future holds for us.



Proverbs 6:6-8, Lazy people should learn a lesson from the way ants live. ⁷ They have no leader, chief, or ruler, ⁸ but they store up their food during the summer, getting ready for winter. (GNT)

A minimum of 5 to 10% should be saved.

3. Debt payment: 1-10%

Word of God never speaks of debt as a sin, but there are clear references to debt as “slavery.”

Borrowing money is never encouraged in the scriptures, and when Moses spoke to the people of Israel, borrowing from others was listed as a consequence of disobedience.

Let me give you a small advice, don't forget this!

Do Not finance your wants with debt!

Learn the distinction between WANTS and NEEDS!

Romans 13:8, Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. (MSG)

So, set a goal, we will do this end of the lesson, to get rid off all your debt.

Let me give you a small advice which will help you to plan your future.

Never borrow for decreasing assets! (Like automobiles, Electronic goods etc)

Don't carry any balance on your credit card, they charge you 36% interest. Also use your credit card like debit card. Set up a direct debit to take all your expenses of the month the credit card. Use both credit and debit as cash card.

4. Housing: 25-40%

The next big expenses which is essential for you to pay either rent or mortgage for your home.

If you are paying mortgage for your home, then you can make an effort to make one extra payment every year.

A \$200,000 **30-year** home loan with an interest rate of 5% would cost \$186,512 in interest with the traditional 12 payments a year.

Make the equivalent of 13 monthly payments every year, and the loan will be retired in **26 years** and you will pay only \$153,813 in interest, a savings of **\$32,699**.

5. Transport: 15-25%

Car repayment, petrol, train or taxi everything put together it should not exceed 25%

If you have two cars, then see how you can reduce the expenses.

6. Insurance: 1- 5%

Some of you have health insurance part of your job but many of you must have one. Also other insurances such as home, car etc, which are mandatory.

7. Household expenses 20 -40%

Groceries/Perishables, clothes, gifts, Personal Cosmetics/Etc., Meals, travel/Vacations/Trips, Fitness/Hobbies.

We need to have good healthy life style so make sure you buy good groceries and avoid eating out as much as possible. For safety and health reasons it is better you prepare the food at home.

8. Professional services: 1-10%

Child care if your children are younger, if they are older then school fees, then college fees etc.

Other services like laundry etc

Don't panic... for some it may go over 150 %...

This is where you need to plan and budget. That's the reason we are doing this.

Conclusion

Let us get together as a family and do the budgeting now.



You are budgeting and planning that should be like the construction site.

Need all the resources and people and the tools to build a building, similar way you need all the resources and all the members of the family to come together with all the available tools to bring it back to a beautiful building.

Goal Setting

Mention here any short/long term goals for your family. Mentiond here are some usual goals. However, as husband and wife decide the goals for your family.

	Goal	Amount	Time (Months / Years)
	Pay off Debt		
	Save for a major purchase like car/ house		
	Major expenses like college fees		
	Replacing a major appliance like cooker, heating/ cooling system		
	Vacation		
	Save for pregnancy		
	Save for emergency		
	Save for retirement		

Debts

Specify all the debts holdin the family.

Debt	Company	Amount \$	Interest Rate
Credit Card 1			
Credit Card 2			
Credit Card 3			
Store Card 1			
Store Card 2			
Store Card 3			
Bank loan			
Personal Loan			
Car loan			
College fee loan			
Other			
Total			

Incomes Table

Income	USD	Remarks
Salary / Business 1		
Salary / Business 2		
Salary / Business 3		
Others		
<i>Total</i>		

Expenses Table 01

Giving to God	\$	Remarks
Church		
Your Call		
Others		
<i>Total</i>		

Expenses Table 02

Savings 5-10%	\$	Remarks
Emergency		
Replacement		
Long-term		
<i>Total</i>		

Expenses Table 03

Debt 1-10%	\$	Remarks
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Credit Cards		
Loans		
Store Cards		
Total		

Expenses Table 04

Housing 25 -40%	\$	Remarks
Mortgage/Rent		
Repair/ Maint		
HOA, Property tax, Insurance		
Others		
Total		

Expenses Table 05

Transport	\$	Remarks
Car loans		
Tax/Tag/license		
Train/Bus pass		
Gas		
Maintenance		
Total		

Expenses Table 06

Insurance 5%	\$	Remarks

Car		
Health		
Home		
Others		
<i>Total</i>		

Expenses Table 07

Household 25-40%	\$	Remarks
Groceries		
Restaurants		
Clothes		
Gifts		
Household items		
Personal		
Beauty products		
Travel/ vacation		
Fitness		
Hobby		
Miscellaneous		
<i>Total</i>		

Expenses Table 08

Personal 5-10%	\$	Remarks
Child care		
School/ College fees		
Laundry		
<i>Total</i>		

Ratio of Income and Expenses

- Current % - Find the existing % of amount spent in each category (Expense 01 to 08) worked out in the above pages.
- Target % - This can be filled during the interactive session

	Income	01 - Giving to God	02 - Savings	03 - Debt	04 - Housing	05 - Transport	06 - Insurance	07 - Household	08 - Personal
Expense %	100%								
Target %	-								

11. Talents and Gifts

Kingdom of God

In the Gospel we will find the phrases as "**Kingdom of heaven**," or "**Kingdom of God**". The Kingdom is the sphere where God rules by grace and salvation through Christ. The Kingdom is the sphere of God's dominion in Christ.



This often refers to the invisible Kingdom because it is a spiritual one, where it is occupied by those who are truly regenerated. They are invisible, so, we can't see who is in that Kingdom.

Sometimes the Kingdom of heaven is used to refer to the visible Kingdom, the outward Kingdom. This Kingdom is made up of people who identify themselves with Christ. Some are real, and some are false.

Matthew 13:47-50, Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,⁴⁸ which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The Kingdom is like a dragged net full of stuff that's dragged up from the bottom of the sea, some to be kept and some to be thrown away.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like wheat and tares. Wheat will be kept, shaff will be thrown away into fire.

The Kingdom is made up of soil, some are good, and some are bad.

So, there are times then when the gospel record refers to the Kingdom in its outward external and sometimes they are internal.

In the parable of Ten Virgins in Matthew 25, the Kingdom was like ten virgins. Five of them were real and five of them were false. Five of them had internal grace, five of them did not. Therefore, the Kingdom there was picturing the true and the false in the organized external visible Kingdom.

Similar thing we can find in the church as well.

The parable of Talents what we are going to look now is talking about those who have been saved and belong to the Kingdom.

In this parable the people are identified as servants of the Lord. So, you and me are within this parable of in its external visible Kingdom.

Let me set the stage for you!

Matthew 24:3, Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

The disciples ask the question to the Lord.

When is Your coming?

He answered saying that "no one knows the day nor the hour" He told them five times.

Matthew 24:36,

Matthew 24:42,

Matthew 24:44,

Matthew 24:50 and

Matthew 25:13

Jesus told them the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. He talked about the danger and deception and evil of the great Tribulation period.

In short Jesus wanted them to be ready and waiting for His coming, none knows the exact day and time. Be ready always!

To make His point known to the disciples He spoke two parables. The first one is about Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-12 which we will study tomorrow) the second one is the parable of Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

Both the parables is connected by verse 13.

Matthew 25:13, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

The first Parable about the time He will come and the second parable about the readiness one should wait for His coming.

Let me warn you that we should strike a balance between waiting and working.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.¹² Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

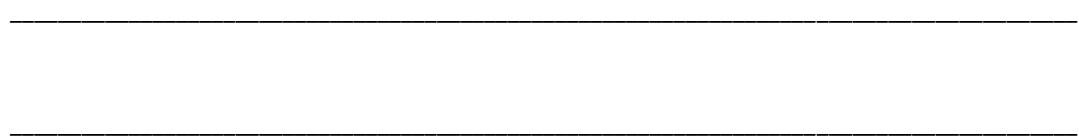
They supposedly were awaiting the Lord's coming so did not work. The Lord is going to come anytime why to go for work? They just quit and simply became busybodies and burden to everyone.

On the other hand, there were people who thought that the Lord is not going to come. Peter warns them that don't be fooled Jesus will come back surely.

2 Peter 3:10, But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

The balance in between these two is what is required of you. We know certainly that the Lord Jesus is going to come yet we do not know the hour, but we are eagerly waiting and working to give account to Him.

So, because we don't know the moment or the hour, we are watching all the time, but we are working, that is the balance.



Please do note the parable in **Luke 19:11 -27** is a different one than this. We will look at that when the time permits.

With this background information let us look at this Parable in detail so that we will be able to understand fully what the Lord requires of us.

Matthew 25:14-30

It is our privilege that we have been entrusted by God the talents and abilities and the opportunity to glorify Him. But in this parable, we will see both who had seized the opportunity and the privilege and also wasted the opportunity in spite of given the privilege to work for Him.

Responsibility

V14, "For it is just like a man going on a journey. He called his own slaves and turned over his possessions to them. (HCSB)

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. (NKJV)

In the original text the word "for the Kingdom of heaven" is not there in the original manuscript, but it was added since it is implied from V1 and 34.

The man travels to the far country. Those days they could be gone for a year or two.

Gave responsibility to his slaves. These slaves belong to him. They are already part of the kingdom, visible one.

He gave his goods to them to take care and produce more or increase economically.

V15, To one he gave five talents; to another, two; and to another, one—to each according to his own ability. Then he went on a journey.

He knew the talent and skills of his servants. He also knows them that they will handle it properly.

- To the first he gives five talents.
- To the second two, and
- To the third one.

The numbers could be different, but they illustrate low and high and somewhere in the middle.



You need to know that a talent, is meant as a weight, like a scale. That's why in Revelation 16 it talks about a hailstone weighing a talent. It was a certain measure of weight.

The value of each talent would depend on whether it was gold (which very high value) or Silver (which is lesser than gold). It's probably this as silver because the word used for money in verse 18 is a word that is frequently used to refer to silver coin.

He gave and left for a far country so that they will take this, invest it and get a return for me on it. Show yourself a faithful steward.

Key thing is that "He gave them to every man according to his ability and took his journey."

Each man's ability was that which determined what he received. Some people had greater capacity to handle a large amount than other people did. He assigned that one got five, one got two and one got one.

- It is obvious as you look at the parable that the master here is the Lord Himself.
- Going on a journey is the Lord going back to heaven where He is right now.
- We are now in management.
- We have been given various talents and abilities.
- The talents and abilities what we have should be used to use to serve God and to accomplish for Him while He is away in Heaven.
- We all have not received the same ability.

- Christ has Not given all of us equal portioning.
- All of us are different that is by the design of God.

Romans 12:3, For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

He gives each person gifts according to the measure of grace and the proportion of faith.

V 16-17, Immediately the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more.¹⁷ In the same way the man with two earned two more.

The word Immediately in Tamil bible is missing...

The man who got the five talents went and put into use immediately. Immediately is the fruit of inward salvation. This is a true servant because he's immediately activated, and his heart instantly responds to the privilege of serving his Lord.

I can think of Apostle Paul only immediately. As soon as he received the baptism he didn't waste any time at all.

Acts 9:20, Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

He went and did business or trading and produce some amazing results. He doubled the masters money.

Five doubled his talents into ten and two also doubled his talents to two more.

- Equal percentage.
- Not equal result
- Equal faithfulness

The implication of this parable is that even in the Kingdom there will be different levels of rulership for people at different capacities. So, God sovereignly has designed some of us to be rulers and some of us to be followers and some of us to fit in at all different levels.

Jesus did that with His disciples that Peter, James and John were trio who were with Jesus always and out of which Peter was unique and special leader. In the Jerusalem church where all those people came together, James rose to a place of leadership.

V18, But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

He dug a hole and buried it. He made no effort to do anything with what he had got from his master.

It was a common thing to do in those days when you wanted to save money you go and dug hole in the ground to hide it and keep safe.

Achan went and hid the spoil inside the ground.

Joshua 7:21, When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

The man in our parable too buries the money. He does absolutely nothing with it and wasted his opportunity and his privilege.

This is because he thought he was given less?

Let us ponder this for a moment!

- We have been given spiritual privilege while our Lord is away.
- Our Lord God has given us different levels of Gifts.
- Our Lord has given us differing levels of privilege and wants us to maximize the return on our privileges.
- Either we give Him back equally to that privilege and opportunity or we will waste it.
- Even a person with one is still responsible to God for that one and to be a steward of that limited privilege.

Reckoning (Settling Accounts)

V 19, "After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.

The owner comes back to look at his books. He comes back to see how and what they have done with the opportunity and the privileges he had given to his slaves.

After a long time... the Lord returns is also taking a long time...

When the Lord returns He is going to come back and take a look at the books and see what we have done with the opportunity and the privileges to serve Him.

- **What have you done with your spiritual privileges?**
- **What do you do with the privilege you have?**
- **Have you given the Lord a whole life of service in return for all that He had done to you?**

V 20, The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. Look, I've earned five more talents.' (HCSB)

When we look at the same verse in Greek Literal Translation it gives the joy of this servant.

"Lord, five talents you delivered to me, behold, five talents more I have gained."

The emphasis on the five talents. This guy is very excited to face his master to say that he had gained five more. He had done well with his stewardship.

We Christians we ought to be happy and excited to see the Lord coming knowing that we have rendered our services to the Lord.

- Apostle Paul was excited that's why he said, he will have boldness in the day of judgment.
- Apostle John said, he will be not ashamed at the coming of the Lord.

Both of them knew that they had something to show for the opportunity that they were given.

That is how I want every one of you here as well as every Christian should be excited to face the Lord. No fear!

We ought to look forward for the coming of the Lord with great anticipation because it will be our privilege to demonstrate before Him the service we have done with our privileges and opportunities.

Privileges You gave to me I received it from YOU, Responded to the call on my life from YOU, and

The servant who received five talents acknowledged that,

- The source of everything was the lord,
- No Ego about himself,
- No pride, and
- I am faithful to respond to your call.

I can echo the statement of Apostle Paul who wrote to his spiritual son before his departure from this earth.

2 Timothy 4:7-8, For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

This is not an egoistic statement but a confident and faithful servant's words.

V 21, "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy!'

The master is joyful! Master is very happy because of the faithfulness of his slave.

The master says to the slave that you are good, and you are trustworthy. He is not just commenting on his service, but he is commenting on his character, excellent, good, trustworthy servant.

The master is so gracious that he just doesn't stop there, he says to the slave, "You have been faithful over a few things, I'll make you ruler over many things. You have proven you are trustworthy, you have proven you are good and if you can handle a few things I am going to put you over a lot of things."

The slave received three commendations.

1. The slave had been appreciated by his master verbally
2. The slave was made responsible for greater things
3. The slave also was given the access to enter the joy of the Lord.

What would you like to receive from the Lord when you stand before Him on the day of His coming?

All I want to hear Him say "Well done Abraham, good and faithful. You are a good and trust worthy servant of mine"

But the Lord is so generous, and He is so gracious that He won't stop there.

He says to the servant, "You have been faithful over a few things, I'll make you ruler over many things. You've proven you're trustworthy, you've proven you're good and if you can handle a few things I'm going to put you over a lot of things."

Same way He will say to me!!

Have you ever wondered when we go into eternity we are all going to be equal?

Remember the parable of the servants in the vineyard? (Matthew 20:1-16)

Every worker irrespective what time they joined the work they all given the same wages.

So, in the Kingdom of God we all will be equal.

Secondly, we all will be like Christ Himself. Hence there is no varying level of holiness or perfection. We all will be the same.

Then how come we are going to have rulership?

There will be differing levels of service in the Kingdom of God. Now, service in the Kingdom now demands different kinds of people doing different things.

We all won't have the same assignment and we won't all have the same service rendered to God. As the angels serve God with ranks. Angels and archangels and seraphim and cherubim and principalities and powers and rulers and all of that, I believe we in our glorified state will all find a special place of service.

Each one of us will be exactly like Christ, exactly perfect, absolutely sinless, fully possessing eternal life. So whatever service we render it will be infinitely eternally and perfectly satisfying. There will be no sense of disparity, or not sense of lesser privilege or greater privilege than anyone else has. Because the privilege we occupy there will be in exact accord with our eternal God designed and God given capacities.

We all are going to be the same in eternity.

And yet we are all going to be distinct.

Thirdly entering into the joy of the lord.

Jesus went to the cross knowing that the joy was set before Him.

Hebrews 12:2, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We will be as joyful as the Lord is joyful.

The joy in our heart is for us to know that redemption is accomplished, to know that Satan is defeated, to know that sin is abolished, to know that the righteous Kingdom forever and ever is established, to know that He is ultimately and forever glorified.

It is the same joy of the Lord into which we will also enter.

V22-23, ²² “Then the man with two talents also approached. He said, ‘Master, you gave me two talents. Look, I’ve earned two more talents.’

²³ “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy!’

Exactly the same thing happened to the five talents! Same faithfulness.

V24-25, Then the man who had received one talent also approached and said, ‘Master, I know you. You’re a difficult man, reaping where you haven’t sown and gathering where you haven’t scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have what is yours.’

We enter into the sad part of the story and that is what we need to learn today so that we can avoid.

- This slave claims that he also belongs to the master.
- He is also part of the household of the master.
- He had capabilities.
- He had the capacity to steward one talent that is why the master gave him only one talent.

He produced nothing!

He did with the talent nothing.

Even though he is part of the household, but he did not belong to household the reason he attacks his master like unbeliever.

- You are a hard man.
- You are unforgiving,
- You are unrelenting,
- You are unbending,
- You are unmerciful,
- You are ungracious,
- You are unkind,
- You lack compassion,
- You are too tough, and
- You have no sensitivity.



This man operated out of fear!
That is what religion does to
people.

He accuses the master of
stealing, how?

He says that “*you are reaping where you haven’t sown and gathering where you haven’t scattered seed*” This statement is nothing but stealing.

What an accusation to his own master!

V26-27, “But his master replied to him, ‘You evil, lazy slave! If you knew that I reap where I haven’t sown and gather where I haven’t scattered,²⁷ then you should have deposited my money with the bankers. And when I returned I would have received my money back with interest.

The master told the slave that you just took the money and buried into the ground. You made no use of your privilege because of your lazy lifestyle and wickedness. You are a wicked and lazy slave. Laziness and wickedness goes hand in hand in every time its mentioned in the book of Proverbs.

Then the master goes on to say if you knew I am such hard man at least you could have deposited my money in the exchangers/bank. So that when I came back I would have received some interest? Roman empire did have banking system like the one we have today.

In effect he did not make any effort, even simple effort of going to city gate and investing with the bankers, it's because of his wickedness and laziness. He was making excuses and lying to the master.

V 28-30, "So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has 10 talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ³⁰ And throw this good-for-nothing slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Give it to the one who has 10 talents!

Why him?

He was faithful in carrying out the master's interests.

In the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on throughout eternity, there will be no service offered other than that which is offered by true believers.

The ones who have demonstrated and used their privileges and opportunities, they will receive more, he will have abundance. But from the one who has not shall be taken away even what he has.

What happens in the reward?

The true and faithful servant receives more privilege, more opportunity for service, more divine service capacity.

What happens to unfaithful servant?

They will cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. That's nothing but hell.

Conclusion

The unique mark of two slaves are that they used their opportunity to serve the Lord and proved their genuineness of their salvation.

They spent their time for the sake of their master.

But one servant hid his master's money in the ground and spent his time doing exactly what he wanted. He called himself a slave to the master, but he was not.

Even though he said he belonged to the master, but he didn't show by his actions and was reckoned to hell and thrown out of God's presence.

We see the same kind of warning from our Lord that He gives us, be sure that you are outwardly associated with the Kingdom and also inwardly belonging to the Kingdom.

Our Lord is going to come, any time!

Be excited to see Him because you serve Him with the privileges and the opportunities what the Lord had bestowed upon you.

When the Lord comes there will be a separation!

Faithfulness will be rewarded!

Unfaithfulness, laziness, wickedness and fear will be punished.

My brothers and sisters,

Do you understand the importance of stewardship of your privileges and the opportunities the Lord had deposited within YOU?

Let us bow before the Lord to be faithful in our call.

12. Your Tongue

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, ¹ Let a man so consider us, **as servants of Christ** and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

“Never doubt the power of the tiny tongue – and never underestimate it!”

James 3:1-12, ¹⁻² Don't be in any rush to become a teacher, my friends. Teaching is highly responsible work. Teachers are held to the strictest standards. And none of us is perfectly qualified. We get it wrong nearly every time we open our mouths. If you could find someone whose speech was perfectly true, you'd have a perfect person, in perfect control of life.

³⁻⁵ A bit in the mouth of a horse controls the whole horse. A small rudder on a huge ship in the hands of a skilled captain sets a course in the face of the strongest winds. A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it!

⁵⁻⁶ It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell.

⁷⁻¹⁰ This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue—it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth!

¹⁰⁻¹² My friends, this can't go on. A spring doesn't gush fresh water one day and brackish the next, does it? Apple trees don't bear strawberries, do they? Raspberry bushes don't bear apples, do they? You're not going to dip into a polluted mud hole and get a cup of clear, cool water, are you? (MSG)

James, half-brother of Jesus has given an awesome insight into this subject.

There is an incredible amount of “intrinsic power” in the tongue.

Proverbs 18:21, Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 28:23, He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue.

Jesus connected the tongue to our heart.

Matthew 15:18, "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man."

Bible gives a lot of emphasis on the use of tongue, our mouth. We can use our mouth to glorify God or destroy it.

God gave us our tongue and the ability to communicate!

Are you a good steward of it?

Tongue reveals about your spiritual life.



When you visit a doctor, the doctor says open your mouth and show me your tongue!

James 1:26, If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.

The pride, self-righteousness, and self-satisfied "religious" person is shown by the words.

Jesus spoke about this,

Matthew 12:33-34, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."

Your tongue will eventually reveal what is in the heart.

Tongue is like a mirror. When you listen to someone then you can assess the character of that person since it reveals through that person.

During my counselling with people they generally tend to say only when I am under pressure or stress I get angry. But I will have to differ since it is not the pressure or stress but it what was inside of you.

In the passage you will notice it's not mentioning about perfection but it's about how to manage it.

If you are not able to control your tongue, habitually, then whatever you do like,

- Church attendance is perfect
- Bible knowledge is great,
- Prayer is moving the mountains
- Generous in giving

Become meaningless and you are deceiving not anyone else but YOU.

Proverbs 27:17, As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

You can either sharpen to be positive or negative. Recently one of the sister in our church who is a seamstress blouse, while she was cutting the blouse from the saree she cut the border by mistake. The scissor cuts! It does not know whether it's the border or the blouse bit.

Similar way with your words you can sharpen someone either positively or negatively.

Your friends also can either encourage you or discourage you to follow God. It could either be helpful to grow or hinder your growth.

Using your tongue for destruction.

James 3:9-10, With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

How can we use the tongue for negative purpose?

Gossip



What is Gossip?

Speaking to someone about an issue of which they are neither part of the problem nor a part of the solution.

Saying things about someone behind their back that you would never say to their face.

Discussing details about a problem with a person without first going to the person with whom you had the problem.

Proverbs 18:8, Listening to gossip is like eating cheap candy; do you really want junk like that in your belly? (MSG)

Gossip often hides itself in acceptable reasoning such as:

- Have you heard?
- Did you know that?
- I do not believe it is true, but I heard that?
- I would tell you, because that I know it will go no further.”
- I am telling you this, so you can pray about this with me.

Putting down gossip is one of a deacon’s responsibility (Acts 6)

Criticism

We are all expert and we find it so easy to find fault with others.

We like to maximize the weaknesses of others, so that we don’t look bad.

Much of our criticism is nothing short of simply being self-righteous and judgmental.

James 4:11, Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

Never pull each other to pieces, my brothers. If you do you are judging your brother and setting yourself up in the place of God’s Law; you have become in fact a critic of the Law. Yet if you start to criticise the Law instead of obeying it you are setting yourself up as judge, and there is only one judge, the one who gave the Law, to whom belongs absolute power of life and death. How can you then be so silly as to imagine that you are your neighbour’s judge? (PHILIPS)

It’s not that what you speak is Not true but telling about someone also we need to be careful.

Matthew 12:34, Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Many believers use truth as a license or a shield to righteously pick apart someone else reputation.

You can give back the money or things or another thing which you had taken which belong to someone. But you will never be able to give back the reputation of someone.

Murmuring & Unthankful

Murmuring and unthankful is the two side of the same coin.

1 Corinthians 10:1-6 & 10-11, Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,³ all ate the same spiritual food,⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted

¹⁰ nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

The Israelites when they came out of Egypt, they also ate the same Spiritual food and the Water from the Rock that was none other than Christ Himself. Yet they complained, and they were destroyed.

We, who live in the New Covenant have been very clearly warned not to be like them, if we continue that way then we will also be destroyed.

Why we complain and murmur?

Because we are unthankful.

Can we think of what we can right now thank God for?

- Salvation,
- Eternal life,
- Mercy,
- Grace,
- Life,
- Health,
- Food,

- Clothing
- List goes on and on...

1 Timothy 6:8, *If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*

James 3:6, *And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.*

We all make mistakes in all kinds of ways, but the man who can claim that he never says the wrong thing can consider himself perfect, for if he can control his tongue he can control every other part of his personality. (PHILIPS)

How to have a Disciplined Tongue?

James 3:10, *We use the tongue to bless our Father, God, and we use the same tongue to curse our fellow-men, who are all created in God's likeness. Blessing and curses come out of the same mouth—surely, my brothers, this is the sort of thing that never ought to happen! (PHILIPS)*

If you want to have disciplined tongue first you must accept that you have the uncontrolled tongue, this will be first step in solving the problem.

1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*

Confess the sin and leave it.

Stewardship of Preaching the Gospel

Romans 10:14-15, *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

When we focus on the reason why God has given you the mouth then we would not be wasting it by misusing it.

You need to shift your focus that you have been given a tongue to proclaim the Gospel.

2 Corinthians 5:15, and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

You can NOT live for yourself. Your life is got to be lived for God.

2 Corinthians 5:20, Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

We have been given the great responsibility and privilege of proclaiming the Gospel as the ambassadors of Christ.

Let God grant us compassion towards the people so that you will be moved like Christ.

Matthew 9:36, And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.

Stewardship to comfort

2 Corinthians 7:5-7, For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. ⁶ Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷ and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

We should bring comfort to those who are in trouble. This stewardship attitude comes only when you express the gratitude of what the Lord had done for you.

Comfort can come in times of trials, just letting someone know you are praying for them.

When was the last time you were able to bring comfort to those who are going through difficulty?

Stewardship to worship

Hosea 14:1-2, O Israel, return to the Lord your God,

For you have stumbled because of your iniquity;

² Take words with you, And return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.

Offer the sacrifice of your lips!

For Who He is and what He has done

Hebrews 13:15, Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

Can you see how thankfulness and worship are interconnected with our lips?

This is what James meant when he said, "out of the same mouth comes blessings and cursing" these things sought not to be!

Conclusion

What are the things you need to get rid of in your life?

Proverbs 21:23, Whoever guards his mouth and tongue Keeps his soul from troubles.

Guard it!

Jesus warned about this.

Matthew 12:36-37, But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

1. Be thankful and praise Him always

As we have seen Hebrews 13:15 be thankful and let the praises be on your lips continually.

2. God give you the discernment

Psalms 19:14, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

Let this be your prayer daily!

3. Ask for forgiveness for all wrong use of your tongue

James 3:2, *For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.*

By controlling your tongue, you can go on to be a perfect person!

4. Practice to bring encouraging words

Ephesians 4:29, *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

13. Connected & United - Devotion 03



NOKIA
Connecting People

Do you remember this?

Their tagline for entire ad campaign simply said, “connecting people” but you and me know how this mobile phones have disconnected the people and the society.

People are so disconnected in our present day. The study on the people behaviour shows that almost 40% who live are living a lonely life, which is very alarming.

The research found that almost 10% of people aged 16 to 24 were “always or often” lonely - the highest proportion of any age group in the United Kingdom.

This was more than three times higher than people aged 65 and over.

In USA, Health insurer Cigna took a nationwide survey, and found that 54% of respondents said they feel like no one knows them well, NPR reports.

Additionally, 56% of people said the people they surround themselves around “are not necessarily with them,” and approximately 40% said they “lack companionship,” their “relationships aren’t meaningful,” and that they feel “isolated from others.”

“Half of Americans view themselves as lonely,” **David Cordani**, chief executive of **Cigna**, said, according to NPR. “I can’t help but be surprised”.

2018 January, a new ministry has been created in UK to tackle the lethal of Loneliness.

This morning we will look at how well you are connected with God and United with Him in everything you do.

Jesus feeds the 5,000 men and teaches them for the whole day. After that He crosses the Sea of Galilee to be alone with His disciples. But the people who ate the bread ran across the land and reach before he could land on the boat.

John 6:26-29, ²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

²⁸ Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Throughout the book of John Jesus speaks about the work of God, most of the time it represents the miracles and signs and wonders. Here Jesus gives another dimension to the work of God in believing Him.

We have been meditating on being a better steward for the last three days. You should not end up thinking that it's the performance which is going to be measured or that is the yardstick in which God is going to measure.

God has revealed to us as 'Heaven on Earth' **Matthew 6:10**, *Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

Jesus said we will do greater works than Him!

John 14:12, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

A high-resistance **connection** (HRC) is a problem that results from **loose** or poor **connections** in traditional electrical accessories and switchgear which can **cause heat** to develop, capable of starting a fire.

Though it's true that there will be a reckoning of the things what the Lord had entrusted you with, but it is be fulfilled accruing to His terms.

Matthew 7:21-23, ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say

to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

*Knowing God by you one thing!
Known by God is another thing.*

Jesus is speaking to two different groups of people.

1. Those who don't do the will of God
2. Those who do the will of God without any relationship with Him.

V 21, This group of people say "Lord, Lord" But He is not the Lord of their life.

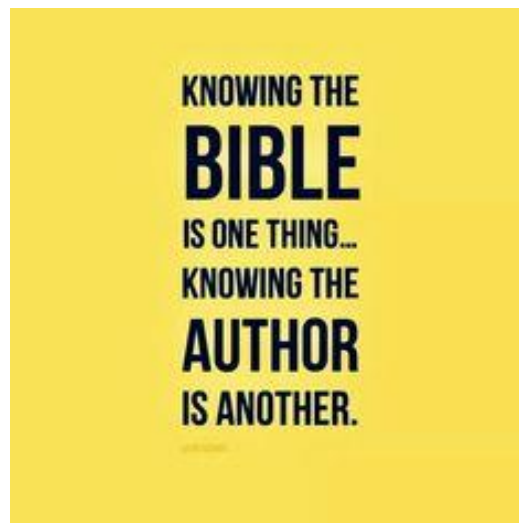
Jesus had revealed that doing the will of God is doing the work of God.

Jesus had commanded us very clearly that we ought to go and preach and God will confirm His words through His works. But this group did not do any of the work.

V22, they have done a lot of works which is very good and also exhibited the power of God.

This group they have done and did what the Lord has commanded them to do but they did not have any living relationship with the Lord.

V23, most alarming statement God says, "I never knew you"



Jesus and the Samaritan women makes an interesting conversation about worshipping the Father.

We know the last two verses well but let us read the whole conversation that took place.

John 4:21-24, Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

You don't know what is worship but we do know.

Worship must be done in Spirit and in Truth!

Truth, which is nothing hidden from God in your heart. Exposed completely before Him.

There is no area in your heart is that private!

Openness and honesty with God gives the invitation for Him to come to you. Then He engages with you.

Let me explain to you in a simpler way to understand this. In my recent trip to Australia there were quite a few people who have met with me whom I have never seen in my life time. But they knew all the details about me. They knew when we started the ministry, my wife, children name and even many details from the messages I share.

Until unless they take the time to open their family and let me know them then I will not know them.

There is another thing, our bible says that He knows us before we were born.

Psalms 139:16, Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

Isaiah 49:16, See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

Matthew 10:30, But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

You will be amazed at the amount of details God knows about you but having said that He will not be invasive into your heart.

Unless you invite Him and give Him the authority over His life He will not do anything. The rule of relationship is to invite Him then the transparency.

When you have your own agenda or plan for yourself then you have created a secret place for yourself where God would not come rather you would not expose that area to God.

There are many aspects in Worship which we have spoken and ministered many times in our ministry. But one aspect of worship is to expose yourself completely, there is no area in your life that is not exposed to God.

Having a seamless connection with God in every part of your heart and every attitude should be measured with God.

When we aim to be connected with God, He connects with you!

Being United

There are two analogies that have been referred in the scripture the relationship between us and God.

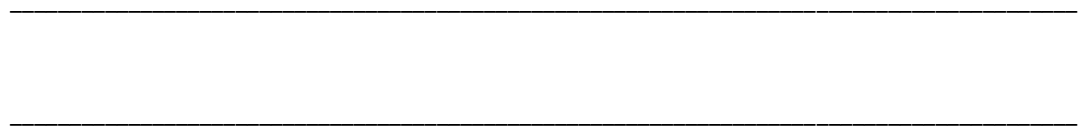
Shepherd and Sheep

Wine and Branches

John 10:3-4, To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

John 10:14, I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

Sheep is the one of the dumbest animal. Sheep are foolish. They seem to only know how to do one thing well, eat grass (and produce more grass-eating sheep).



Sheep are slow to learn every shepherd will tell you countless stories about how sheep can be taught a very painful lesson, and yet fail to learn the painful lesson. A sheep may get caught in barbed wire trying to break through a fence. And the next day it will try it again, and again.

Sheep are so awkward, so lacking in agility and dignity.

Sheep are demanding Ever watch a lamb suckle its mother? Almost as soon as it is born, it is violently sucking its mother's udders. And that insatiable demand never leaves them. They demand grass, grass, and more grass; day after day, and night after night.

Sheep are stubborn, it's like trying to move an elephant. Ever watched a shepherd try to manoeuvre a sheep into a fold or a dip-tank.

Sheep are straying perhaps the main reason Scripture chooses sheep to characterize us, more than any other animal, is because of its well-deserved reputation for straying and getting lost.

Sheep are dependent Some animals can cope and thrive without any close supervision. Not sheep. They are very dependent on their shepherd. They cannot live without him.

Wine and Branches

Many false teachers today say that Christ is the vine and the various man-made churches or denominations are the branches in the vine.

They say, "One branch is the Baptist Church, another the Lutheran, another the Roman Catholic, another the Seventh Day Adventist, etc."

Jesus did not say, "I am the vine, and denominations are the branches!" He said, "I am the vine and you are the branches." Disciples of Christ are the branches in the vine. If you are a Christian, you are a branch in Christ.

Can you imagine a tomato vine producing from the same vine maize, yams, beans, and cabbages?

It is not possible.

A tomato vine can only produce tomatoes.

Christ, the true vine, can only produce Christians. He cannot produce Lutherans, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, etc.

John 15:5-8, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

The vine is the source and sustenance of life for the branches, and the branches must abide in the vine to live and bear fruit.

Jesus is the vine, and the branches are people. While it is obvious the fruit-bearing branches represent true Christians. Bible students can easily identify that the barren branches are Christians who bear no spiritual fruit.

A branch that is truly connected to the vine is secure and will never be removed.

But one that only appears to be connected or the one that has only a superficial connection,

will be removed.

Jesus chose the analogy of a vine for several reasons. The lowliness of a vine demonstrates His humility.



It also pictures a close, permanent, vital union between the vine and branches. It is symbolic of belonging, because branches belong entirely to the vine.

If branches are to live and bear fruit, they must completely depend on the vine for nourishment, support, strength, and vitality.

There is no struggle for the branch to bear fruit as long as its connected and united with the branch.

Will you abide in Him?

Are you connected with HIM, always?

14. Living with the Second Coming

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-12)

The Olivet Discourse of **Matthew** chapters **24** and **25** are the Lord's own sermon on His second coming.

This particular Parable is a warning passage, there are many such parables Jesus spoke in this passage.

Earlier Jesus did give the signs before His Second Coming but in this parable, He warned them about being ready for His coming.

Let us get the circumstances clear so that we will have better understanding of the context in which Jesus spoke this parable.

Matthew 24:3, Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

The disciples asked Jesus three questions for which He gave them elaborate answer through the parable.

His answers were recorded,

Matthew 24:36, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Matthew 24:42, Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Matthew 24:44, Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Matthew 24:50, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of,

Four times He gave them the answer that no one will know the time except the Father in Heaven.

Then Jesus gives them this particular parable and then He concludes as

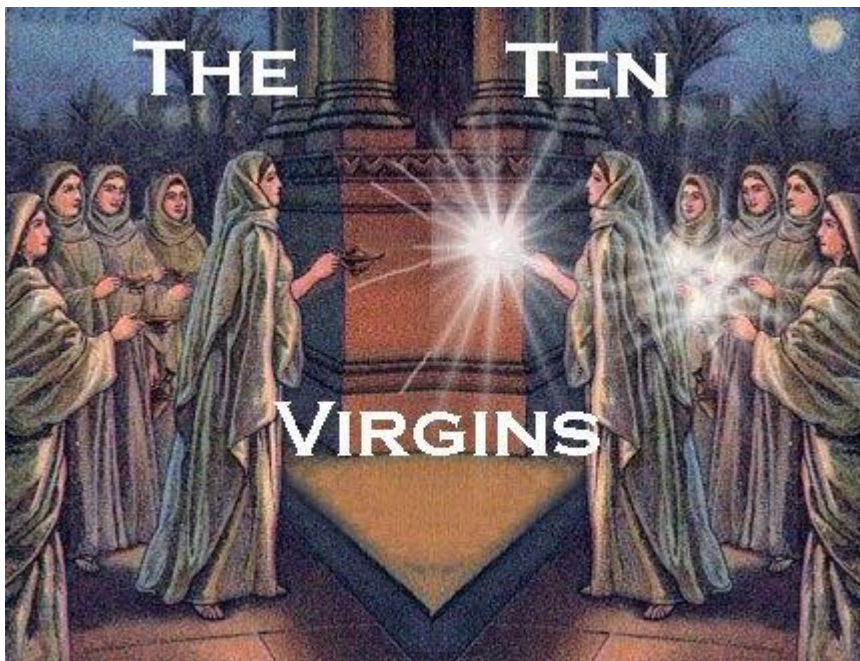
Matthew 25:13, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

The purpose of the parable is to show the sudden or unexpected time of His imminent coming back, so better you be prepared.

Matthew 25:1-12, "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶ "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹ "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' ¹² But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'



After concluding that the faithful servant will be rewarded and the unfaithful will be punished. Having said that Jesus was setting up the immense coming of Him.

Remember Jesus first coming was prophesied by many prophets as to place of His birth, the virgin birth, lineage of David, that He come from Galilee and a voice in the wilderness will prepare the way. Everything happened yet the people who committed their lives for this, ended up missing Him completely not only that they even went and crucified Him.

Jesus takes some time to tell them about His Second Coming. He is coming in a sudden and unexpected moment and everyone should be prepared. Because if you miss there is NO Second Chance!

He is coming to judge sinners and to reward the righteous.

A Jewish wedding overview is what you need. A detailed parallel study has been done in the second lesson on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Let me give you a brief account so that you get this right.

The first is engagement and it is an official contract between the two fathers who were giving their daughter and their son to each other. So, engagements were made with the fathers not with bridegroom and bride.

Second phase is the betrothal, it is the official ceremony, the couple, family, relatives and friends come together, and they will have actual ceremony.

From the time the betrothal takes place they are known as Husband and wife. If they have to break from the betrothal then they must take official divorce to get out from this marriage, since they are considered as husband and wife from the time of betrothal.

Thirdly, the bridegroom comes to take his bride back to his place, so that she can live with him in his place. He comes along in the procession with his family and friends. Usually this takes place in the middle of night. The bride will be waiting to enter this wedding celebration along with her bridesmaids, family etc.

The bridegroom arrives, and he takes the bride along with her bridesmaids and they all go with torches, parading in the night through the village of singing and joyful banter and great excitement!

- Everything is ready for the Bride!
- Bride groom worked well to build the house!
- The father approved the house as ready!

- Now the Bridegroom is going to take his wife and the consummate the marriage.

When they arrive their home at that night, the procession is joined by all the people in the village, they also join the procession and the celebration. It is like a festival in the village, it lasts for seven days.

Another important thing I would like you to know is the word used in this parable for the lamp.

Matthew 25:1, "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom."

The Greek word 'lampas' it is also used in John 18:3, when Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane. This should be translated as 'torch'

When Jesus spoke in Matthew 5:14-15, about the lamp the word used here in Greek is 'phos' This is being translated as light in 59 times in our New Testament.

The torch they used in those days are like a long wooden pole with some mesh and inside with small clothes. The oil is poured on the clothes to keep it burning and then they will trim clothes to make it brighter. Small flask of oil is also carried by the person who carries the torch.

Now let us look at the parable in its context.

V 1, All ten of them are virgins!

They were just ten bridesmaids, and the custom was that virgins were the bridesmaids

The Jews were so fascinated by the number 10 so Jesus also uses the same number.

- Ten commandments!
- Ten men to eat paschal supper.
- Ten men constitute a synagogue.
- Ten men to give wedding blessing.
- In many of the Jewish festivals you will find number 10.

Just like a wedding party in our present day, the bridesmaids may carry flowers or light candles etc, this wedding procession of the wedding party they carried torches. And they brought their torches along to light the night sky in the procession that they would all enjoy when the bridegroom came.

Who are these virgins?

They are all the professing Christians, who claim that they belong to Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me take this little further, they are those who have gathered with the assembly of Christian people, who await for the Second Coming of the Lord.

They can be summarized as,

- They believe in the lord Jesus Christ, Theology
- They wait for the second coming of the Lord, Eschatology
- They know that the time is drawing closer
- They are prepared to be with the Lord
- They have their own wedding garment
- They have their torch

In summary they are like you and me.

Their torch symbolizes their profession of faith in Christ. They show **outward marks** of watching for the coming of the bridegroom.

So, outwardly we can't make any distinguishing between these ten virgins. They all look alike, they all profess alike, and outwardly they are alike.

V 2, Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

God knows the heart of the people.

Psalms 14:1, The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

Psalms 53:1, The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good.

Five were called as 'mōros' in Greek, from which we get our word moron, stupid.

Even though they all know God, but they are not obeying the word of God.

Jesus explains in His sermon who is wise and who is foolish.

Wiseman is one who obeys the word of God.

Matthew 7:24, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

Fool is the one who hears the word of God but do not obey the word.

Matthew 7:26, "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

Torch, light

In the Old Testament the commandments were the light.

Proverbs 6:23, For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,

Psalms 119:105, Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

The word was the lamp in the Old Covenant. But in the New its Jesus!

John 1:4, In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 1:1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, having Jesus in your life gives the light.

God could look down on this assembled group like us, of bridesmaids,

- all of us are professing that we are Christians,
- We have the wedding garments,
- We have our torch,
- We are waiting for His coming

Yet He knows, only He knows, which category we belong, to the wise or stupid.

The only difference we can identify from this two groups, is preparedness.

V 3-4, Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

The wise carried the flask with the oil and the fools had no oil at all. The foolish did not make proper preparation. The foolish were only external. Five prepared and five were not prepared.

Oil

Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

"The Spirit of the Lord" and the oil of anointing are directly linked. The oil of anointing stands as a physical representation of Jesus being given the Spirit to perform these functions for God in His service to man.

Acts 10:38, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

So, the only difference is their preparedness of their internal life in Christ.

Jesus emphasized this in many parables again and again.

Matthew 22:1-14, the wedding feasts one guy did not wear the wedding garment.

Matthew 13:24-30, wheat and tare, they grow together you can make out until the day of harvest.

Matthew 13:18-23, Parable of the sower they grow fast but they fall away or choked.

At present day every church across this world are filled with people who are unredeemed and unprepared for the coming of the Lord.

Five of them did not come prepared its 50%, please don't take this as a method in mathematic calculation.

May be the person who is sitting next to you or its YOU!

2 Timothy 3:5, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

V 5, But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

Lord is coming but it's taking time so they all fell into sleep. Remember every one of them slept.

I am sure many of you who got married would not have slept in the previous night, thinking and preparing for the big day. Sometime you can't keep yourself awake and fall asleep.

V 6, "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'"

It took a long time for the bridegroom to come and in an unexpected time, at midnight, he arrives.

Just for a moment draw a parallel thought on the night of Passover!

Exodus 12:29, And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock.

The deliverance of Israel took place in the middle of the night that's why they are still expecting the Messiah to come in the middle of the night, unexpectedly!

Bible did say that He will come like a thief!

V 7-8, Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

The wise ones wore their wedding garments, trimmed their light, poured the oil on it lit up the night sky and was ready to join the bridegroom and the wedding procession.

The foolish ones did not have oil! They did light their torch that was going out, so they asked them to spare some oil for themselves.

*The message is very clear from the Lord saying the salvation is
NOT transferable!*

If the call to go, before the judgment seat of God came to you whether in death or the second coming of Jesus Christ, and it came to you when you were not ready and you were not prepared, all the saints in heaven and all the people on earth could stand weeping in your behalf but could never save you.

The saved can't save the lost. Give us your oil is a request that no one can answer! Only God can!! Its available free!!!

V 9-10, But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

This is to teach us that you have got to have your own salvation. Its available for free to all those who seek.

Isaiah 55:1-3, "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. ² Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³ Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David.

You got to go on your own and get it!

The oil was available for free! Plenty!! But not at this time.

Who are the oil sellers?

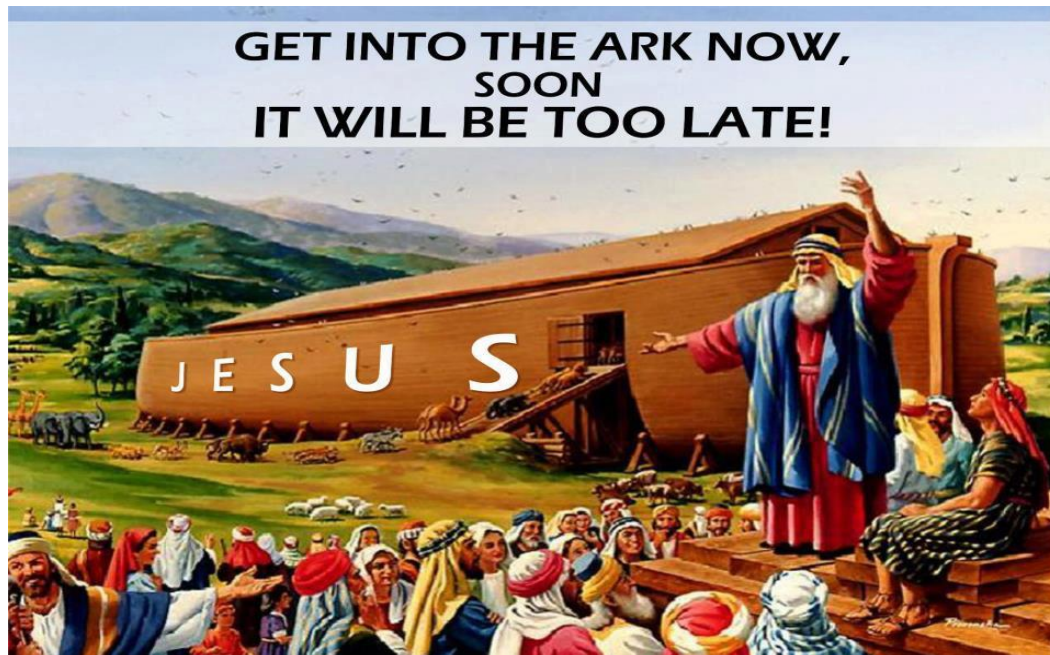
- The Scriptures,
- The Apostles,
- The Prophets,
- The Evangelist
- The Pastors,
- The teachers.

No one is allowed into the wedding ceremony without a torch that is lit. There is no way they can go and get it because the time is running out!

Luke 6:46, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? ⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. ⁴⁹ But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

People who built their house only on religious beliefs, have no foundation. The resident of holiness is that which is missing in their life. You don't witness the transformation in their life. Does not matter how they appear outside.

V 10, ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.



There are no one to teach you about the ways of God because the door is shut! Just for a moment imagine and visualise the thoughts of the people when Noah's ark started floating. People coming and banging the door and asking them to open the door for them. The lord God shut the door. When Noah was building the ark, people were mocking and ridiculing but then when the door was shut there was panic in everyone mind and heart.

My dear brothers and sisters the door is wide open now. As you hear this message the door is open. You be ready. When you see the sign of Son of Man coming is near then you will go sleep prepared not to be taken by surprise.

So, you ought to be willing to pay the price now to get into the kingdom. Jesus gave two parables in Matthew chapter 13.

Matthew 13:45-46, Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The kingdom is like a pearl, the man sells everything he had and went and bought it.

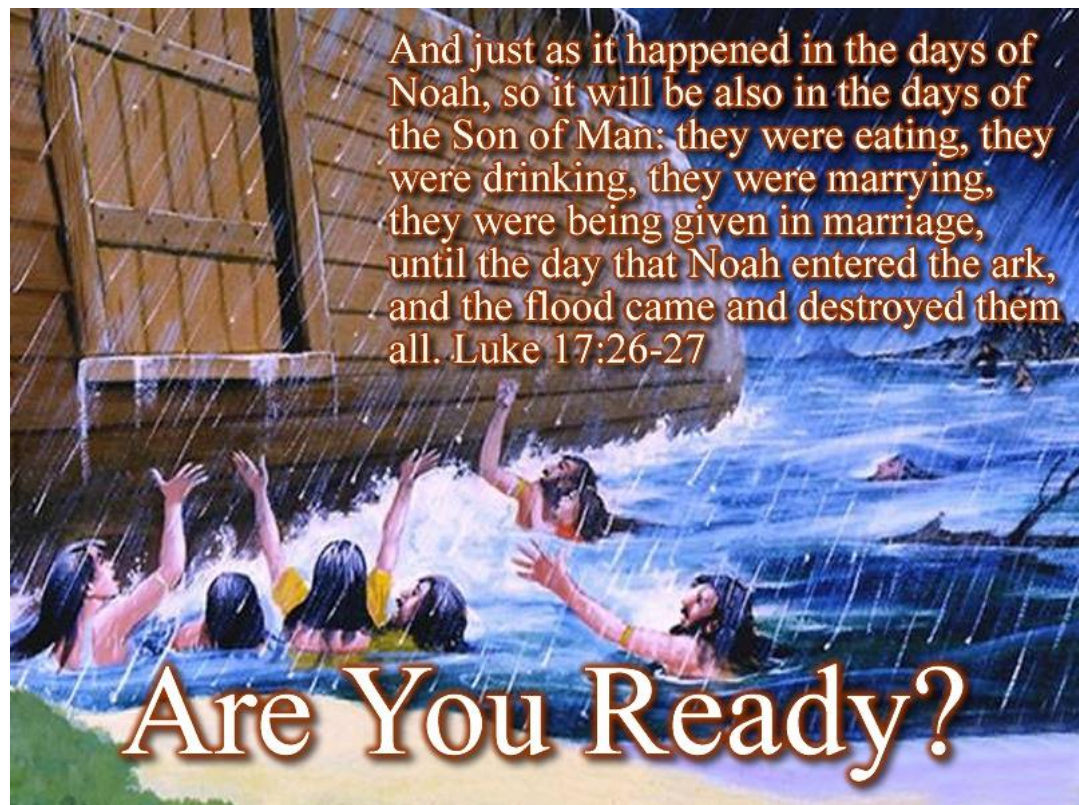
Matthew 13:44, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

Kingdom of Heaven is like a field the man found it and went and sold and bought the land.

You do pay a price which is giving up your whole self!

V 11-12, "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' ¹² But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you."

When the door is shut it's too late for them to enter into the wedding celebration.



Jesus spoke about this narrow gate!

Luke 13:24-27, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵ When once the Master of the house has risen up

and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,'²⁶ then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.'²⁷ But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'

What a disaster it will be to stand before the closed door and knocking and crying out to Him.

There's no second chance. The only sure way to be ready on the unexpected day is to be ready every day! every day!!

My brothers and sisters, Jesus finish this parable with this remark,

*"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." **Matthew 25:13.***

Are you ready?

No second chance!

No one can help you!!

You may not have this time!!!

This is the time make use of it!!

15. King's Return

We are going to look at one of the Parable of Jesus Christ in the book of Luke.

This is not the same in Matthew 25, which we looked at in detail last night.

Even though there are some similarities there are also many differences:

	<i>Parable of Ten Minas</i> Luke 19:11-27	<i>Parable of Talents</i> Matthew 25:14-30
<i>Both parables differ in the number of people</i>		
Occasion when the Parable was taught	On the way from Jericho to Jerusalem	in Jerusalem during the Passion Week
Audience	Large crowd	Disciples alone
Characters in parable	Two classes of people: servants and enemies	Professed servants alone
Earnings	Ten-fold and five-fold	Double

Luke 19:11-27, ¹¹Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. ¹²Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

¹⁵"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. ¹⁶Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

20 "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

24 "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' 25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.' "

Let me set the historical background first for us to understand what Jesus was speaking.

The great Roman Empire ruled the Whole World, including the land of Israel. During this period of Time Caesar was ruling the World and they appointed kings and rulers locally so that they will collect taxes and pay it to him. So, all the nations were ruled under the authority of Caesar and his power. Roman troops were helping the local authority to collect taxes and make sure its running smoothly.

Caesar was the ultimate king of the whole Empire, therefore he is the ultimate king in Israel as well.

The Romans were very wise in ruling them, they knew they are bringing various cultures and traditions under their rule, so they used the local leaders or kings who had been well known or from their own culture and traditions to rule over them. This ensured that the rule of Roman empire is intact throughout their territory.

Caesar appointed kings under him to rule the nation of Israel too. Even though they had the local king their ultimate ruler was Caesar. The kings who ruled Israel were neither Romans nor Jews. They were Idumeans, from the family of Herod, we know the most notable one is Herod the Great.

In 40. B.C, Herod the Great, went to Rome and negotiated with Marc Antony, Roman general and politician and a close supporter of Julius Caesar to rule over Israel. Herod Got the right. (You can watch it on our YouTube Channel, how to read the book of Obadiah sermon about Herod and why they wanted to rule over Israel)

Herod the Great, ruled until 4 B.C., and died. He had written a “will” stating that the kingdom should be divided into three and it will be given to three of his sons.

The Romans divided the kingdom after the death of Herod the Great, among three of his sons

Archelaus became ethnarch of the tetrarchy of **Judea**, **Herod Antipas** became tetrarch of **Galilee and Peraea**, **Philip** became tetrarch of north and east of the **Jordan**.

Now this Parable was told by Jesus while He was on His way from Jericho to Jerusalem.

Archelaus ruled Judea, where Jericho is part of the territory, where he had built a palace for himself and stationed there. Jericho to Jerusalem is about seventeen miles by road. Can't imagine Jesus speaking to them on a journey of 17 miles and how much He would have taught them. When Jesus told this story Archelaus stopped ruling about 10 years back.

Just prior to this Parable Jesus spoke with Zacchaeus and stayed there. (Luke 19:1-10)

But there is a history that needs to be told then only you will understand the context of the parable. When Archelaus took over the king after his father's death, to establish his power and authority over the place he did evil. He killed 3,000 Jews in the first Passover when he ascended to the throne so that people will fear him. So, people hated, despised him because he was so wicked and a brutal murderer.

Everyone who become a king to rule under the empire of Caesar, they must go and meet the Emperor to be accepted officially. So, does Archelaus and two of his brothers too. But when he went to Rome for his approval the people who hated him sent a delegation just behind him.

While Archelaus was appealing for Caesar to give him the right to be the king, 50 prominent Jewish leaders from Judea who had travelled from Judea and joined by 8,000 expatriate Jews in Rome joined together and were appealing to Caesar saying this, "We do not want this man to reign over us." Caesar, being the politician, trying to find middle ground to make everybody happy, said, "Well, Archelaus, you can be king, you just can't have the name. You must be an ethnarch and can't take the title king until you earn it by the favor of the people.

People tried to prevent him from being king by sending a delegation to Rome to stop Caesar approving and appointing him. They couldn't, so he came back as a

king and he did rule. This familiar history that everybody knew on which Jesus builds his story about a nobleman who went to a higher king to receive the right to rule his own people.

V 12, 12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

After hearing this political background now, you will be able to understand better.

Now in this story the nobleman is going to a far country to receive a Kingdom.

This nobleman is in the Greek, '*anthrpos tis eugens*'. It is a high-birth man or a man of noble birth. Jesus was the most noble birth ever. His Father was God. So, this is a story about one who had a noble birth, literally a man of birth, a man of significant birth who went to a distant country.

The Nobleman goes away to receive a kingdom for himself. Jesus the Messiah came, and the Israelites were expecting Him to set up a Kingdom now. Remember the disciples were expecting that Jesus will set up His kingdom and He will overthrow the Roman Empire.

Even the Jewish people were hoping that Son of Man will come and set up His Kingdom. But Jesus said that the Son of Man came to save the lost!

First the work of salvation must be completed before His reign as King on His Millennial Kingdom. When Jesus came for the first time he did NOT come to

- overthrow Rome and set up an earthly kingdom,
- Make right of all wrongs, socially,
- Straighten out all civil inequalities,
- Make the World moral,
- To end slavery, corruption, poverty, injustice etc.,
- Establish economic justice and
- Institute Jewish Victory

But He came to save the sinners.

More than that He came to set up the Kingdom inside of the believers first.

Luke 17:21, nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

On His Second coming, He comes back with the right to rule. He will rule with the rod of iron, and fixes everything.

- He will renovate the earth,
- He will turn the desert into a garden,
- He will create fountains and waterfalls,
- Rivers and lakes where they do not exist in desert places,
- He will change the animal kingdom,
- Glorious paradise in a renewed earth and
- He will reign with justice, righteousness, peace and joy.

We have done a detailed study of His second coming, watch it to get the full details of it.

He is gone away!

Also, when He comes back He will rule the entire creation!

Revelation 19:16, And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Philippians 2:9-11, Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This nobleman was going away to receive a kingdom, that's he is going to get coronated by a higher authority than him. But he is going to come back with kingdom to rule the same country which he is leaving now!

V 13, ¹³ So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'

Here we can see he called 10 of his slaves not three in the parable of Matthew 25.

Also, here in this parable all the ten were given equal amount of talents. In the parable of Matthew, it was one gets 5, another gets 2, and the last one gets one.

He gave them ten minas, one each, that's about three months' wages, not a big money.

While he's gone, he wants his slaves do his business and earn a respectable profit with their efforts. They can demonstrate their love and respect and concern for him and their own trustworthiness by making a reasonable profit with the investment. When he comes back, he will evaluate what everyone has done.

Slaves were told to show to their Master,

- Trustworthiness as a slave,
- Love for him,
- Respect for him,
- Honor for him,
- Commitment to his kingdom and
- Development of his kingdom,

Then they will enjoy the benefit of the kingdom by showing their faithfulness by making something out of what had been entrusted to them.

This is a call to the slave to live a life that honors the absent nobleman, that they respect him, love him, and make most out of the gifts, privileges, opportunities and responsibilities that they have been given.

V 14, But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

The citizens hated him saying that we don't want him to reign over us. So, they sent a delegation to register their protest to the superior authority not to make this man as their king.

Look at the words of Jesus, "His citizens hated him."

Everyone is owned by God! There is no exception. You may be Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim, Atheist, anybody but God owns you.

You live in His country for He made this world. It is His, and He made you. By creation, He owns you.



Only three types of people you can see in this story.

1. Faithful
2. Unfaithful
3. Rejected God altogether

So, the third group hated the nobleman and they sent a delegation.

Just for a moment let me remind the parable of the Prodigal son. People think that the younger son has to be a believer. He must be a believer because he's the son of the father.

No, he doesn't become a believer until he repents and comes back.

But the younger son is in the father's family by creation. I think this is a message that people don't quite understand.

They think that if they reject Christ, then Christ has nothing to do with them. You reject Christ and He has everything to do with you.

You accept Christ and He has everything to do with you. You do nothing with Christ and He has everything to do with you.

You are in His world.

You live in His country over which He is sovereign, over which He has full authority. Every knee bows to Him, Philippians 2. You can reject Him, you can ignore Him, but He owns you.



Nothing in the story indicates that they had any reason to hate the nobleman. The story changes from the history.

John 15:25, But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'

In the case of the history the people had valid reason for hating Archelaus. The Jews of an earlier generation did not want Archelaus to reign over them. He slaughtered, 3,000 of them. The Jews at the time of Jesus' generation didn't want him to reign over them.

The Jews didn't succeed in keeping Archelaus off the throne, and they didn't succeed in keeping Jesus off the throne either.

Jesus will be back, and He has been coronated. He has been crowned and He will come back as King of kings and Lord of lords. All kingdoms will become His kingdom. Jesus will rule the world and every knee will bow to Him. They will not be ever successful in keeping Him off His glorious throne. So those who hate Jesus Christ, who hate the gospel, reject the gospel, will face Jesus Christ as their King, as their judge and as their slaughterer.

V 15, "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

The nobleman gets the kingdom and becomes the king and, he comes back. Jesus second coming will be as the King of kings in all grandeur and not in a manger.

Revelation 19, describes the scene, Jesus ascends from heaven and a white horse with all the saints and angels coming out of heaven. He comes to earth and establishes His glorious kingdom here. This was all that the prophets prophesied, all that Jesus promised, all that the apostles wrote.

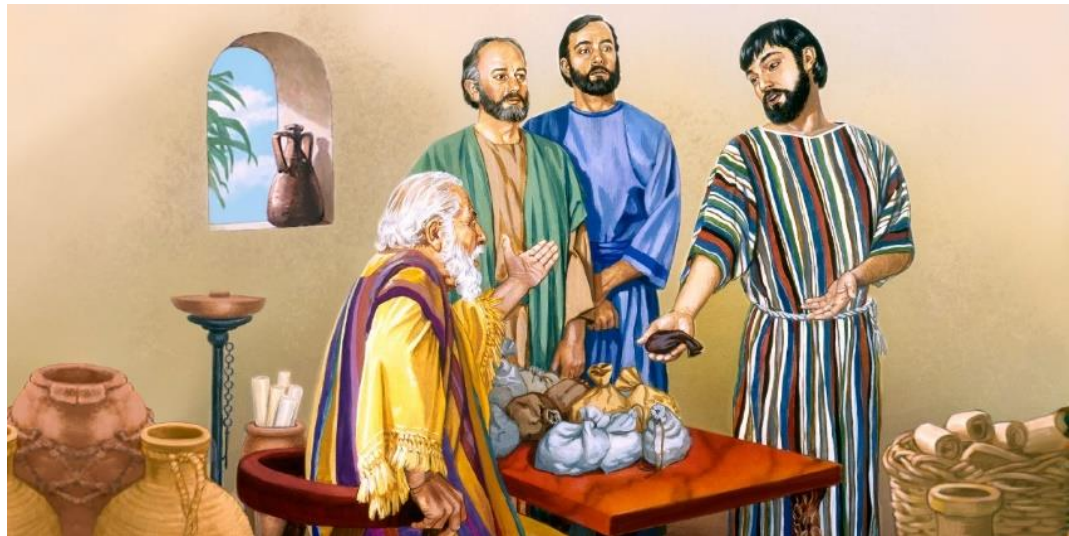
Everyone has to come to give an account to the Master.

V 16-19, ¹⁶Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.'¹⁹ Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

The nobleman orders his slaves to come and give account. He wanted to know what they have done with the money that he had given to them.

Listen to the first slave response, *'Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.'* (KJV)

Lord, the word in Greek is *'Kyrios'* which can be translated as Master, or Owner. Respect!



your mina has earned ten minas- look at the statement it is *'your mina'* What he doesn't say is "look this is what I have done with the money you gave me"

Your minas did this! I only just put this to work and you created the environment, it was your power and your influence. I was at the right place, so the money you placed in my care came to this growth it is because of you.

This is what every Christian should know and affirm. This is about living our Christian life as a trustworthy Christian, taking the truth, the power of the Spirit, spiritual opportunity, spiritual gifts, spiritual privileges, everything the Lord puts in our life and maximizing it for His honor and His glory.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7, I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

We put our gifts, talents and abilities to put into use and it is God who gives the increase.

The master told him “*well done, good slave, because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities*”. This is so unbelievable in terms of the reward. The slave had only three month’s wages to begin with and he gets a reward to rule 10 cities.

This will happen in the Millennial Kingdom. Faithful believers will rule with Christ when we enter into the kingdom with the Lord. We will also under His rule across this earth, rule with Him and have authority over multiple actual cities, nothing of this rule in the eternal heaven.

The second slave comes and gives his account. Same characteristics of the first slave, humility and respect.

Not everyone has the same,

- Opportunity,
- Ministry,
- Church,
- Influence and
- Gifts.

Your mina in my hands did this. The nobleman said to him, “*You also be over five cities.*”

What a generosity of this nobleman!

These two are the faithful ones! They showed that they were,

- Real believers,
- Loved their Master,
- Faithful,
- Humble,
- Honored to serve Him,
- Used their privilege,
- Used their influence,
- Commitment
- Finally gave all the credit back to Him.

Let me give you few verses so that you will be motivated to it!

1 Corinthians 6:2-3, Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

We will rule and we'll even rule over angels. And the apostles will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel.

Paul writes about the judgement of the believers, as Bema, where we will receive our rewards for the gold, silver, precious stones of our service and all the dross will be burned away. (A detailed study has been done in Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Lesson 18, under the title: Believers Judgement)

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

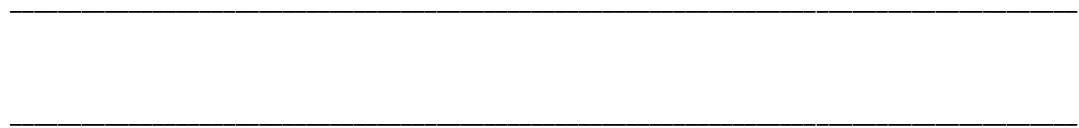
2 Corinthians 5: 9-11

2 Peter 1

There will be a glorious future reward for the faithful when the Lord comes back. Our Lord will pour out lavishly on us more than we can ever imagine. That's why it says, *"Eye hasn't seen, ear hasn't heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him."* (1 Corinthians 2:9)

V 20-21, ²⁰ "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ²¹ For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'

Now let us look at the unfaithful one.



As stated above when you have received a valuable thing to do business, then you won't put it in a handkerchief. You bury it according to the customs prevailing at that time. But this man is thoughtless, so he was careless and useless.

What we can see from his action is that his characters revealed as he has,

- No love for the nobleman
- No desire to honor the nobleman,
- No desire to work for nobleman,
- No desire to do any work for the nobleman,
- No desire to show his faithfulness,
- No desire to please the nobleman,
- No interest in the affairs of the nobleman,
- No understanding the character of the nobleman,
- No worry or think about the nobleman think of him,
- He is a Selfish person to look after only his needs,
- Taking his life easy and
- This shows he had no relationship with his master.

He says acted out of fear not out of love!

You are an austere man, meaning severe, harsh, strict, ungracious, unfair, hard-nosed and somebody might say cut-throat person.

He accuses the nobleman as a thief because he says you collect what you did not deposit and reap where you did not sow.

The religious leaders were making the Jewish people to obey the law out of fear but not to act in love.

He is the false follower and not taking any responsibility for what he has done. Rather he has the audacity to blame the nobleman, now the king.

Though he is part of the team, but he is not a believer because no true believer would act like this. No true believer calls the Lord a liar and a thief and an exploiter. No true believer declares his lack of love, lack of trust and lack of interest in the things of the Lord.

No true believer accuses the Lord of lacking justice and fairness and using people for illegitimate selfish gain

V 22-23, *And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. ²³ Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'*

Lord doesn't call any of his beloved children a worthless slave either. So, the master tells him if you knew I am such a man then why didn't you put the money in bank?

As he said he was fearful, then the least he could have done is go to the bank and deposit the money, that would have earned some interest.

Maybe this man came to the master because of his some personal need, he got that need met. He is hanging around the master and the fellow servants to see how much more he can get for himself. Selfish person. No genuine love for the master and always looking for his own selfish interest.

Our churches are filled with such people. They are so keen on what they can get from their church. You would not find love for the Lord or they have no desire to serve the Lord or be faithful to the gifts and the talents what the Lord had entrusted them.

These false disciples you can see them everywhere and their characteristics are,

- No love for Him,
- No desire to honor Him,
- No desire to respect Him,
- No desire to trust Him
- No desire to show themselves trustworthy,
- Hypocrisy is their lifestyle, Act very well
- Look for what they can get out from the church/ ministry
- Waste their spiritual opportunity,
- Waste their privilege of serving Him and
- Just remain as they are

V 24-26, ²⁴ "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' ²⁵ (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') ²⁶ *'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.*

Who could be those who stood by? Maybe the seven other servants or some others, I am not sure.

But my own thinking is that out of ten servants only three came back rest did not come back. We can see from our society that many people who had been gifted by God use it for their own good but not to glorify God.

This is my own thinking ... you are free to disagree...

The master tells them to take the mina to one who has the ten minas. Nobleman does know he has ten, but the people say that he has already ten.

But the master reply, *For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.*

This is grace! Grace is outrageous!!

What is taken away?

- Opportunity,
- privilege,
- position,
- stripped of everything and
- becomes an eternal waste & worthless.

These people who confess Christ but who have no relationship with the Lord end up like this only.

- They were connected to the church,
- Surrounded by the privileges
- Heard the truth of the gospel,
- They make a profession out of Gospel,
- Fulfilling their own purposes,
- No relationship with the Lord,
- No love for the Lord,
- No desire to honor Him.

They also that the Lord's harsh and demanding and unjust and unfair and they will be like the oil-less virgins, shut out of the kingdom forever.

V 27, *²⁷But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'*

Slay?

A very strong word, '**katasphaz**', cut them down or slay them completely.

Conclusion

You are in this story.

- **Either one among the Faithful,**
- **The False or**
- **The Enemies.**

Remember whatever category you may be, the Lord owns you!

We all must stand before Him to give account.

2 Corinthians 5:10, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Romans 14:12, So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

If you have confessed Him as Lord and King, you become among the faithful, those who are rewarded and lavished with spiritual graces and privileges forever.

If you're hiding among the false, the day will come when you will be unmasked, and all your silly excuses will be unveiled and you will become eternal waste and sent off to perish with the enemies of Christ.

Theme of this Parable is,

- ❖ **Rewards for the Faithful,**
- ❖ **Rejection for the False,**
- ❖ **Retribution for the Foes.**

Where are you?
