

living in **Fear** or living in **Faith**?

Matthew 25:14-30

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What do we do with all that God has given us? With all that He's entrusted to us? With our very lives. With eternal life? Live in fear or live in faith? Cling to our life at all costs, afraid of letting it go? Or let go of our life and cling to Christ? Give ourselves away to the One who gave away Himself for us. It all began as Matthew records it in our previous chapter, Matthew chapter 24.

Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." 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?"

And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. Away from Me. ... "But concerning that day and hour no one knows ... Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Be ready always, in faith. Looking to Me.

Jesus is about to leave. How shall His followers live while He's gone? How shall we live while Jesus is gone? Living in fear or living in Faith? Holding on to our lives or investing our lives in Another? Gladly giving up our lives for the One who gave His life for us.

In Matthew 25 Jesus gives two parables to answer that question. *How shall we live while He's gone?*

"Then the kingdom of heaven [and its coming] will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise." A Sudden appearance. Ready or not? How shall we live while He's gone? Live wisely in faith. Watchful, ready, looking forward to Jesus' return, trusting Him, hopeful, excited to see Him ... looking to Him and His return for us.

You don't want to be distracted by other loves in life and be unprepared for His unexpected arrival, with Him not recognizing you as His bride, and you finding the door to heaven shut to you, left outside for all eternity! How shall we live while Jesus is gone? As a bride looking forward to her groom coming for her. Ready and waiting!

"For it ... will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

What's a talent? Back then it was a measure, a weight, of wealth/possessions. In the wider sense, it's all that our Heavenly Master has entrusted to us - family - community - work - wealth - opportunities - our very lives - including everlasting life!

A man goes away from home. And he remains away for a long time. But before he leaves, he entrusts his wealth to his servants in the form of talents, a large sum of money. To one, he gives five *bags of gold*, to another two *bags of gold*, and to another one *bag of gold*. And then, the man goes away, without so much as a word of instruction as to what to do.

The first two, do what? Honored to be trusted by their Master, they step out in faith and double their investment. But the third one takes a different approach. In fear of what might happen to him, not trusting the Master, but instead, fearing Him, he does nothing with it. Afraid to step out in faith, he instead, digs a hole and buries what's been entrusted to Him.

After a long time, the master returns to settle accounts. The Last Day. Judgment Day. The day when the books are opened and the accounts are settled. (*William Cwirla*) Listen how the **language of faith** sounds. With not a word of instruction ... *And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.'* His master said to him, *'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

Now, listen to what **unbelieving fear** sounds like ... *He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'*

But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.'

For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

When your Gracious Master returns one day, and there's an accounting of all He's entrusted to you - ultimately, your life and the Good News of Jesus, who saves you from your sin; from yourself, the *last* thing He wants to hear is, *"Here is what you've entrusted to me. You can have it back, safe and sound, untouched, just the way it was when you gave it to me!"* No change. No growth. No multiplication. It's still all about me and holding on to my life. No fruit. But only unbelieving fear.

My car. My house. My family. My phone. My toys. My money. My life. Really? Is it really ours or does it all belong to another? You and I own nothing. All we have, even our lives, life eternal, is a gift, owned by Another and entrusted to us. (What we do with it is an indication of where our heart is at.) To each as God best sees fit - life, breath, time, abilities, gifts, wealth, speech, health, family, work, play, position, influence, money, education, relationships, His wondrous Gospel, and every other blessing He bestows on us. All gifts from our Lord,

Why does our Gracious Master entrust us with His riches? So that we can bury them in unbelief and fear? No, but that we would step out in faith, and see them multiplied. See them expand and grow eternally. He could do it all by Himself if He wanted. But He wants us to share in the joy of His kingdom work! To be involved. Creating and doing *His* work *through* us. And us, having the joy of watching Him work through us, and saying at the end of the day, *"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"*

You can hear it in their voice, *"Master ... you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more!"* *"... you entrusted me with two bags of gold; See, I have gained two more!"* *"Look Master, how exciting!"* *"Thank you for trusting me, with what is Yours. What an honor! I'm so happy to have been part of this venture and to see blessing come to You. You've been so good to me. You've given me so much. I'm so glad I could do something on Your behalf! I'm honored; overwhelmed, that You would even ask!"*

Who is a faithful servant? Not one who is perfect. Not one who doesn't fail. But one who lives by faith, *trusting* in the Master, especially while He's away. *Waiting* for Him to return. Looking *forward* to His return. Not idle, but busy. Busy using the gifts the Master has entrusted while He's away. Honored to be *asked*. Honored to be *used*. Gladly busying himself for the sake of His Gracious Master - to see Him blessed and honored and glorified!

What's it like in the kingdom of heaven? What will it be like in the end, when Christ returns? After a long time, He will return and settle accounts. What will He say to you? *"Well done, good and faithful servant ... Come and share your master's happiness!"* Or will He not even address you, but rather say to those who do His bidding, *"Take what I've entrusted to them and give it to the one who has ten bags ... and throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!"*

When Jesus returns, and an audit is taken of your life, how will you fare? What will you have done with all He's entrusted to you, especially eternal life? It's not about the talents, but the *heart* behind the talents. Have you lived in fear and unbelief? Or have you invested your life fearlessly, trusting yourselves into His care, to be used for His purposes, that *His* will be done in you and through you? Living in fear or living in faith? Living to save your life or living to lose your life for the One who lost His life for you?