



What Would You Do With \$1,000,000

sunday 14 november
connect group resource

How to use this resource

These notes support the message shared each Sunday morning. There are four sections with thoughts and ideas for connect group leaders. Use the bits that best suit your group rather than try to cover all parts of this resource.

Each week there is a one page resource on the [church website](#) for individuals to use for their personal reflection or in discussion with family or friends.



IN THE BIBLE

In the Gospels many of the parables Jesus told have this sort of phrase “the Kingdom of Heaven is like” or “the Kingdom of God is like”. The scripture for this week’s message, **Matthew 25:14-30**, is one of these sorts of parables. A parable is a short story to illustrate a truth, don’t we wish we could tell short stories like Jesus! I was taught at [Ministry Training College](#) that in order to understand a parable we have to recognise that it teaching one point. Sometimes, as the disciples and you or me discover, we need Jesus to explain the parable. Other times the parable is clearly understandable. We are now blessed with 2,000 years of Biblical teaching to have a clear idea what the parables are teaching.

This week ask the group to look at these parables and share what they think it is saying and how it relates to the challenge of what would we do if Jesus gave us something amazing like \$1,000,000 – oh by the way, he has already done so, it just doesn’t look like \$1,000,000 to most of us. It is probably best to allocate the parables to pairs of people to discuss and then they can share their wisdom. Another thing is to invite the Holy Spirit to throw light onto the parable – if we believe He will do this then it will happen and the result will be sweet music to our soul. It can actually be that simple.

Matthew

13:24-30

13:44

18:23-35

25:1-13

13:31-32

13:45-46

20:1-16

13:33-35

13:47-50

22:1-14

Mark

4:26-29

4:30-32

Luke

13:18-19

13:20-21

Finally, **challenge the group to pick one of these parables** and after some silence in prayer make a note of how they could make changes to their life to act according to God’s will. They might want to share this with the group or their study partner.



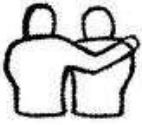
SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The purpose of the parable recorded in Matthew 25:14-30 which Jesus told of three people given different sums of money is clearly related to what His followers are expected to do for His Kingdom once they have been saved by His sacrifice for our sins. It provokes a response and in your group it gives the leader the opportunity to dig deep into some personal areas about our faithfulness to Jesus' expectations. **Invite people to share what they think about this parable** based upon what they heard on Sunday and what else they have heard or meditated upon. Do this without providing any additional teaching.

Jesus used money as an example in this parable; a talent was a measure of weight for gold or silver. One silver talent equalled 6,000 days of wages and one gold talent equalled 180,000 days of wages. By choosing a large value which none of his audience was likely to ever own He was making a point. At times we are called servants but at other times friends and yet other times sons and daughters of God. We are sons and daughters of God however we will need to act like servants and friends in certain circumstances. We know our position with God is as one of His children who will be expected to work in the family endeavour i.e. the Kingdom of Heaven also called the Kingdom of God. I think Jesus was saying that what He gives his followers is of unimaginable value.

Invite the group to share what sorts of things Jesus gives ordinary believers which is of unimaginable value. Write down a list of the answers. Look for the obvious big things like salvation and also the little simple things like money to share and then things like good works and then there are the almost intangible things like time, joy, faith, hope or love (note: they look intangible in this physical world but are very tangible in the spiritual realm). Stretch the group to think about the authority, often translated 'power', which Jesus has given us to change things through prayer and faith e.g. healing, deliverance, provision, spiritual bondages over nations and people etc.

Now, as they say, the time is for the rubber to hit the road (Jesus probably said the leather needs to hit the road). **Get into small enough groups so that each person will be able to share for at least five minutes.** The challenge is for people to identify one thing which they have been given by God and then share how they will add to it so that when 'Jesus comes again' they can be like the faithful servants. Now this is not an easy task for most of us to complete, but it is surprising how accurate we become in identifying our gifts, talents, skills and opportunities when we share honestly with others who know us and then we allow them talk into our life. Another clue can be thinking about prophetic words we have received; these can be an indicator what we have been given and what we are to be doing. Yet another clue can be looking at what we are not doing which we know we are good at or equipped to do. And yet another clue can be what is it that stirs up a holy frustration to see something done to improve other's conditions; this is the clue that started the Salvation Army and World Vision – powerful isn't it! Many people want to know what the will of God is. This step is easy to drop because it is hard to do, but if dropping it means we stay in a passive and risk-free state then we have this parable as a warning: not producing an increase from what we've been given is not the will of God.



CARING & SHARING



REACHING OTHERS

We'll combine these two aspects this week.

One teaching on this parable from Matthew 25:14-30 looked at the decision of each servant after being given the talent. As Jesus told this story he made a point of saying how quickly each servant responded. **Ask the group to see if they can identify this difference in their responses.** In most translations of the Bible it says that the servant with five talents went 'at once' or in another translation 'immediately' and starting trading to make more. The same is said for the servant who received two talents. Contrast this with the servant who got one talent and went and buried it. What was in his mind? This is just a story Jesus told so we have to speculate. **Ask the group to suggest some ideas:** maybe he thought I'll hide it safely and think about what I will do with it and then I'll do something with it. Maybe he kept feeling guilty about not acting. Maybe he kept justifying why burying it is the right thing to do. Maybe he looked at the other servants and discounted himself as not being clever enough. Maybe he thought he was too busy. Maybe he was too fearful of risk and loss.

The teaching on this parable reflected upon how two servants acted immediately and one procrastinated, that is, they put off doing what was available to do. Usually we procrastinate for a number of reasons. **Ask the group to suggest ones they know.** There will be things like: lack of time, not the right moment, too difficult, too uncomfortable to do it, too hard, plenty of time later or someone else will probably do it. The teaching went on to say that procrastination works well when we know the deadline and it isn't changing e.g. GST return due if you are in business, exam or assignment due if you are studying or your flight is leaving if you are packing for a long trip. **Ask the group to suggest their favourite ones,** this should be a lot of fun with some good natured humour. However, procrastination fails terribly when we don't know the deadline e.g. preparing for the birth of the third child, asking someone for a date or to marry you, forgiving someone who has hurt us or sharing Jesus with someone who we might not see again because they move away or die. **Ask the group to share about times they have procrastinated and wish they had not done so.**

The example in the teaching of procrastination which didn't work was when someone dies and we never shared Jesus with them like we had planned to do. Or maybe we never resolved things like we said we would when the time was right or whatever the excuse. Anyone who has had a loved parent, sibling, spouse or friend die will be able to remember the strange world at the time. All around it seems everyone is going on with life as normal and fully expecting tomorrow to be predictable. For the person who has lost their much loved one the world slowed down and tomorrow isn't predictable. This is especially the case if someone dies unexpectedly, such as in an accident. At this time regrets can come, like I wish I had said or done this or that before they died. **Ask the group if anyone who has had a situation like this would like to share their experience.** What you are looking for is where something was left undone and the person changed so it didn't happen again with anyone else they knew. Alternatively, someone might recall making a vow not to leave important life and death things, especially eternal life, until it's too late only to realise that they are repeating the cycle again.

So now the group is ready to pause and let the Holy Spirit tell each person if there is something which they are procrastinating about and He is saying the time to act is now: this is the 'at once' moment mentioned in the parable. After allowing people to reflect in silence, **suggest that they write out a commitment to act** and then most importantly share this with another person. The commitment needs to be specific and have a date for action. **Secondly, ask them to think of who they are to share the good news of Jesus with.** The Holy Spirit will once again give them the answer. Suggest that they also make a written commitment.

During this process you might want to share this Scripture for discussion or reflection: [Luke 12:16-21](#).