

Kingdom Purpose

Series: The Kingdom Project

Matthew 25:14-30

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Over the course of the last six weeks, we have looked at various aspects related to the Kingdom of God. This is a subject that Jesus spoke more about than any other subject while he walked the earth.

His very first message was, “Repent for the Kingdom of God/Heaven is at hand.” His last message was about being his witnesses and taking his gospel message...what we know of as “The Great Commission” – this was all about spreading his rule...his reign...his dominion all over the world.

We are to live – EVERY single one of us...AND together as a church – as we put in our focus statement...we are to live to advance the Kingdom of God.

And the number one way we can advance the Kingdom of God is to use and properly steward the talents, gifts, abilities, and skills God has given us.

When we do this, we will discover what I’m calling the message today, and that is: **Kingdom Purpose**

Illus. Sweet spot – (tell story of bat)

Part of the dream of “The Kingdom Project” is to help every single member of Champion Forest discover their “sweet spot” in the Kingdom.

What is it when you do it...and chances are it comes easily and naturally (not always, but most times)...when you do this, you sense the smile of God on your life?

To borrow a quote from the great movie, *Chariots of Fire* – the 1924 Olympic runner, Eric Liddell is speaking with his sister who is worried he may have forgotten his calling as a missionary to China, to which Liddell responds he “God has made me fast. I feel his pleasure when I run. To give that up would be to hold Him in contempt. To win is to honor him.”

- God has gifted us with talents...
- God has given us an education...
- God has provided us with a profession...
- As citizens of the Kingdom, God has as we will see in this message has given us a spiritual gift(s)...

And when we put these together – sort of mix them into a casserole if you will, I believe this is where you find your “sweet spot” to serving the Lord and helping advance his Kingdom in the most efficient and impactful of ways.

The goal of this message today is to get you thinking about your “sweet spot”, and to help you discover what it is, where you can be used most effectively, provide some opportunities and examples as to what I’m talking about looks like.

And I want begin with the chief text we are going to look at today which speaks to WHY all of this matters in the first place.

Let me set some context for you and we’ll jump right in. This set of teaching that Jesus is doing here in Matt. 24-25 is what is known as the “Olivet Discourse”. This took place during the last week of Jesus’s life – on Friday, he would be crucified, this teaching took place on Tuesday.

During that week, Jesus would spend the days teaching in the temple and in the evening he and his disciples would return to Bethany which was a short walk right beyond the Mount of Olives.

When we go to Israel, we do several teachings from the Mount of Olives because it has this beautiful view overlooking Jerusalem (**SHOW PIC**)

It would have been somewhere on Mount Olivet that the disciples turned to Jesus and point out the magnificent buildings (Matt. 24:1), and it’s at this point Jesus uses this opportunity to teach about his return. He gives them signs and warnings as to what will happen WHEN he returns and as we move into Matt. 25, we are given two parables that Jesus teaches ABOUT the Kingdom of heaven.

Look at **Matt. 25:1a** – “**Then the kingdom of heaven will be like...**”

We read this again in **Matt. 25:14a** – “**For it (the kingdom of heaven) will be like...**”

Jesus in an effort to explain the coming kingdom, where we will rule and reign with him forever and ever told a parable to describe it. Now, remember from weeks back, the word “parable” comes from a word meaning to “set alongside”.

And Jesus would speak in parables...he’d share a story in order to set it alongside a spiritual truth he was teaching. So, these parables have to do with the setting up his future kingdom upon his return.

The first parable is titled, “The Parable of the Ten Virgins”. It’s all about watching and being ready for Jesus to return. It comes to a climax with **Matt. 25:13** – “**Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.**”

I’ve said it before, we are to be Motel 6 Christians – we are leaving the light on! Jesus could return at any moment and we must be ready!

This second parable Jesus talks about concerning his return and the future kingdom he will establish, while it carries this idea of waiting as well, the thrust of this parable is we better be working when Jesus returns!

This BIG lesson of this parable is God has entrusted to us gifts, talents, abilities...AND we will be held accountable and either rewarded OR punished depending upon whether or not we used what God gave us to advance his kingdom.

Let's read the whole thing together and then we'll come back and walk through it a little bit at a time.

Matt. 25:14-30– “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ 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.’ ²¹ 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.’ ²² 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.’ ²³ 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.’ ²⁴ 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, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ 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? ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Steward faithfully what God has entrusted to you, and you receive blessing and reward. Be an unfaithful steward and you receive reprimand and no reward.

Let me say this again: Steward faithfully what God has entrusted to you, and you receive blessing and reward. Be an unfaithful steward with what God has entrusted to you and you receive reprimand and no reward.

Jesus teaches that a man is going on a journey. In this case, the man is Jesus. He is about to journey to his death and ultimately his ascension where he will sit at the right hand of God. He's going away.

And in this story, the man – who is evidently well off because he has servants and property...he “entrusts” to them some of his wealth. To one he gave five talents, to one he gave two talents and to another he gave one talent (v. 15) “each according to his ability”.

Now, a “talent” as it is worded here, doesn't exactly mean in our vocabulary today what it meant in the days of the Bible. In the days of the Bible it was a monetary value that changed over time. The ESV Study Bible notes that one talent was worth 20 year's worth of wages.

So, Jesus is making a point here that even with one talent, it's an extreme amount of wealth. To put it in modern day terms IF we were putting a monetary value on it, it would equal about \$600,000 USD.

Do the math on the five talent and two talent and what you have is a man that is very wealthy trusting his servants A LOT by entrusting to his servants A LOT!

Now, if we build an interpretive bridge and translate what “talents” mean today, it's not necessarily monetary value although God has entrusted wealth to us, and it's clear in scripture that what we do with our wealth...how we steward our wealth matters!

An interpretive bridge from the culture then to our culture now allows us to say that “talents” is more than money. It's everything God has entrusted to us.

Warren Wiersbe – “The talents represent opportunities to use our abilities.”

So, before we go any further in this parable, let's just push pause and talk about our talents...our abilities...our gifting.

When I talk about operating in your sweet spot, I see discovering the “sweet spot” by overlapping primarily four areas. I'll show you this image and we'll work it out one at a time (SHOW IMAGE):

1. Education and Skills

Now, this speaks for itself, but doesn't it just make sense that your “sweet spot” would include something you know something about...something that fits your skillset?

I'm reminded in the Old Testament in Exodus 35. God through Moses is giving instruction...and it's specific instruction on how to build and construct the tabernacle. And just listen to these verses:

Exodus 35:10, 30-35– “Let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the Lord has commanded... Then Moses said to the people of Israel, “See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; ³¹ and he has filled

him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship,³² to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze,³³ in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft.³⁴ And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan.³⁵ He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer.”

Every person here has been “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14), and God has put within you a certain ability to learn and has given you a certain skill set.

Now, part of the stewardship aspect of this is that we develop our education and our skillset to the best of our ability...we are to learn and stretch and grow, and if God has given us the opportunity, we have to take advantage of it!

Illus. College or Trade School – Dr. Moore words of advice in college

Listen, advancing the kingdom should come natural to us because it will happen often in the context of the education and skills God has given us.

2. Passions and Interests

Your “sweet spot”...part of your Kingdom Purpose is going to go right alongside your “passions and interests”. And certainly, this makes sense, doesn’t it?

Think about what you are passionate about...what you love...and think with me - Are you using that as an avenue to advance the kingdom? God wants you to!

Illus. Car Care, Sports, ladies that sew – you love cars and love working with your hands and you’re using it to help widows and single parents...or you love sports and coaching is a way for you to advance the kingdom. Yes, you coach the fundamentals, you teach how to play the game, but your eyes are open to need on your team to pointing those kids to Jesus.

Think about what your passions and interests are...the things that you just love to do...they come easy to you and you’d be doing with all your free time if you could. Whatever THAT is, God wants you to use to help advance his Kingdom.

3. Spiritual Gifting

Now, we could spend an entire series talking about the spiritual gifts, but let me just read a few passages to you that highlight for you the importance of the spiritual gift.

1 Peter 4:10 – “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11 – “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...All these are empowered by one and same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”

Romans 12:4-5 – “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

Now, there are a lot more passages in the Bible that are dedicated to the spiritual gifts, but what I want to emphasize through these passages that we've each received A gift...some have received more than one gift. Notice there are a variety of gifts. I'll show you where you can find an entire list of the spiritual gifts in just a moment. Also, notice these gifts given by the Holy Spirit are to be used to help others and build others up – Paul writes “for the common good”. Peter would say they are to be used so that God would be glorified.

So, when we use our spiritual gift(s), we are actually in that act being empowered by God himself to help others and bring glory to God – that is advancing the kingdom!

We want every person here to know their spiritual gift(s). It's imperative because you'll never experience your true, kingdom purpose...you'll never operate in your “sweet spot” if you don't know your spiritual gift.

If you are not sure what your spiritual gift is, we want to help you discover it. And if you will text the word: **Kingdom** to **77069**, you will be sent a link that allows you to take a spiritual gifts assessment. It takes about 15 minutes to answer some questions and it will allow you to see the results.

And what I LOVE that our team did is when you get the results and the bottom of the page, our ministry team came up with a list of ministries both inside and outside the church that can help match you with a kingdom opportunity that fits your kingdom gifting.

We're NOT saying this is the specific ministry for you, but it could be and it's a great place to get started.

4. Personal experiences

Listen, God has allowed you to go through certain experiences in life that you have learned from. And as a result you have care and empathy for people experiencing the same kinds of difficulties and hard roads you have traveled on. There's a reason for this!

2 Cor. 1:3-4 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

So, it could be that abuse is in your background...God can use it!

- It could be addiction in your background...God can use it!
- It could be divorce is in your background...God can use it!
- It could be that death is in your background...God can use it!

I think of so many of our “Coach Couples” in our MERGE ministry or ReENGAGE ministry that are there serving because they have been through some valleys as a couple and want to use their experiences to help others. Or our Divorce Care ministry or Greif ministry.

And listen, it's not just the bad personal experiences God uses, it's the good ones as well. You may have been close to your grandparents and God has given you a soft heart for the aging. Or it could be a teacher/mentor invested in you and that positive experience strikes something within you and you want to do that for others.

I don't know what it is, but I do know God allows us to go through different experiences AND be brought up in different ways AND be impacted by different people ALL to help form and fashion and fit us for a unique Kingdom purpose.

So, put it all together...and let's look at our “Kingdom Purpose” image once more (**SHOW IMAGE**). **THIS** is what we are after!

Can I share with you some real life examples of people in our congregation that actually doing this? There are so many I could choose from, but here's just a few:

1. Lorraine Hibbert – educated and skilled as a nurse. Spiritual gifts are probably serving and mercy with a bit of exhortation mixed in. You know what she spends her time doing? Serving at CareNet (perfect fit for her education and skill set along with spiritual gifts). Also serves with a ministry called Gracewood that helps single moms get on her feet because someone helped her family in the same way years ago. Beautiful.
2. Coach Max Bowman – educated as a teacher, but is a National Champion football coach. Coached in the NFL for a number of years. He loves football and he loves impacting kids. His spiritual gift is no doubt leadership and exhortation. You know what he does now? FCA – he is using the skills and resume God has given him as an open door to sharing Jesus to coaches and youth who need to hear it. Love it.
3. Linda Atkins – Linda serves in our Greif Share ministry. She experienced the devastating loss of her college aged son that changed her and Jerry's life forever. Her spiritual gift is probably mercy and helps. She wrote a book about her experience and serves every week in our Greif Share ministry comforting others with the comfort with which she's been comforted.
4. Keith Barbor – we recently hired him as our CFO, business administrator. His education is in business and finance. His spiritual gifting is in administration. We hired him to work

alongside our finance committee in leading us financially as church. You ask him how he likes it, he can't believe he gets paid to do it!

Listen, I could go on and on! People using their education and skillset, passions and interests, spiritual gifting and personal experiences to advance the Kingdom of God.

When you are operating in your "sweet spot" there is NOTHING else like it!

Matt Perman (author/missiologist/theologian) – **"God has given you certain gifts and abilities. You have a responsibility to steward those well. Not to use your gifts is bad stewardship. Our passions and strengths are among the gifts God has given us. To the best of our ability, find the job and career that allows you to optimize your talents, interests, and passions for the good of others."**

That's a GOOD word and an important word...and this parable in Matthew 25, tells us WHY this is so important.

Remember what we said at the outset of this message: Steward faithfully what God has entrusted to you, and you receive blessing and reward. Be an unfaithful steward with what God has entrusted to you and you receive reprimand and no reward.

Let's return to the parable: **Matt. 25:15-23** – **"To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability.** (this is the prerogative of the master! How much we get is not on us...what's on us is what we do with what we get!) **Then he went away.** (BUT, he's coming back!!!)¹⁶ **He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.** (He used his talents...invested them...did something with them! ¹⁷ **So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.** ¹⁸ **But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.** ¹⁹ **Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.** ²⁰ **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.'** ²¹ **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.'** ²² **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.'** ²³ **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.'"**

Notice in both these instances of the servant who stewarded well what the master had entrusted to them – they got praise and they got promoted! They got blessing and reward!

I've heard this verse, "well done" preached at funerals where I've known the person that died – and from what I knew of them, they did not steward well what God had given them, and yet this verse was preached over their life. I say all that to say, we ALL want to hear "Well done" but we don't just hear it because we die!

We hear it because we stewarded well what God has entrusted to us...because we used our giftings, talents, abilities and passions to advance the kingdom – that’s when we get to hear, “Well done, they good and FAITHFUL servant!”

Matt. 25:24-30 – “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, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground.

Here, you have what is yours.’ (Here you have a man that doesn’t understand who is master is...perhaps he was upset he only got one talent and decided not to do anything with it – look at what he got. Reprimanded...and NO reward!)

²⁶ 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? ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

D.A. Carson – “...to fail to do good and use what God has entrusted to us to use is a grievous sin...”

Just as faithfulness will be rewarded, unfaithfulness will be punished. The last verse (v. 30) which speaks of outer darkness and a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. One word needs to be written out beside this verse, and that is judgment.

We will be judged...held accountable for what we have done with all that God has entrusted to us. What do you want?

Reward OR reprimand. Entering into the joy of your master OR entering into judgment by your master?

What you do with all that God has entrusted to you matters. So, let’s close this message with a couple of “do’s and don’ts”.

DO:

- 1. Discover your kingdom purpose** – “find your sweet spot” Pray and ask God to show you what it is – it may come by “trial and error”! And your kingdom purpose could be right under your nose!

Alan Hirsch – “One of the most significant things to remember in getting missional is often the thing we most overlook. It’s not all about starting grand programs and running big organizations. It is just doing what you do...for God. The basic elements of missionality are already present in your life.”

Henry Blackaby – “Watch to see where God is working and join him in his work.”

- 2. Determine to be faithful** – THIS is ALL God requires of you. Faithfulness. Make the decision that I am going to be faithful with what God has entrusted to me! If not, he'll take it away and give it to someone who will be.

1 Cor. 4:1-2- “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”

In the Christian realm, success is faithfulness. Christian businessman, **Fred Smith** wrote an article for Christianity Today called, *How Should a Christian View Success*. He wrote:

“The measurement of success is simply the ratio of talents uses to talents received. What you are doing with what you’ve got, plus who you are becoming. Are you a growing, maturing Christian? Whether you work in business, or in Christian work, or as a day laborer, professional, or academic, if you are a maturing Christian, using a large percentage of your talents, you are successful. Be glad.”

My life verse is **2 Tim. 4:7 – “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”**

I want to hear, “Well done, thy good and faithful servant.” There is one qualification to hearing it - finishing faithful!

So, the “do’s”: Discover your kingdom purpose and determine to be faithful. Here’s the “Don’ts”

Don’t:

- 1. Get discouraged** – listen, if you are not operating in your sweet spot or you feel like you are in a dead-end job, don’t get discouraged.

God often times uses different seasons in our life. It could be you are in a job that’s not using your education and gifting, but it’s providing for your family, and being faithful in that is what is most important in this season. It could be you are a young mom and kids running everywhere and you couldn’t find your “sweet spot” if you wanted to because it’s under piles of laundry and in sinks filled with bottles you have to wash.

Look, this is a season...faithfulness for you is raising those children and grabbing a nap wherever you can get it! It may be you are looking after aging parents and it’s preventing you from being as involved in ministry as you would like to be. Don’t get discouraged, this is a season of life and looking after your parents is your ministry right now.

So, in all that we talked about today, don’t get discouraged if you’re not operating in your “sweet spot”...if you are not feeling fulfilled via a Kingdom purpose. There are seasons of life and you use wisdom and discernment to help you figure out what faithfulness to God looks like in whatever season of life you find yourself in.

2. Compare yourself to others

Run your race. Find your ministry. We all have different gifts and abilities. Some have 5 talents, 2 talents and others have 1 talent. If you are a one talent person, be grateful...don't compare yourself to others. That's the quickest way to lose your joy and your reward.

God has gifted you...he has equipped you. There's only one you, so as you discover your kingdom purpose, don't compare yourself to others. Thank God for what he has entrusted to you and use it for his glory.

Let's pray.

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.