

Fil-Am Community Church

Pastor David Bennett

5 May 2013

Key Verse: **Matthew 25:14-30**

“Stewardship”

Good morning Fil-Am it is so good to be home again, like we have said so many times, every day is a holiday, every time we eat is a feast, and every Sunday is like a Family reunion. Turn to someone and tell them “Welcome Home”

This morning we are going to talk about the topic of Stewardship, found in the Parable of Talents in Matthew, but as we do I want you to remember something that we all forget.

The question is what does God require of us?

So hopefully at the end of this sermon you will have a better understanding of what Biblical Stewardship is all about, and what God requires of us!

Let's start this morning with a definition of stewardship.

1. The office, duties, and obligation of a steward
2. The conducting, supervising, or managing something, especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care, stewardship of our natural resources

I like how in the definition it says “managing something” This could imply that we do in fact have a decision to make and are responsible for that which we are stewards over.

Just like managers of business is responsible for his/her department and employees, so we are with **ALL** that has been entrusted to us.

So what are we actually stewards over?

I personally believe, that this refers to **EVERYTHING** we have been given. **Our TIME**, our **TALENTS**, and our **TITHE**.

There are many examples that we could use this morning to help demonstrate Biblical Stewardship the one we are going to focus on is the Parable of Talents, since it gives us great illustrations of what a good steward does.

We will get into the parable itself, but before we do let's look at Luke 12:48 where it says, *"...For everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."*

At this point let's look a little closer at the Parable of the Talents, and as we do let's remember Jesus is not just talking about what we should do with our talents, he is also **challenging us!**

Matthew 25: 14-30 (NASB)

¹⁴ *"For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. ¹⁶ Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸ But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ "Now after a long time the master of those slaves *came and *settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' ²¹ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²² "Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you*

entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

²⁴ “And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ “But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. ²⁷ Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. ²⁸ Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ ²⁹ “For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. ³⁰ Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In the **Parable of the Talents** let’s look specifically at a five key points to take away today!

1. Ownership
2. God given Talents
3. Use our God given Talents.
4. Don’t sit on what has been given to us.
5. Use it or lose it.

Let’s get right into the lessons this morning by looking at the first point.

1. OWNERSHIP

One of the things that helped me realize that all my possessions are just on **“temp loan”** and not my possessions that I am merely a steward rather

than the processor, was a story I was reading about a well-known violinists, talking about his violin.

He mentioned that his violin was a couple hundred years old and worth many hundreds of thousands of dollars. The interesting point about his conversation was the way the violinists viewed himself as a steward of the instrument, rather than its owner.

He was fully aware that many great musicians had played the instrument before he was even born, and he was not naïve to think that he would be the last to play the fine instrument, he understood that it was just temporarily passing through his hands.

The violinist's outlook on his violin helped me get a better understanding of the role possessions should have in my life. It is not so much having or not having possessions is a good or bad thing more about the proper perspective of them in my life.

God **made it all**. You really own nothing. You didn't come into this world with anything and you're not going to take anything out of this world.

The Bible says, in vs. 14. ¹⁴ *"For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.*

Whose property was it? The servant's or the master's? It was the master's. God has entrusted some things to you. God owns everything.

One thing that can distract us is forgetting where our talents came from. Upon first recognition of a talent we may think that somehow we were responsible for it. After all it was through our efforts that we became rich, educated, got the promotion, etc...

We must be **watchful** at all times. It's ironic isn't it that Satan can even use the gifts of the Lord against us. The only way to prevent or overcome this is to freely admit that the source of our talents is from the Lord and be ever thankful for them. We need to pray prayers of thanksgiving everyday for the rich gifts that he gives us.

2. God given talents.

Talents are abilities, resources, skills or opportunities all of the things that God has given, including spiritual gifts.

Anything that God has trusted you with, your children, your job, can be considered a talent.

Let's look at some other categories of talents or gifts.

The ability to **teach**, God has given to some a very special talent to be able to explain difficult subjects. So if you have that ability and do not use it, are you like the servant with the one talent?

Some have the ability to **sing**. If you have this ability and don't sing then you may fall into the same judgment as the one talent servant. The Lord may want you to lead singing. If that is the case then you must heed the call.

There are many other talents that the Lord gives us such as **athleticism, enthusiasm, serving spirit, praying, encouraging, and attendance**.

The Amplified Bible says in Romans 12:6, "*Having gifts (faculties, talents, qualities) that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them...*"

F.B. Meyer once said: "I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves one above the other; and that the taller we grew in Christian character the easier we could reach them. I now find that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other. It is not a question of growing **taller** but of stooping **lower**; that we have to go down, always down, to get His best gifts."

It says in vs. 15 "*To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability.*"

Talent in this verse simply meant an amount of money. A Talent in New Testament times was worth about \$30,000 dollars. The master gives \$150,000 to one, \$60,000 to another and \$30,000 to the last one. He says, I want you to go invest it.

The next point is;

3. Use your talents.

The Bible says in **Matthew 25:19**, *“Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.”*

The master had made an **investment** and wanted a return. God has made an investment in **your** life and he wants a return.

The Bible says one day God is going to do an account **“an audit”** of your life.

Are you ready for that, to be asked what did we do with our talents?

I believe the parable makes the answer to that question crystal clear. We must use them for the Lords service.

Admittedly it is not always easy to know what the Lord wants us to do with our talents.

First of course we must be able to recognize what it is that the Lord has given us, it comes down to perspective.

One night a wife found her husband standing over their newborn baby’s crib silently watching him. As he stood there looking down at the sleeping infant, she saw a mixture of emotions, disbelief, doubt, delight, amazement. She could see the bewilderment in his eyes as he would just stand there and shake his head and say **“Simply Amazing.”**

Touched by her husband’s unusual display of emotion, she slipped her arms around him and whispered a penny for your thoughts?

Isn’t it amazing? He replied, when you take the time and look really close, how could anyone make a crib like that for only 50 dollars?

The man had given his time, but his object of affection or perception was not correct.

It all boils down to perspective.

It is usually easier to see the abundances of others and concentrate on what we don't have and gloss right over what we have been blessed with.

We may find ourselves without a job; however, the Lord has given you more time to devote in his service. Once again it boils down to perspective.

What do we do with our talents? I believe the parable makes the answer to that question **crystal clear**. We must use them for the **Lord's service**.

The next point is;

4. Don't sit on what God gave us

The first man took his money and doubled it, a 100 percent return. This man was a wise investor. The second guy took his two grand and he doubled it. The point of the story is the third guy. The third guy just **buries it**. He does nothing.

It says in **vs. 18**, *"But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money."*

He's **cautious** and **conservative**. He says, "I'm going to play it safe!" He sat on it.

What was his master's reaction? "His master replied, in **vs. 26**, *"But his master answered and said to him, 'you wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.'"*

He was more than a little upset! "At least you could have put it in the bank." You haven't even tried, he said. You hid it. This is the sin of inactivity, the sin of passivity.

The point is we cannot please God by **playing it safe**. We must take risks in life. If we don't, we are wicked and lazy.

- Doing nothing is **inexcusable**.
- God would rather have you try to serve him and totally blow it, than do nothing.

- I'd rather attempt to do something great and fail than attempt to do nothing and succeed.
- If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time.

I may not **reach all the goals** I believe God has given me for my life but it really doesn't matter.

You've heard me say this again and again, it does not matter how many times you fall down, it only matters how many times you **get back up...**

What matters is the effort — **trying!**

- Trying to make your life count,
- Trying to make an impact with your life,
- Trying to do something significant that is going to outlast you.

It's not whether you reach it or not, it's the **effort** that counts. Doing nothing is inexcusable.

Don't be the person who is constantly sitting on the **sidelines**, not in the game, spectating and not participating.

Christianity is Not a Spectator sport, you need to get involved!

I shudder to think of some of the excuses given while standing before our pure Savior — **excuses** why no attempt was made to get involved helping other people and serving others.

Whether you like it or not, it's inevitable, **we will all stand** in that final day and be held accountable.

God is going to ask you, "What did you do with what I gave you?"

2 Corinthians 5:10, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*

Don't be the one to stand there and say I buried my talent, but that I tried my best to use what was given to me to advance your kingdom.

Why do we play it safe? It's really fear. Fear is Satan's favorite tactic.

The man in the parable was paralyzed by fear, because of the heavy responsibility his Lord has given him. He like many of us here today was the typical spectator, the bench warmer. He stood on the sidelines; never participating in what his Lord wanted him to do.

A famous theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, tells a parable about this same parable. It was a story about a young man who left his home in Kansas to be a sailor on a tall-masted sailing ship.

On his third day out to sea, the new sailor was commanded to take watch in the crow's nest, high up in the mast.

After climbing about halfway up the very tall mast, he stopped, he was frozen with fear. He could not continue to climb up to the crow's nest, he was also too proud to slink back down to the safety of the deck below, and face the seasoned sailors and admit he was afraid of heights.

What he did was freeze and cling to the mast with all his strength, he didn't think about the responsibility that had been given to him, he just froze and did nothing.

The comparison between the sailor and the one-talent man is very similar. The servant was given the stuff of life and told to invest it, to risk it for the sake of his Lord, but fear seized him and he could not bring himself to do anything. He simply clutched the talent just like the sailor clutched the mast, he didn't give it, or himself a chance at all.

If you had never heard the above parables you might be tempted to think that this servant did something commendable or prudent by not taking any risk.

After all he didn't lose what he had been given, I mean think about it, the world is a crazy place and he did hand the master back exactly what he had been given.

You might have expected the master to understand and say, *“Well you did the best you could.”*

But not so, Jesus had no sympathy for the character in the narrative. *“You wicked and slothful servant.”*

Then in verse 30, he tells the others to cast this unprofitable servant out!

Fear causes me to **make excuses** for doing nothing. "Then the man who had received one talent came and said, in vs. 24, *“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.’”*

This guy **prepared a speech**. He was rehearsed, he **lost** before he even started, and he went into it with the **wrong attitude**.

He says, "The reason why I didn't make any profit on my money is your fault!" He blames the master and passes the buck.

You could almost hear him say, **See, What had happened was.....**

I know that does not sound like anyone here!

Let's look at the sixth point;

5. Use it or Lose it

This principle is true of **anything** in your life time, money, effort, energy, talent or abilities. If you don't use it, you lose it.

In vs. 28 it says, *“Therefore, take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.”*

God has the right to take away anything that I don't use for him.

He gave it to me in the first place. He has the right to do that. I forfeit it if I don't use it. It's a universal law:

- If I don't use my muscles I lose my muscles.

- If I don't use my mind, I lose it — it becomes mentally dull.
- If I don't use the opportunities God has given me in business, sports, ministry, whatever, I lose the opportunities.
- If I don't practice my talent, I lose my talent.

Just start using what you have been given for God. If you find you need more energy, use what you've got for God and watch what happens.

Little becomes much when you put it in the master's hand.

- If I need more **time**, I give my time to God.
- If I need more **money**, I give my money to God.
- If I need more **talent**, I give my talent to God.

Watch him multiply it just like the five loaves and two fish. He multiples it when we place it in the Master's hand.

Once we use it for God we will be rewarded

In says in **vs.23**, "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' God promises three rewards:

Affirmation: "**Well done.**" I can't think of anything better than to stand before Jesus Christ and have him say, "Good job, Pastor Dave. **Good job!**"

Promotion: He says, "I'm going to give you greater responsibility. You've been faithful with little things; I'll trust you with more."

Celebration: He says, "Come and **share** your master's happiness." The happiest people I know are those who are using what they have for God.

When God does an **audit** on your life, and it's not **if** it's **when**, and it is coming is it going to show a **profit** or a **loss**?

Is the Lord of Host going to say, "Well done!" or "Lazy servant?"

How will it feel to stand before a Savior with pierced hands and have him say, "Why did you never even make an attempt to get involved in a ministry? You were so busy doing your own thing!"

I would like to take this time and suggest that you start preparing for that event right now? Start making **investments** into the Kingdom.

Get involved, make a difference.

It's not too late...

You can start the investment right here today....

Saints the wisest investment you will ever make is not with AT&T, Merrill Lynch or anybody else. The wisest investment you will ever make is when you say, "**God, I want to make the rest of my life count for you.**"

I give it to you, whatever it is.

I'm tired of sitting on the sidelines. I'm not going to be a spectator."

It says in **Matthew 6:19-20**, "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.*"

I can't think of a greater thing than to stand before Jesus and hear him say, "You don't have a whole lot to show for the first part of your life, but you did get make a change and start to turn it on in the later years.

You did a **good job**. You weren't perfect, you had a lot of faults and fell down a lot but you **always got back up**. You made an effort. Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

How great that day will be.

Are you **looking forward to it**? Or do you **dread** the day when you will be held accountable?

Today I offer you the challenge of looking at your life and ask are you using your talents for God?

Don't **bury your talent** in the sand and wait until it too late to try and make a difference.

You can make a difference starting **right now**, right here **today....**

Let us pray...

"Father God, thank you so much for the talents you have free given us that we know we are not worthy to receive. You have given us talents, abilities, gifts, skills and opportunities. You've given us such a great privilege to make a difference by using our abilities and talents to advance your kingdom here on earth. We know with this privilege comes responsibility. Help us make our lives count. Help us not be like others who are living simply for today, and are afraid to step up to the challenge you have laid before us. Help us to get outside of our comfort zone and live for eternity instead of living for the here and now. In Jesus' most Holy and Precious name and all the saints said Amen.