

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

BURY IT OR MULTIPLY IT?



THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

“To the Master who entrusted us with His treasure may we be found faithful to multiply it until He comes.”

This booklet calls the church back to the heart of discipleship: to be a disciple who disciples others. With practical clarity, it shows how Learning Centers can help believers invest their treasure, multiply disciples, and hear those precious words from the Master: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

When Jesus told the parable of the talents, His listeners knew a single talent was worth twenty years’ wages today, equal to nearly a million dollars. He chose that image to show the staggering value of what God entrusts to every believer. The gospel, the Spirit, the Word, and the Great Commission are treasures beyond price. Yet too many Christians, like the unfaithful servant, have buried what was given instead of multiplying it.

The Wonder of the Talent: Disciples Who Disciple

It was near the end of His earthly ministry. Jesus had left the temple for the last time, and His disciples were full of questions. They had heard His warnings about the coming judgment, and they wanted to know what the signs of His return would be. Sitting with them on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the city of Jerusalem, the Lord unfolded one of the most remarkable discourses in all of Scripture. We know it as the Olivet Discourse. In it, Jesus spoke not only of the destruction that would come upon Jerusalem, but also of His future return, the end of the age, and the need for His followers to be ready.

Among His many illustrations that day, Jesus told a story that still pierces the heart of every believer who listens carefully. It is the story of the talents. Like all of His parables, it was simple enough for ordinary people to understand, yet profound enough to carry eternal significance. A man was going on a journey, and before leaving, he entrusted his wealth to his servants. To one, he gave five talents; to another, two; and to a third, one. Then he departed. Each servant was expected to do something with what was entrusted to him. When the master returned, he called them to account.

The first two servants had used their talents wisely. They invested and multiplied them. One who had five gained five more, and the one who had two gained two more. Their master's response was filled with joy: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." But the third servant had buried his single talent in the ground. He gave it back unused. He thought he was being cautious, perhaps even responsible, but the master judged him differently. "Thou wicked and slothful servant... cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."

The meaning was clear: the Lord expects His followers to take what He has given them and use it, multiply it, and invest it in His work. To hide it, to bury it, to keep it safe but unused, that is disobedience. That is sloth. And that is a message the modern church desperately needs to hear.

Burying the Talent in Our Day

If you were to ask most Christians today whether they had ever been discipled, many would hesitate. Ask them whether they have ever discipled another person, and the silence grows deeper. I have asked this very question to believers across churches, and I cannot recall a single time when I received a solid, positive answer. They may look puzzled, or they may respond with vague references to attending Sunday school or hearing sermons. But discipled? Or discipling another? The answer is almost always no.

This silence reveals something sobering. In our day, many believers are just like the servant who buried his talent. They have received something from the Master: the truth of the gospel, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the privilege of God's Word, but they have not invested it. They hold on to it quietly, perhaps even thinking that this is faithfulness, when in reality they are simply burying it. They attend services, sing hymns, and listen to preaching, but they do not multiply what was given to them by pouring it into others.

The parable of the talents makes it clear that the Lord does not view this as neutrality. He views it as wickedness and slothfulness. It is not that the servant had stolen the money, squandered it, or wasted it in wild living. He had done nothing with it. And that, in the eyes of the master, was enough to condemn him.

What Has the Lord Entrusted to Us?

Every believer has been entrusted with far more than a talent of money. We have been entrusted with eternal truth. The gospel is the greatest treasure ever placed into human hands. Paul called it

“this treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7). Alongside the gospel, we have been given the indwelling Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live for Christ. We have been given the Scriptures, living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. We have been given the fellowship of the saints and the commission of the Lord Himself: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

With such riches in our hands, how can we bury them? How can we be content to sit week after week, learning but never teaching, receiving but never giving, hearing but never sharing? The parable calls us back to faithfulness. The Lord does not measure success by numbers or by the size of our ministry. He measures faithfulness by whether we invested what He gave us into others.

The Staggering Value of a Talent

We must pause here to notice something remarkable in the story. When Jesus spoke of a “talent,” He was not referring to a small coin. A single talent represented about twenty years’ wages for a working man. In our terms today, that would equal somewhere between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000. Imagine being handed that much money by your master, with the simple expectation that you would put it to work.

Why would Jesus use such an amount? Because He wanted His listeners to understand the staggering value of what the Master places into the hands of His servants. And if the earthly sum was beyond imagination, how much more the spiritual reality? When a person becomes a child of God, Christ invests in them

something of incalculable worth. He entrusts them with the gospel, with His Spirit, with His Word, with His promises, with His mission. Peter reminds us that we were redeemed “not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

When we realize this, the parable takes on a new weight. Who would bury a million-dollar investment in the ground? Yet spiritually, this is exactly what happens when Christians keep their faith to themselves, never discipling, never investing, never multiplying. To bury such a treasure is not only foolish, it is a tragedy. The Lord has entrusted every believer with something beyond price, and He expects us to multiply it until He comes again.

Why the Silence?

Why then is discipleship so rare among us? Why is it that when asked whether they have discipled another, Christians grow silent? I believe the answer lies partly in the structures we have built. Many churches have adopted a model of ministry where the pulpit and the Sunday school class are the primary vehicles of spiritual growth. While preaching and teaching are vital, they often function as “listening centers” rather than “learning centers.” Believers gather to hear, but seldom to practice, to apply, or to pass on what they have received.

Learning in the biblical sense is never passive. Jesus said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me” (Matthew 11:29). That yoke implies active partnership, walking with Him, and following in His steps. Paul told Timothy, “The things that thou hast heard of

me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). That is, multiplication truth is passed from one to another, and then to another, and then to another. Without structures that encourage this kind of multiplication, the people of God too often settle into passivity. They bury the talent without even realizing it.

The Purpose of a Learning Center

This is why we must speak about Learning Centers. A Learning Center is not another program, another burden, or another layer of church activity. It is a return to what Jesus intended all along. It is a place where believers are not only taught but trained, not only listeners but learners, not only receivers but reproducers.

Think of the faithful servants in the parable. They did not simply hold on to their talents. They used them. They took risks. They worked with what they had been given, and in doing so, they multiplied it. A Learning Center provides the same opportunity. It creates an intentional environment where believers learn how to invest the truth they have received, where they practice sharing it, and where they grow confident in discipling others.

In many churches, people long for deeper teaching but do not know where to find it. Others feel the call to disciple but lack the training. A Learning Center meets both needs. It equips believers doctrinally, so they know what they believe. It equips them personally, enabling them to walk with God in daily life. And it equips them missionally so that they can invest in others.

The Great Commission Revisited

When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He was not giving a suggestion. He was entrusting His disciples with His mission. It was the same trust illustrated in the parable of the talents. He, the Master, was going away. He would ascend to the Father, but before leaving, He placed the responsibility in the hands of His followers: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

Notice the language. He did not say, “Teach them to listen,” but “Teach them to observe.” Observation implies obedience, practice, and living it out. The Commission is not fulfilled by merely attending a class or joining a church roll. It is fulfilled when a believer begins to follow Jesus as a disciple and then disciples others.

In that light, the parable of the talents becomes a mirror. What are we doing with the treasure of the gospel? Are we multiplying it by discipling others, or are we burying it by silence and inaction?

Multiplication, Not Addition

There is a striking difference between addition and multiplication. If a pastor discipled ten people in his lifetime, that is an addition. But if those ten disciples each disciple ten more, and those ten disciples each disciple ten more, the multiplication soon becomes exponential. That was the design of Jesus. He discipled twelve, who in turn discipled others, until the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire and eventually the world.

In too many places today, we are content with addition. We celebrate attendance numbers or professions of faith, but seldom

do we measure how many are discipling others. The parable of the talents reminds us that the Lord is looking for multiplication. The servants who doubled their talents were praised. The one who maintained but did not multiply was condemned.

Bringing It Home

So, how do we put this into perspective for today's church? We must help believers see that burying the talent is not an option. To remain silent about discipling others is not faithfulness; it is unfaithfulness. To hoard the truth without investing it into another life is disobedience to the Master.

At the same time, we must provide a pathway forward. It is not enough to scold believers for failing to disciple; we must equip them to begin. That is the purpose of a Learning Center. It is a place where truth is not only heard but practiced, where questions are asked and answered, where believers learn how to explain their faith, and where they are encouraged to disciple someone else.

Imagine a church where every believer could confidently answer two questions: Have you been discipled? Have you discipled someone else? Imagine the multiplication that would occur. Imagine the joy of the Master when He returns and finds His servants investing, multiplying, and reproducing.

Conclusion: The Joy of the Master

In the end, the parable of the talents points us to the joy of the Master. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou

into the joy of thy lord.” That joy is not reserved for preachers or missionaries alone. It is promised to every faithful believer who takes what Christ has given and multiplies it. It is promised to the mother who disciplines her children, the worker who disciplines a coworker, the believer who disciplines a new convert, and the pastor who disciplines a young preacher.

When the Lord returns, He will not ask how many programs we attended, how many sermons we heard, or how many classes we sat in. He will ask whether we were faithful with what He gave us. Did we bury the talent, or did we multiply it?

The answer to that question will reveal whether we truly understood discipleship. It will reveal whether we have embraced the necessity of being a disciple who disciplines others. And it will remind us that Learning Centers are not just another idea; they are a vital means of obedience to the Great Commission, a way to move believers from passive listening to active multiplication.

“Lord Jesus, You have entrusted us with Your treasure.
Keep us from burying it.
Teach us to invest it.
Help us multiply disciples.
May we hear, ‘Well done.’
Amen.”

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Proofreading, Grammatical, and Content Support

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