

The Upside Down Kingdom
The Parable of the Talents

Review:

Wherever Jesus was, is where the Kingdom was.
Wherever you are, is where the Kingdom is.

* If you truly believed this perspective, how would it affect your daily life?

How is the value system of the Kingdom different than the world: (fill in)

World

God's Kingdom

self preservation

revenge

hoard possessions

fight enemies

We will never see Kingdom values fulfilled fully here on earth because of our brokenness.

* How does our brokenness affect our daily living-out these Kingdom values?

Read Matt. 25:14-30

Theme of this parable: How are we investing what God has entrusted to us? Are we idle or intentionally furthering God's Kingdom?

The value of the talent in the story isn't important. What stands out is:

1. The servants were given different amounts.
2. They were given according to their individual abilities.

* How can it impact your service to God when you see someone else blessed with larger amounts and more Kingdom-impacting abilities than you?

These servants became trustees or stewards. They were assigned responsibility to act on the owner's behalf with the owner's goods. They were each given a different amount, but not more than they could be responsible for.

- * What happens when we reach further and grasp for more than what God has entrusted to us?

Categories for living this out:

1. **Read** Eph. 2:10 We have been uniquely crafted for good works.
2. We were created to be intentionally relational, which is how we carry out these good works. We are responsible to God for the relationships He has given us to nurture.
3. **Read** I John 3:16-18 God has given us resources, not just money, but time, natural abilities and possessions. What God measures is not the outcome of our investment in these areas, but whether we have been faithful as obedient servants.

- * How do you feel when it seems there is no return on your investment, when it seems others are advancing the Kingdom with their 5 talents and you only have 2?

Our ability to be faithful servants can only come from being open to the Holy Spirit's lead and power to do what we have been called to do. This is not something we have to work up the energy for, but something He has created us to do. If we are doing what we have been called to do, we will have the energy and the want-to to continue on without any praise or feedback or even fruit from our labors. It flows from our intimate relationship with Jesus, something we need to be intentional about, if we are serious about being faithful.

Response to the parable:

1. Think about what God has uniquely entrusted you with to further His Kingdom.
 - * Share these with your group.
2. Make space for the Holy Spirit to lead in these areas.
 - * How is this done?
3. Don't feel guilty that you aren't as productive as you expect of yourself or from a comparison with others.
 - * What can guilt cause us to do?