



THE SUNDAY MESSAGE

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH \$1,000,000?

sunday 14 november

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps.

What would you do with the \$1M if you knew you had to return it to the owner?

 **Matthew 25:14-30**

When we heard the title of this message most of us probably began thinking how we would use one million dollars. Maybe we'd pay off debt, or give it away, or save some, or travel, or invest in something worthy, or a combination of these options. It is all different when we have the one million dollars to achieve something worthwhile and to return it with benefit to the owner. Did you feel a responsibility? Suddenly travel, buying nicer possessions, paying off our own debt and so on doesn't make the list. Many would say "give it to someone else who is better skilled to manage the money" and then the responsibility is removed.

Can you measure how you handled the \$1M only by an increase in the amount of money?

 **Luke 19:11-27**

The parable Jesus told showed that the servants were expected to manage what had been given to them or another word is to *steward*, which implies the person is accountable to someone in authority over them. In the parable the measure of good stewardship was making more money. God has given each of us valuable 'things' to steward and our good stewardship might be measured in how money increased but most likely it will be measured in other ways. Jesus made it clear that the way we measure has to be the way the kingdom of heaven. Mother Teresa was once challenged that there was no hope that she could be successful in overcoming the poverty in Calcutta, she responded "God hasn't called me to be successful. He has called me to be faithful."

What is the difference between being faithful and being successful?

 **Luke 18:1b and Matthew 16:27 & 24:45-47**

How do the following areas of life measure success: business, sports, politicians, education or the media? Contrast these with how we measure success in life when we think of family or friends. They are really different aren't they? How does Jesus measure success? Words like faithfulness, faith, obedience, sacrifice, forgiveness and love come to mind. Jesus used this parable just before his final week before the Cross so it is an important teaching point. Money was used to illustrate the point of the parable but Jesus' life illustrated what really matters, so it would be wrong to think He was just talking about financial success. Equally it is wrong to only measure our contribution to the Kingdom using something basic like money.

NEXT STEPS

Thinking of this parable, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what God has trusted you with. Take time to listen to Him speak – it might happen in a period of silence, in everyday life, through someone passing a comment or some other unexpected way. If you ask and then expect to hear Him speak then He will speak to you, but be careful not to dismiss the messenger He uses of the message He gives.

A trap we can fall into is the comparison game. Usually it will create either pride (at our success as the world measures success) or guilt (at how poor our contribution looks compared to someone else's). Comparison and competition of this nature (who has done better for God) is based on a shame culture and that comes from the Devil to paralyse us. Jesus' parables constantly challenge this comparison trap.

A talent of silver in Biblical times was equal to 6,000 days of the average wage; a talent of gold was equal to 180,000 days of the average wage – go on, do the math with your own daily wage and look at the answer. It is often said that the currency of heaven is faith. God has given each of us at least one talent of faith. It is that which He expects us to invest.

Significance

I once worked for a bright young non-Christian man who now leads a University in NZ. In the early 1990s he reflected that people like him were achieving success in their 30s – career, financial, family, health and the like. They had made it 'to the top' and unlike the previous generation who only reached the top well into their 50s they had achieved success. He wondered what then would motivate them for the next few decades. A change of job is still actually more of the same at the top.

This man was not alone in this thought. Someone else around that time had the same thought but he responded differently. He believed in God and discovered that what comes after success (and that doesn't mean having to be at the top) is significance. People found success was shallow but leaving something of significance was what mattered. So they donated time (their life in other words) to people who mattered to God and needed help. Read some of their stories at this [website](#) or read a couple of books [Half Time](#) and [Search for Significance](#).

In July an amazing Canadian couple in their 70s, the wife is fighting cancer, won US\$10.6M in a lottery. They gave \$10.3M to charity and the world's press covered the story. Every day believers are giving away faith, hope and love (God's currency) and heaven's press shouts with joy. That's significance!