

# Matthew 25:14-30

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[0:00] Good morning. Good morning. What a lovely time of worship that was.! Praise God, eh?! Matthew chapter 25.

Father, we come to your word with awe.! And how we never stop learning from it.

And we would just ask you, Father, to teach us this morning. We don't just want to gain knowledge, but we want you to change us. Change our hearts. And so we give ourselves to you for this period of study.

In Jesus' name. Amen. So, you may recall. If you get the notes, it says, Parable of the Talents, which is what we're studying.

So it's from verse 14 to, I think, verse 30. And I've put a subtitle, Investing in God's Economy. What we've done, just to give you a preamble, if you recall, in chapter 24 and the first part of chapter 25, we have dealt with several warnings that God has given Israel about how things are going to go in history in the latter days.

[1:20] And as we've read through that, we've realized that we are in those days. That there are so many things happening that the Bible has predicted. But we're also aware, we've been made aware, that the Bible deals with the Jews, Israel, separately from the church.

And so, from the point of view of Israel, Israel has a history period which has kind of been paused since the resurrection of Jesus, really.

And it will be taken up again in the last seven years of human history. And in between those two slots is the church age, which is where we are now.

And the end for Israel and the end for the church are very different from one another. One is told to look out for lots of signs, lots of things happening, wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famine, pestilence, false Christs arising, claiming to be Messiah when they're not, and so on.

And they've been told, look out for these things and pray that it be not on the Sabbath, because for a Jew, if you had to travel any distance on the Sabbath, that would give you a problem.

[2:36] Whereas, of course, to the church, it gives us no problem. The church is told, you're going to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it's going to be bang, done, like that.

And when that happens, this mortal will put on immortality, and this corrupt will put on incorruption. And so these are two very different endings, mercifully all finishing up with both Israel and the church, with the Redeemer that they love.

And so with all of that going on, in the latter part of chapter 24, in the first part of chapter 25, there have been these instructions to be ready, and be faithful, and to be alert.

And in the last parable we looked at, the parable of the ten virgins, we saw, first of all, that this was addressed still to Jews. The gospel of Matthew is addressed to Jews, rather than the church.

That doesn't mean that we can't learn from it, or shouldn't learn from it, because as we see the end approaching for Israel, well, guess what? Our ending comes just before that, so the things that we see happening for them, we should pay attention to.

[3:51] Plus, a lot of the warnings, and a lot of the instructions given to the Jews, in Matthew's gospel, are also given to the church by the apostle Paul. So, we shouldn't just go, oh, well, that's for the Jews.

No, no, no, no, no. It's for all of us, even though our endings will be different. And when he comes again, when he comes the second time, we're also told that it's going to be an unmissable occasion, full of astronomical phenomena, stars falling from the sky, there's going to be pitch blackness, and Jesus is going to come into that pitch blackness as the light of the world, and nobody on earth will miss the occasion.

And so, we've got to live, according to the Bible, we should live as if we're waiting for the burglar to turn up. You know, he's going to come like a thief in the night, and we need to be alert, and we need to be ready for his coming.

Not that he's coming to steal, although in one sense, he is coming to steal, because in the time of the rapture, he's going to come and steal away the church. The church will be gone. But he's not coming as a sort of morally bankrupt character.

He's coming to take away what is his. We've also seen these things explained through the parable of the fig tree and the parable of the thief in the night.

[5:24] And in chapter 24, verses 42 to 51, you may recall that there's an exhortation very much to be ready for his coming, and not only to be ready for his coming, but to be found doing well when he comes.

Now, I would say, whether you're thinking of the second coming or the rapture, that is still the case. If God raptures us in the middle of this meeting, I want to be found saying something worth listening to.

And I want to be found in righteousness, not in sin. And I want to be found uplifting my family, my wife, all of you.

I want to be found doing what the Lord would want me to do, rather than, uh-oh, that was unfortunate, being caught doing that. So this exhortation applies whether we think of these things as when we're the church or whether we're Israel.

Israel. So the parable of the talent starts in verse 14. And it says this, for it is, oh, hang on, for it is.

[6:43] For what is? Well, if you go back to the parable of the ten virgins and chapter 25, verse 1, it says, the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins.

So the start of the chapter was, this is what we can compare the kingdom to. So in verse 14, for it, the kingdom, is just like a man about to go on a journey who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.

To the one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, each according to his own ability, and he went on his journey. Immediately, the one who had received the five talents went and traded them and gained five more talents.

In the same manner, the one who had received the two talents gained two more. But he who received the one talent went away and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

Now, after a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, Master, you entrusted five talents to me.

[7:58] See, I have gained five more. His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things.

Enter into the joy of your master. Also, the one who had received the two talents came up and said, Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.

His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, but I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

And the one who also had received the one talent came up and said, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.

And I was afraid, and I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours. But his master answered and said to him, You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, gather where I scattered no seed.

[9:01] Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival, I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore, take away the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.

For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness, that in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. You would not believe what people do with this passage of scripture.

For many, it has become a scripture that they use to preach a ministry of works. You need to get those talents, you need to get out there and work and improve and invest, and suddenly you're retaining your salvation because of the work you've done.

Can I please ask you to forget that? That is not biblical doctrine at all. We'll look at why it's there in a moment. But the most crucial part of today is you're not saved by your works.

[10:15] You can't improve your salvation by your works. It's got nothing to do with you. Your salvation is through him. I've also heard lots of people preach on this where they've used it as a way of saying you should be out there preaching the gospel on the streets.

And the church was, I mean, I was once part of a church that used to have these days where they all went and preached on the streets. And for some people, that was a terrifying experience.

They weren't equipped for it. It was not their ministry. And the result was the whole day was pretty much fruitless. Demoralizing. And I would say that, well, they've misunderstood about talents, for one thing.

But also, whatever God gives you as a talent, and it's not what you think. Like the English word talent tends to mean skill or ability, doesn't it?

I'm talented at this or talented at that. It's nothing to do with that. The talent is a different thing. It's a form of currency, which I'll talk about in a moment. But what God wants you to do might well have nothing to do with any of that.

[11:32] It's not everybody's lot to do what I'm doing now. It's not everybody's lot to preach the gospel on the streets. It is everybody's lot to share Jesus with whoever they get a chance to share Jesus with.

But it might be your lot to be a good dad, a good mum, a reliable and honest worker in a workforce, someone whose life witnesses to Christ, and whose speech witnesses to Christ whenever they get the chance.

This is not supposed to be a burden. Because guess what? The Bible says his yoke is easy and his burden is light. So this scripture is not designed to put a burden on your shoulders, to continually seek to outperform yourself and to compare yourselves with the performance of others.

I think, well, I don't do what Fred does, and I don't do what Joe does, and I don't do what Freda does. Maybe you're not called to do any of those things. Are you doing what you are called to do?

And that can be as simple as cleaning the loos. And because I've put that at the front rather than further on in this talk, I'm now completely at odds with my own notes.

[12:42] But I felt it was the most important part of this. There's a godless and completely ungodly competitiveness that gets put on people to make them feel like they need to perform.

You don't need to perform. This thing about the man with the one talent doesn't mean what you may think it means. And when we get to it, I'm hoping you'll go, praise the Lord for that.

In verse 14, what it's saying is, when it says, for it is just like, it's saying the kingdom is also like. So the kingdom is like somebody in charge of the kingdom has given talents and gone away.

So guess who's in that little niche of time? He's gone away. It happened at the ascension. He went away. And so we're now in this period of time awaiting for his return.

So indeed is Israel. But they still think they're waiting for him to come the first time. So they're a bit muddled. But nevertheless, we're all waiting for him to come one way or another.

[13:55] And at the moment, he's gone away. And according to this parable, the master who's gone away has given out on a temporary basis talents for which he expects a reckoning when he comes back.

So these are gifts for now. But he's going to come back and say, how did you get on with the gift that I gave you? And what we read about is that there's one who has five and one who has two and one who only has one.

But there's nothing in the passage of Scripture that says that the one who only had the one talent had to outperform the others.

All he had to do was the right thing with the one talent he had. And that's a very important distinction. This is not competition. This is praise God, you've given me a precious gift.

What would you like me to do with it? And notice, it's important to notice, it says, he gave them these talents according to their abilities. He knows what your abilities are.

[15:12] He hasn't given you something to do that is bigger than you. He hasn't given you something to do that's going to make you forever sit with your head on a blanket thinking, I can't cope with what God wants me to do.

You can, because what God wants you to do fits you like a glove. It's absolutely just for you. And can I say, and although this has already arisen this morning, and I am not wanting to point the finger at anyone, but when Satan taps you on the shoulders and says you are not doing well enough, that is a lie from the pit of hell.

You're following the Lord, that's all he requires of you, nothing more. Do what you're designed to do, and don't compare yourself with anybody else. He loves you just as you are, and if you never lifted a finger for him for the rest of your life, he would still love you just as you are.

But because he loves you just as you are, you don't want to do nothing, do you? So you kind of get off your bum and you want to do stuff. I digress.

He's given us these abilities. Now a talent, let me talk about talents. It's not talking about abilities, it's talking about a currency. Now a talent of currency, you've heard me say before, a denarius was a single day's wage for what we would call a blue-collar worker, a tradesman.

[16:37] If you wanted a carpenter to come and do something, you'd pay them a denarius per day. Anything above that was even better. It was good. It was obviously you're being prospered above and beyond the norm.

A talent is 6,000 denarii. 20, approximately. So roughly 20 years pay.

That's a talent of silver. A talent of silver is roughly 20 years salary. And of course, if you invest 20 years salary, it's quite on the cards that you will never have to work again in your life.

So the one who's been given a measly won talent has actually been given a small fortune. Now if it was a talent of gold, you'd be a millionaire.

But at the least, and it could have been a talent of copper, but that's not what the scripture is referring to. It's a talent of silver. So what this means, this is a currency that you are supposed to use wisely.

[17:48] And the one who had the five talents used it wisely and got five more. So when the master came back, he had 10 to give. And the one who had the two used it wisely and had four to give back.

So when this time of reckoning comes, you have this amount that you can give back to the master. And the one that had the one talent had a small fortune, a lifetime's investment.

And what he did was to bury it so it wasn't even in his consciousness. He didn't have it to spend. He didn't have it to invest because it was buried.

So he not only, he hadn't used it unwisely and he hadn't spent it on anything. He just buried it.

It's gone. It's out of sight. I don't even need to think about it till the master comes back. It's gone. Keep that in your mind because that becomes important as we work out what this is really all about.

[18:58] Because so many, so many priests say, you don't want to be the one that's only got the one talent. No, no, no. Give me the one talent. That would be wonderful and teach me what to do with it.

You see, they used to protect things like gold and silver and savings by burying it. If they wanted something, they wanted to keep something, they'd go find a field and they'd make coordinates so they knew where they buried it and they'd dig a hole and they'd bury it and cover it up and nobody would ever know it was there until you wanted to go and dig it up.

So it was a bit like a piggy bank that they used to use in ancient Israel and I presume other places. But it's not the wisest thing to do with your money.

Of course, it would be a very wise thing to do if you were expecting the thief to come and steal it or if you were expecting to be besieged by a foreign army or something like that. So there are some circumstances when it would be a wise thing to do.

But generally speaking, wasn't the wisest thing to do with your money. You're not going to grow anything. You're not going to build a business. You're not... It's kind of useless. And God gave these talents to these servants in the parable to be useful to them.

[20:14] And there was always going to be a day when he would come back and take a reckoning. So I'm going to suggest this to you.

By the way, just in passing, a talent was about 33 kilograms or about 72 pounds. So you imagine a 72 pound lump of silver or gold or copper.

It's a significant amount of asset. And notice that they're given... They're given according to the ability of the person.

So what we know from that is the master who you will have already worked out is metaphorically Jesus knows what your abilities are.

So small aside, getting back to not feeling condemned and not feeling like you're not matching up. Who knows best the abilities of the person to whom the one talent is given?

[ 21 : 16 ] Particularly if you're a Christian. Where does he live? By his spirit. In us. In our hearts.

So he doesn't give everybody the same deal because it would overwhelm some people. And he gives us enough so that the yoke that we carry and there isn't...

It isn't no yoke. There's a yoke that all of us carries. But it's easy. And the burden is a light burden. We're not supposed to sit at home with our head in our hands thinking how on earth am I going to carry this burden?

He gives you the burden he's equipped you to carry. Most merciful. So he hasn't expected a five-star performance from the two-star or the one-star ability.

He has simply expected them to do what they're able to do. Right? So what is the talent? And this is the... Ray, you're talking in circles.

[ 22 : 27 ] I know this was hard to prepare. I truly believe this. I believe the talent is salvation itself. And it's the one gift that God has given to the whole world.

To every single person that walks the face of this earth. They've all been given the opportunity for salvation. In 1 John, 1 John 2, my little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin.

And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. So he's writing to avoid sin, but if you do sin, it's covered. We've got this advocate with the Father.

And he himself is the propitiation for our sins and not only for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

There is nobody walking on this planet who is denied access to salvation. He has paid for the sins of every human being.

[ 23 : 37 ] And we know from other scriptures that there will be a day when he comes back and expects a reckoning. So who are the ones who've just buried the gift?

They're the ones who have not responded to Christ. Ones who've not. I don't want to know about this God stuff. I don't want to... I'm not worried about my sin.

I prefer to go to hell. That's where all my mates will be. Oh my word, what a misunderstanding that is. If you understood what hell was like, that's the last thing you'd say. But the point is that everyone has been given at least a talent.

To some, he has given more. I think of some of the revivals that have taken place and the men that preached in those revivals and saw whole towns and villages saved under their ministry.

They were probably given five talents. I don't know. I don't know how God counts those things. But everyone has been given a talent. And when we say, oh yes, please Jesus, please save me, we've not buried the talent.

[ 24 : 49 ] And we've no reason to assume that harsh judgment will follow. Now why do I say all this? Well, because the end of the chapter, if we turn back to Matthew, in verse 30, throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. So the one who buries the thing so it is no longer a currency, it can't be used, it can't be spent, it can't be invested, it's just buried, it's out of sight, out of mind, and I'm getting on with my life, thank you very much.

And we are warned, aren't we, that the times in which we're living are going to be like it was in the days of Noah. and in the days of Noah, everybody was marrying and giving him marriage and having parties and picnics and just doing their thing and God was on the sidelines, buried.

Nobody's taking notice apart from Noah who was preaching and possibly some of his relatives, that's a matter for discussion and debate, but people had just buried the fact that there was a God to whom we should submit.

And let's face it, if you recognize God exists, then submitting to him is the only option. And so all this requires is proper use of the talent that you have been given.

[26:24] And what we've just read is even if you mess that up, there's an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins.

I've explained this before here, but some of you weren't here then, so the word propitiation, the word propitiation is they used to, they'd make a sacrifice to a pagan god, let's say the god of the sea or something like that, but they would begin to go on a journey, they'd begin to set off to sea, and they would make a sacrifice to the god of the sea for a good journey and good weather and to avoid storms and all that.

So the sacrifice was to encourage the god, false god in this case, to be propitious toward them. It was to alleviate the possible wrath that that god might pour out on you.

So Jesus is the propitiation for our sin. In other words, Jesus goes before god on our account and says, I've paid for their sin.

You have no reason to pour out your wrath on them. He is the propitiation. He's the one who puts himself in the place to deal with the wrath of god on our behalf.

[27:50] And so the fact that he's the propitiation for our sin means whilst it's very unwise to go about deliberately getting it wrong, if we get it wrong, he's got it covered.

Why? Because he knows our abilities and he knows our weaknesses and he's got it covered. So when you feel down, I know this is a crass thing to say in many ways because you can't just turn these things on and off, but when you feel down about how you're doing, don't.

He's got it covered. And that's part of your walk in faith is that you don't walk about depressed, but you walk about with your head held high. The Psalms tell us he is our glory and the lifter of our heads.

Turn to 2 Timothy chapter 4. I'm just going to read verses 7 and 8. And this is where Paul is coming to the end of his life.

Now we're all aware probably that Paul had a few more talents than maybe we've got. But listen, he is facing death at this point. He knows that he is about to be beheaded.

[29:01] And he says this in verse 6, 2 Timothy 4 verse 6, for I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. Now a drink offering by the way was a celebratory offering.

This wasn't a well is me offering. I'm being beheaded probably tomorrow, and I celebrate it. I'm being poured out as a drink offering. The time of my departure has come.

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. In other words, I've done the right thing with my talents. In future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

this parable, we must remember, is spoken still under the law. And so when you lived under the law as the Jews were, you had the way that you showed that you were a believer was exactly the same way that Abraham did, which is the scripture says, Abraham believed and it was accounted to him as righteousness.

And the way that you showed that you had believed was you did your best to keep the law. But Jesus fulfilled the law.

[30:27] So there is no longer a need to keep the law. Now when you have a heart change because the Holy Spirit comes and lives in you, the chances are you will want to keep the law because your desires will change.

you won't want to do the horrible things you used to do. Yet 1 John 1:9 tells us if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves but he is righteous and just to forgive us from all unrighteousness.

So God has left the church with gifts, talents if you like, to spread abroad. I think it was Peter that said the love of God is spread abroad.

In our hearts. And there's a sentiment here, we go back to Matthew again, as you can probably tell, this passage of scripture kind of got to me.

In the parable before last, when Jesus was exhorting people to be ready for his coming, he talked about in verse 48, chapter 24, verse 48, if that evil slave says in his heart, my master is not coming for a long time, and begins to beat his fellow slaves, and eat and drink with drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day when he doesn't expect him, and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[32:06] So this is the same outcome as the one who buries his talent, and I'm encouraged to think, people like Malcolm there who go out on the streets all the time and talk to people about Jesus, he's talking to people who have a talent, somewhere down in their soul there is some investment that is buried, it makes my heart cry out for them because they were never really lost in the sense of God hasn't lost them, God has given them something in their hearts of himself and somehow what we're trying to do when we evangelize is to bring that gift awake, to waken it up, no not woke, but we're trying to wake up that something that God has already put within every human being, they all have a sense of it, but many of them are saying oh I don't need to worry about that and I've even had people say yeah I think there's a God but I don't need to worry about that till

I get much nearer death, I have a variety of responses to that comment but I won't bore you with them, in Luke 19, quickly turn there, there's a similar parable that seems to be making much the same point, but is a different there are some Bible commentators who say this is a different way of saying this is the same occasion, I don't believe that to be true, I think it's a separate occasion, but Luke 19 and verse 13 start with verse 12 which is the beginning of the sentence, so he said a nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself and then he returned, so the nobleman's gone away, he's going to return, and he called 10 of his slaves and gave them 10 minas, a mina was a Roman currency, it was valuable,

I think a mina was worth about 100 denarii, so he called 10 of his slaves and gave to them 10 minas and said to them, do business with this until I come back, can somebody read me the old King James version of that, occupy till I come, do business with this till I come, occupy till I come, once again it's talking about currency and what the Lord is saying in both parables is, what I've given you, go and use it, now you don't have to compete, you don't have to match yourself against somebody else who's using a different talent, just go and do what I've given you to do, it can be as simple as helping a neighbour with some shopping, as Keith does, becoming the church taxi service, as putting your arm around someone who's crying, we tend to be schooled by the world to be ambitious and to paint ourselves into these roles that involve grandeur and self aggrandisement and actually the one who was the least self aggrandising on the earth was Jesus himself who washed the disciples feet, there's nothing grandiose about washing feet particularly in those days where people didn't have socks and shoes, they had open sandals and washing the disciples feet would have normally been the job of the most menial of slaves, so it's not about that, it's about whatever

God has given you, use that, but what the unsaved have done is they have rendered the talent useless as a currency and that's why he says you are evil, what he's saying in my view and there are people who would contest this view and I'm quite happy to have the debate, but what he's saying of that slave is you didn't even get saved, I gave it to you and you didn't you just buried it, you didn't take it into yourself, it never became a currency for you, now I will admit I've not heard this preached this way, so if you think I'm wrong do please be good Bereans and search the scriptures for yourself and come and talk to me about it, but I do believe this refers to people who do not respond to Jesus and do not avail themselves of the gift of salvation, so it never becomes something they can share, and so when he comes back for the time of reckoning he says well done my good and faithful servant, what is not said in the scripture is whether he says to some, you could have done better, that information is not given, but we're given these two contrasts aren't we, we're given the contrast between well done and you blew it, turn to 1st

Corinthians chapter 1, here's a similar exhortation to a church, now of all churches you would pick, if you were, people sometimes come here and they say we're looking around to see what's about because we've fallen out with our church so we're looking for one and sometimes they're looking for one that spouts the truth and sometimes they're looking for one that spouts their favourite doctrine, whichever, but they're looking for somewhere, and the Corinthian church was one of the most difficult churches you could pick, you had incest going on there, you had sexual sin going on there, you had people with high ideas who were getting drunk at the communion table, it was just bedlam, but the Lord said to the apostle Paul I have much people there, so he hadn't cast aside any of them for these sins, but he says this, Paul called us the apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at

[ 38 : 13 ] Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours, grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in him, in all speech and in all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, I'm going to read on to verse 9, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ who will also confirm to you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful through whom you were called into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. God has promised that he is going to present you perfect and he's going to confirm you however naff at doing it you are.

None of this depends on our ability to perform. It depends only on us keeping our focus on Jesus, nothing else. You can't change yourself that much.

Only he can do that change and he's promised that he will. So let's not fret. What you wouldn't want is people coming to church and finding a miserable bunch who are always navel gazing and wondering if they're making it or not.

We have every reason to lift our heads and think our Lord has got it covered and I don't have to outperform you. I just have to do what God's given me to do.

[ 40 : 10 ] Now although talent in the sense in this passage of scripture was a measure of currency, I think it was Tony said to me, it's surely not a coincidence that the word talent also means abilities because we're all so different.

We're all so different. I always remember back in the church in Froome years and years ago, it was a very kind of charismatic church and this chap, a neighbour of mine, came along to church having got saved but he was a very, very shy individual and everybody was trying to hug him and he was kind of recoiling as you might expect.

But the person that got through to him when everything was quiet, this young woman who was very, very shy went and sat next to him and started talking with him. And that was the level, and as far as I know, that's all she did.

That was her ministry, was being quiet, being shy and going up and talking to people. That was it. So valuable. I'm sure God had an awful lot less time for the ones who were trying to stir up false emotion.

I want to finish with this actually. Romans chapter 1. We seem to return to Romans a lot. What I want us to understand, you remember I said, and it could be a point of contention, and this is why I believe it's not a point of contention.

[ 41 : 42 ] What I've said so far is that everyone has a talent from God. Everyone has this gift of salvation which they're either going to invest or they're going to bury. so Romans 1 verse 18 and following says, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

So they've got the truth, but they've suppressed it. Truth is not absent, it's there for them to have if they want it, and they've suppressed it. Because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them.

These people who don't respond to the call of salvation are doing so knowingly. We tend to think we've got to introduce them to the concept of God.

Every time they look at a tree, an animal, another human being, a baby that's just been born, whatever, it's screaming at them that God exists. Why do you think Satan put so much time into the theory of evolution and teaching it to our kids?

To distract them from the fact that God has put his signature over everything. For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, his eternal power, and his divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made so that they are without excuse.

[ 43 : 18 ] Which is why when he comes back for that day of accounting and says, where's the talent I gave you? Oh, it's buried. Oh, is it? Go to hell.

Literally go to hell. And what he expected that person to do with the single talent was to put it in the bank. It wasn't even hard.

And I think we need to get rid of the idea that this parable makes God the big taskmaster that wields the big stick and insists on performance.

I don't think that's what this talent says at all. There are lots of bits of scripture that I haven't yet got to, but you'll get that from the notes if you read them when I send them out or when they're online.

Father, thank you so much for this word. And in a strange way, I want to thank you that I found it so hard because I do believe it is a life changing word for us that gives us proper status and let us not run away with any lack of humility because everything that we are and everything that is of any use in any of us is only born out of your indwelling.

[ 44 : 33 ] So, Father, I do pray that we would study this word and that we would appreciate that you are doing a good work in us. You who have begun a good work in us will bring it to completion.

It's not something we need to strive to achieve. It's something you will do if we're prepared to not bury the talent. So, Lord, thank you in Jesus' name.

Amen.