



# JESUS SAID...

## Jesus Said – The Parable of the Talents

Date: Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Speakers: James Hill, Becky Stamps

Key Verses: Matthew 25:14-30

### Summary

- Jesus taught this parable in the context of his last trip to Jerusalem. Many of those around him wanted him to be king there and then, so Jesus tells several parables, all of which point to a waiting period before the Kingdom is fully realized on earth.
- While the parable is clear about the fact that there will be a judgement, a reckoning for how we've used what God has given us as we wait for Jesus' return, it should inspire hope and faith in us as well as (instead of!) fear. There are 4 elements to the parable that are worth considering: a gift, a promise, a warning and an invitation:
- **GIFT:** God, a bit like the master in the story, has given us everything: not just the specific possessions, wages, and abilities we have right now but everything: breath, life, family, friends, home, future - all of it is from him. Furthermore, in Jesus God gives himself to us, living with us, dying for us, and by his Spirit he gives himself to us all the time. These gifts are an incredible, unearned blessing but also a responsibility: we should be asking, what does God want me to do with them?

- **PROMISE:** Jesus will return, and when he does, he will reward those who have served him faithfully. We do this not just with our money but with everything we have. Have we invested in our abilities and used them for God's glory, not just in churches or the non-profit sector but in every part of our life, work, study? If so, we will receive a reward that's much greater than our culture gives. A good bonus for an employee is a percentage of the profit s/he made for the company; a reward from Jesus is much bigger than what you earned (verses 21 and 23; see also Luke 19 :17, 19).
- **WARNING:** God does care about what we do with the things he's given us: if we bury our talents and refuse to use them, if we keep what we are given for ourselves we could find ourselves on the wrong side of his justice. However, Jesus isn't teaching this to say 'here's the final judgement on your life'; instead, it's an invitation.
- **INVITATION:** Jesus is a teacher: the parable is a story to help us understand one aspect of the truth about God's kingdom. It's not the final word on anyone's life: by being with us on Earth, by speaking to us, by saving us, by giving us his Spirit, Jesus is inviting us to change how we behave. The warning and the promise are a call to action, now. The story of Zaccheus, which comes before the parable in Luke 19, as well as the gifts God has given us (everything) and the generosity of the servants' reward in both versions of the parable should lead us to conclude that if the master is God, the third servant has got it wrong. God is not dishonest and harsh, he is generous and forgiving and very willing to help, teach and support us as we try to make the right choices. We shouldn't be afraid of God and let that fear stop us doing what he's called us to do; instead, we can choose to stand on who we know he is and step out in faith to follow our passions, take risks to start new businesses or projects knowing he has our back.
- Jesus is inviting us to live fearlessly for him and trust him to see our faith and reward it: he's calling us from a life of fear into a life of joy and freedom with God.

## Questions for small groups

- How do you feel when you read this parable? What is your first reaction?
- What is your image of God, when you think about judgement day and the return of Christ?
- What things has God given you (stuff, money, abilities, passions)? How do you currently use them? Do you find it easy to make wise choices? Are there any that you bury, hide, or don't know what to do with?
- What one thing could you do this week to make faith-based choices with what God has given you?