

Faithfulness Matthew 25:14-28

In Matthew 24 we find a rich man leaving town and giving portions of his money to three of his most trusted servants. To one he gave five talents; to another he gave two talents; and to the third he gave one talent. A talent was a weight of money: if these were gold talents each talent would be worth \$200,000.00 today. Thus we find that the first man received \$1000,000.00 to invest as well as to live off while the master was gone. The second man received \$400,000.00, and the third received \$200,000.00. While the master was away, the first two got busy and by wise investing were able to double the money. The third man buried his talent in the ground for safe keeping. When the master returned, he called his servants to account for what they had done with his money. The first two were rewarded with a hearty well done because they were faithful. The third man told the master that the reason he didn't try to invest his money was that he felt his master was too hard to please, so he gave the master his one talent that he had buried. The master was angry with this unfaithful servant, and after rebuking him sharply, took his talent from him and gave it to the man who had the ten talents. Notice several things about this story: the master gave each one a different amount according to his ability (God's gifts are always given according to our ability and clearly, some are able to handle more than others.); the only requirement was that he be faithful in seeking to invest his money (The man with the two talents was not given as much responsibility as the man with the five talents.); and notice too that the third man had a bad attitude, perhaps because he had been given less than the others. In relating this story to us today, we recognize that God has given talents (abilities) to each of us. To some he gives five, to some two, and yes, to some only one. Remember, if God gives you five abilities, he makes you much more responsible than someone with less ability. Are talents today as valuable as those gold talents of yesterday? They can be: if you excel at sports, or if you are an exceptional speaker or science student, you might make more than \$1000,000.00. The key is the same as then: develop whatever gifts the Lord has given you and use them faithfully to the Glory of God.

In whatever you do God requires faithfulness. One of the best Biblical examples is Joseph. Joseph was certainly not a perfect man: because he was spoiled by his father, he developed a superior attitude toward others, especially to his brothers. Along with that, he tended to brag about things (his dreams) which gave his brothers an excuse to hate him. But the thing that was real in Joseph's life was his love for his God and his faithfulness to complete whatever task that was given to him. When Joseph was sold as a slave, he did his new jobs so well that he was promoted to head slave. When he became a jail bird, he was so faithful to keep his cell clean and be a help to those over him that he was soon "prisoner in charge." His faithfulness to his God and to his tasks in this life brought him to be second in command in Egypt. God expects us to be faithful in everyday tasks like cleaning our rooms, doing our chores, doing our schoolwork and even to those extra jobs our parents give and they are often without pay. If we do these tasks around the home well, others in our neighborhood will see that we do our jobs well and soon we will be hired to a paying job. Once we have that paying job remember to look neat, be on time, and give our full attention to the job. That will demonstrate our faithfulness to our God and cannot help but impress our employer.

But faithfulness goes into our spiritual life as well. Certainly we are not saved by

our faithfulness to do good works, or by our going to church, or by doing good deeds to others. No my friend, salvation is a gift to be received, never a reward to be earned. But through faithfulness to certain tasks we who are saved can grow in our Christian life. Learning faithfulness is like learning to ride a bike: you will fall many times while learning, but when you fall, get up and try again until you master the task. Getting victory over your bad habits will take time and faithfulness. When you fall into sin, you get up. When you say a bad word, you stop confess the sin to God and ask His help not to do that again. If you fall again, confess again, get up again. If you will be faithful to follow these steps with each bad habit, you will soon be victorious in living for Jesus. A person who has never or seldom attended church, will not automatically become faithful to attend every church service after they get saved. They must learn to be faithful one service at a time. Being saved will help to make the Bible more understandable, but will not make you read it every day. You might start small that is 10 minutes a day to begin, and then increase the time little by little, and soon you will begin to understand God's Precious Word. The same goes with giving your money to the Lord or witnessing: begin small but be consistent. Being consistent or faithful will bring you to joy in your service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

But as we've already said, do not think that your faithfulness will either gain your salvation or even help to save you. Salvation is a gift that must be received by faith. My friend, Jesus died on the cross to give you a salvation that is completely paid for (by Him) and that does not need your help. If you will admit your sins to Him and trust Him for salvation, He will save you now.

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