

# Don't Bury Your Talents



Rob Pue

In Matthew 23, Jesus was in the temple, giving a harsh rebuke to the Scribes and Pharisees – the religious leaders of His day. He condemned them for their hypocrisy, failing to practice what they were preaching... doing all their deeds only for the admiration of men, loving the best seats in the synagogues and being honored, yet none of them were true ministers of God. None were servants... but they sure loved being revered and served by others.

Jesus also pronounced “woe” unto the religious leaders because instead of leading people to the Kingdom of God, they were leading them astray, and as Jesus said, making them *“twice the child of hell as yourselves.”* He went on to call them *“blind guides”* and *“fools,”* and declared they were *“straining at gnats while swallowing camels”* as they neglected the most important and “weighty” matters of God’s Word. He called them *“whitewashed tombs”* and rebuked them again for persecuting God’s true followers.

Clearly, the Lord was not pleased with the religious leaders – or should I say, the “PASTORS” of His day. It leads me to wonder just what He might be thinking right now about the state of our modern American churches – and the pastors who run them. Do our pastors today prefer to be well liked, popular and honored among men? Would He consider them to be “blind guides” and “fools” preferring to speak only the “easy” things and soft words that would make the people feel good about themselves, while neglecting the weightier matters of

the law – thereby making their followers “twice the children of hell” that they themselves have become?

When good, true Remnant believers in Christ – modern day “prophets,” if you will – BEG today’s pastors to speak out boldly and courageously and LEAD the people in the whole counsel of God (yes, even regarding the “hard” things), do they accept the responsibility of their leadership roles and listen to the prophets as faithful servants of Christ... or do they instead “stone” the prophets and run them out of town? Maybe they just politely “suggest” they might be “happier” in “another church,” thereby kindly inviting them to “*please leave.*”

There’s a lot of false teaching today about how Jesus was always just “love,” “love,” “love.” Our Lord is pictured in most of the artwork we see as an effeminate man, with soft blue eyes and one would assume He was a soft-spoken, gentle man with baby-soft hands that never did a hard day’s work in His life. We envision Him embracing EVERYONE with compassion, love and understanding, never raising His voice, never condemning, never even hating that which is obviously evil. We tend to quickly turn the page when we get to the part where He took the time to make Himself a whip and proceed to beat the money-changers in the temple and overturn their tables in a fit of rage. And we conveniently forget His words in Matthew 23:33, when He declared of the religious leaders, “*You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?*”

No, the “modern day Jesus” we have imagined in our deluded minds would never sentence anyone to hell. “*Jesus loves us all, just the way we are.*” This is what we’ve been taught by our modern day Scribes and Pharisees who love the adoration of men – and all the benefits that go along with that. Today it’s “*Come as you are, sing ‘Just As I Am,’* (not the hymn, the new rock and roll version) *and leave just as you were... Just be sure you come back next Sunday!*” In return for your faithful

attendance, they promise never to offend you, never to challenge you and that your heart will never be convicted – and sadly, never be converted.

But in Matthew 24, Jesus left the temple and began instructing His disciples on future events, the destruction of the temple and the signs to watch for at the end of the age. He reminded the people that no one knows the day or hour of His return, but He gave us specific things to watch for that would alert us... and He warned us to always be prepared, to always be ready – BECAUSE He COULD return at any time. Even now, the “end of the age” could be today. A FEW will be prepared and ready to meet Him. MOST will not. For as we know from His instruction in Matthew 7, *“Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

And then He immediately warned again of those who would lead us astray through vain religion. He said, *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly, they are ravening wolves.”* AND He warned that not all who say “Lord, Lord” will enter into the kingdom of heaven. MOST, in fact, will choose the broad way and will instead be told, *“Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you.”*

Now, please understand... Jesus DOES love. Jesus’ love is AVAILABLE to all who will come to Him in humble repentance and faith. But it’s not “automatic” and it’s not “cheap,” and it’s not “free.” Forgiveness requires repentance and humility. Remember, God gives grace to the humble but He opposes the proud. Indeed, *“Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

You see, Jesus loves us perfectly; He is longsuffering and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But for those who choose to remain disobedient

workers of iniquity, the harsh reality of hell awaits. Revelation 21:8, *"But the cowardly and unbelieving, the abominable and murderers, the sexually immoral and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

I understand this is not an easy thing to hear, and I understand that most pastors today will not tell you this. Most will say Jesus accepts us all just as we are: cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, haters, sexually immoral, those who dabble in sorcery, wiccans, pagans, earth-worshippers, those who idolize Hollywood and sports celebrities, liars, cheaters, even those who hate God and persecute His people. But they're lying to you. The Bible says that God is angry with the wicked every day. It says apart from Christ, His wrath ABIDES on us. It says those who do not believe in the only Son of God are CONDEMNED already.

If you disagree, your argument isn't with me; it's with God's Word. I'm just telling you what it says. Jesus waits with open arms to accept – by grace – all who come to Him, but you must COME, and you must come with a heart of humility, repentance and faith. And please understand, tomorrow is not promised to any of us. TODAY is the day of salvation. To "put off" getting right with God is just pure stupidity. You may say, "I'll get around to it..." But my friend, when will THAT be? To know the truth about this – the most important and significant thing there could ever be, which is where you'll spend eternity – and apathetically ignore it is foolishness.

In Matthew 24, Jesus gave us the Parable of the Fig Tree; He reminded us of the days of Noah; He told the story of the faithful and wise servant and the story of the wicked, self-indulgent servant. In Matthew 25, He told of the ten virgins awaiting the Bridegroom – five wise who were prepared and five foolish who were not and missed the "marriage feast." Jesus

ended this parable with the admonition: *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."*

Now I've said all this to give you the CONTEXT for the point of today's message...the Parable of the Talents. This parable of Jesus has some deep and significant meanings. Jesus told this story because it was something we could all relate to: money. I find it interesting that the word for the money in this story was "talents." A "talent" was equal to about 3,000 sheckels. But bottom line, a "talent" was something of great value. I should note here that God has given all of us a measure of talents; not necessarily money in our case, but talents, skills, abilities, and spiritual gifts.

Since we all pretty much know the story, I'll paraphrase here, for the sake of time. Jesus told of a man who was about to be traveling to a "far country." Before the man left, he called his servants, and to one of them he gave five talents, to another he gave two talents and to another he gave one.

The servant with five talents went to work and invested them and earned five more. Likewise, the servant with two talents invested his two and earned two more. But the servant that was given only one talent, Jesus said, did nothing at all with it. He just buried it in the ground.

When the Master returned, the servant who was given five talents now had TEN to present to his Lord. Likewise, the servant who was given two talents had FOUR. The Master was well pleased with their work while He was away. To these two, He said, *"Well done, thy good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."* They were also rewarded by being made *"rulers over many things,"* the Bible says.

But the servant who buried his talent in the ground and did nothing with it at all, had no increase to present to the Master. This servant explained *"I was afraid and went and hid*

*thy talent in the earth."* THIS servant, his Lord called a *"wicked and slothful servant."* Even the one talent he was given was taken from him and his Lord declared, *"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

So what's the point here? Obviously, Jesus was the Master who was traveling to a "far country." He was soon to be crucified, killed, buried, rise again and ascend to the right hand of the Father in heaven. However, Jesus has given each of His servants – each of US – a measure of talents, and He expects us to get to work and USE these talents to gain more. In other words, while we are here on earth in this life, we are to use the talents, skills, abilities and gifts God has given us to increase the Kingdom of heaven... to "go therefore and make disciples." To be about our Father's business until He returns.

Unfortunately, many of us today are like the "wicked and slothful" servant. We're AFRAID. We're cowardly. What might the world think of us if we declare ourselves to be "Christians?" Instead of "investing" the faith God has graciously given us and bringing others into the kingdom, we "bury" our talents. We hide our lights under a bushel. We cower in the closet while the world around us burns. We give the devil the ground that belongs to our Lord and Savior. We simply HIDE.

And sadly, today many pastors are the epitome of this wicked and slothful servant... BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID of being unpopular, or of "rocking the boat," or of being "counter-cultural," they simply go along to get along. Preaching a powerless, non-offensive false "love gospel" made up of 2% milk instead of the meat of the WHOLE Word of God, they just bury their talents while trying to keep all the people happy and blissfully ignorant and content. But when the Master returns, He will NOT be pleased with such cowardly, wicked and slothful servants. They will cry out *"Lord, Lord,"* but I dare

say they will be cast into outer darkness and there WILL be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This chapter goes on to talk about the reward given to the sheep which Christ places on His right hand. To those He says, *"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* And to the goats on His left, He declares: *"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*

How does He differentiate between the sheep and the goats, the blessed and the cursed? By what each one DID with the "talents" he was given while occupying the earth. The righteous sheep took care of even the "least of those" who were hungry, thirsty, those who were strangers, naked, sick and in prison. The wicked goats couldn't be bothered.

Now don't miss this: I do not believe this is talking ONLY about physical food and drink; it's not talking about illegal aliens crossing the border. It's not JUST about opening a food pantry at your church or giving coats to kids or doing hospital visits or singing songs to prison inmates. These are all fine things. But I believe Jesus was talking about the SPIRITUAL even more than the physical.

There are desperate lost souls out there – right now – planning to murder their babies through abortion. There are those who worship demons – or created things – who are spiritually "naked" and need to know the God of heaven. There are MANY imprisoned by the lies of homosexuality and transgenderism that YOU can not only visit, but help set free! There are MANY who hunger and thirst for truth – truth that perhaps only YOU can provide, if only you will.

You know, it's been said that after the terror attacks on 9/11 the churches in America were packed with people from coast to coast, all looking for answers. But a month later, those same

churches were emptier than they were before. Because the people went there to find God, but He wasn't there. I implore you today, be a good and faithful servant. Have the courage to tell the WHOLE truth about the God who saved you, because you weren't saved just for YOU. You were saved to SERVE. Don't worry about what the world thinks of you. You're not of this world. Prepare yourselves, because you don't know the day or the hour when our Lord will return. And by all means, do NOT bury your talents. Invest wisely.

Audio CDs and transcripts of this message are available when you call me at Wisconsin Christian News, (715) 486-8066. Or email [Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com](mailto:Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com) and ask for message number 284.

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E-Mail Rob Pue: [Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com](mailto:Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com)