

**ON THE MOVE: Kingdom Investors, Message #2 Church On the Move- Matthew 25:14-30,
Oct 27, 2024**

Last week was the kick-off of our Vision Series: ON THE MOVE: Kingdom Investors. A 5 week series studying 5 parables of Jesus about investing our resources in the Kingdom of God, in particular through the work the Spirit of God is doing among us. Last week we learned that investing in the kingdom of God always begins with Jesus. Jesus was ON THE MOVE in pursuing us as the merchant seeking pearls, and we were so precious to him that he sacrificed everything to have us. Our generosity finds its anchor and motivation, never in guilt but always in gratitude for what Jesus has done for us. Because Jesus is On the Move, So we as his ambassadors, the Church is on the move as we will see today from another of Jesus' parables, Matthew 25.

We believe that we are in a holy moment in our 54 year story at Brandywine Valley Church. What do I mean by that? Well let me paint the picture by sharing one of my favorite scenes in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy is that pivotal moment at the Council of Elrond when it becomes clear that the fate of the world depends on making the incredibly dangerous trek of carrying the ring to the fires of Mordor for its destruction. But who is both brave and humble enough to carry the ring without being corrupted by it? And that's when Frodo, the hobbit, the least likely of all, steps forward to carry the ring and they all rally around him to make the trek. That's a Holy Moment. The choice between faith or fear. In our journey of faith, it's a fork in the road, a pivotal moment when we know God's calling us to obey and trust him in an area of our lives but it's hard. And we have a choice between faith or fear, to be fully surrendered to him and courageously take the risk to walk by faith. Or we shrink back into perceived safety and self-protection. We've all had moments like this, if you are a Christian, the moment you trusted Jesus for the first time was a holy moment. But maybe you've had that holy moment in your career- when you knew the values of the company no longer matched yours and God was calling you to leave...but the open door to a new job was a pay cut...that's a holy moment: either faith or fear. Or maybe it was a holy moment when God was calling you to share your faith with your family but it had the potential to introduce conflict into your family dynamic. A choice between faith or fear. That's a holy moment.

And we are in that holy moment as a church, I'm thrilled that we have a leadership team that has not taken the safe route, but has chosen to follow the vision God has given us. We are stepping out in faith, willing to take risks for the sake of the gospel. Will you join us ON THE MOVE? This is what Jesus' Parable of the Talents is all about in Matthew 25. Three servants face a holy moment of opportunity presented by their Master. The stakes are high, the decision is critical. Will they take a risk or will they shrink back? And what we will find is that Jesus is speaking through this parable to Brandywine Valley Church and asking us the very same question. So let's examine the parable. Jesus' parable moves through **three scenes: The Master's Invitation, The Servants' Response, The Master's Return.**

#1 The Master's Invitation:

14 *"Again, it [The kingdom of Heaven] will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them.*

15 *To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.* A talent was an enormous amount of money, 1 talent was about 75 pounds of gold, in today's terms about 2M, so the master leaves these 3 servants with a collective 18M of his estate, wow! Now this wasn't like hitting the lottery, "woo hoo, time to buy a yacht and live it up!" Look at the word "entrust." This is stewardship not windfall. He gave these servants these massive resources, each according to their ability, with the goal of expanding the master's estate while he's away by putting this money to work to make more. And in order to do this, it was going to take a serious amount of skill and commitment of their time, not only that, but courage. This was risky. What if they get robbed or taken advantage of? What if the investment doesn't work out? So what do the three servants do with their holy moment?

Let's look at **#2 the Servants' Response.**

16 *The man who had received five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five talents more.*

17 *So also, the one with two talents gained two more.* Two of the servants faced their holy moment with faith, seizing the opportunity to expand their master's estate. It says these two "Went at once." I love that, no sitting around rationalizing, procrastinating, making excuses...they knew the risk, they knew the challenge at hand, and they said, we are going for it! We might say these servants were ON THE MOVE, is that fair? (In fact, this is where the phrase came to me). And go for it they did. We don't know how long it took, but we do know the master was on a long journey so it may have been many years of work to get this return on investment to double.

But what about the 3rd servant? What did he do with this holy moment? Well, sadly, **V.18** *He dug a hole and buried his talent.* There was no "Went at once", no ON THE MOVE, there was "IN THE DIRT". Why? We come to find out there were two excuses. **Fear-** **25** *I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground.* What was he afraid of? Well for one, "Bad theology"...we find out that he had a warped view of his master, he didn't trust his master and thought he was out to get him and he feared all the "what ifs." But the other was **Indifference.** **V.26** *The master calls him lazy.* This servant, when invited into this opportunity, this holy moment...he shrinks back because he's more preoccupied with his own comfort, safety and maintaining the status quo to care about the expansion vision of his master. And for a while he probably enjoyed putting his feet up on the master's couch, and chillaxing in the master's pool and playing it safe while the master was gone...but the master returns.

#3 The Master's Return

v.19 *After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.* The two of the servants who were ON THE MOVE bring their talents and the double return on the investment back to the Master, to which the Master replies ²¹ *'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.'* What was their reward? An invitation into the great joy of purpose-filled, enduring

impact! Can I just tell you, the most lasting and satisfying joy I've experienced is not sitting back on a beach...that's fun for a week. It's when I know I'm in the center of God's will and making a difference for the kingdom, even when it's hard and daunting and at times painful. That's the joy of the Lord, I sense his presence and pleasure. And that's just a foretaste of what it will be like for eternity. That's the reward for these two servants. What about the third servant who buried it? Well we don't have time to unpack verses 26-30, but suffice to say he misses out. He got his reward of comfort and safety while the master was away, now he suffers enduring loss away from the master.

What is Jesus saying to us through this parable? He's telling us something critical about who He is and the kind of faith he rewards. And we see this all throughout the Bible, the Bible is filled with these holy moments. It's the moment in Esther chapter 4:14 When annihilation is looming over the Jewish people and Mordecai says to Esther, *"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish."*

"And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Would Esther shrink back in fear or step out in faith? Or in John 21 when the resurrected Jesus has a "come to Jesus" with Peter on shores of the sea of Galilee after Peter failed out of ministry and Jesus, who is a God of second chances, extends a holy moment opportunity for him to take the lead in proclaiming the gospel and building the church. Would he shrink back in fear or surrender to Jesus' vision for his life by faith? These moments came to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, the disciples and the Apostle Paul and while they were all flawed sinners like you and me, they are heroes of the faith who God used mightily and rewarded because they did not shrink back from the holy moment. Jesus has the ultimate holy moment in the garden of Gethsemane, and instead of shrinking back in fear, Jesus surrendered to the will of the Father at the cost of suffering and death. And because of the investment of his life, his reward is ruling at the right hand of the Father and the joy of eternity with all who will be saved through the gospel. This is how God works. When you became a Christian you didn't sign up for a safe and comfortable life, but a risky, daring adventure with God by faith.

And now Master Jesus is inviting us into a holy moment as a church represented in our **ON THE MOVE** vision he has given us. It's a vision that will require sacrifice, our time, our skills, our influence, and our financial resources. If you haven't picked up a Vision Guide that walks through the vision and answers questions please pick one up in the lobby, and talk to a pastor at the booth, also brandywine.church/onthemove

BUILDING OUR FAITH: The Invitation of our Master Jesus is to make a **spiritual investment in making resilient disciples.** That's messy, that's hard, that takes time.

REACHING OUR COMMUNITY: The Invitation of our Master Jesus is to make a **missional investment in our neighbors for the sake of the gospel.** That's risky to our reputation, we can face rejection, and hostility in our increasingly post-Christian culture.

SHAPING OUR FUTURE: The Invitation of our Master Jesus is to make a **FINANCIAL INVESTMENT** in the renovation of our facilities for generations to come. This is a risk to our own financial security, our goals, our desires.

So the question for us is: **What will be Our Response to our holy moment?** Frodo courageously stepped forward and said, "I will carry the ring to Mordor!" And because of his faith, saved the world from destruction. Esther courageously drew a line in the sand saying, *"I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."* And because of her faith, the Jewish people were saved from genocide. Peter responded to his holy moment with boldness and power in the Spirit, even under the threat of jail or even death, he preached the gospel of Jesus to the very men who had Jesus crucified! And because of his faith, the Spirit used him to bring thousands of people to faith and birth the church that we now are part of 2000 years later. And when we meet each one of these heroes of the faith in heaven, they will tell you it was worth! How will we respond to our Holy Moment?

I want to share with you one of those holy moments that came into my life almost 10 years ago after I became pastor of Brandywine Valley Church. Can I tell you, while God was so gracious to us, it was a hard first year. We had some difficult staff transitions, we were faced with over 5M of debt and some lean financial years... personally I faced some depression and anxiety. I never doubted my calling here, but at times in that first year I was tempted to shrink back out of fear of failure, and personal risk from the vision I knew the Lord gave for the future of our church.

Toward the end of the first year, Shannan and I received an invitation to Jack and Janice Woodall's home for dinner. Some of you remember them. Jack is a retired 3-star General in the Army, he and Janice were part of our church for many years before they moved to VA to be closer to family. At the end of the dinner, General Jack took me to what I called his "war room", filled with prestigious military awards, pictures like the one of him personally escorting President Reagan on June 12, 1987 at the Berlin Wall where he would give his famous speech. And there in his war room, General Jack handed me a "Challenge Coin." Now if you aren't familiar with a challenge coin, they are primarily used by the military as a way of challenging each other to live by the mission and values on the coin. The idea is you keep the coin on you at all times and when asked to produce it, you should be able to do so...or have to do push-ups... So Gen. Jack put this challenge coin in my hand and said, "I am challenging you to lead Brandywine Valley Church with faithfulness and courage toward the bold vision he has given you." Wow. That was a Holy Moment when the Spirit put the invitation directly to me, and on that day I surrendered to what the Lord wanted, and promised him that I would never shrink back out of fear or indifference, but continue faithfully pursuing the vision God has given us.

One day, our Master Jesus will return. I long to hear those words.

²¹ *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.* Let me encourage you with a story from David and Nancy Cordrey who have accepted the invitation of the Master to be ON THE MOVE. Now the Cordreys would be the first to tell you they aren't perfect, and that they have had seasons when

they didn't respond in faith to their holy moments...but by God's grace in their journey of faith, they have learned to live as 5 talent servants. VIDEO

Two questions to ask yourself: Is the invitation to our holy moment as a church worth our sacrifice? What does sacrifice look like for my family and me? Some of the sacrifice will be financial. Remember, we have a primary goal 100% participation. Clydesdale horse ALONE can pull 8000 lbs. or 4 tons; what could two horses pull: not 16K BUT 24K pounds! What is the potential of the Church if we are all investing together? And that's what it will take. and secondary goal- 5.5 Mill over 36 months.

Make a commitment to make a financial commitment. I'd like to share with you by way of transparency as your leader, how the Spirit has called us to sacrificially give over and above our regular giving to the ON THE MOVE initiative. I was praying, asking the Lord for a number and he gave me a number...and I will tell you, it frightened me. Because we don't have that number to give. Looking at the math and the math doesn't work...but as I began to prepare for this series I was reading the parable in Luke 12 about the man who stored up his treasure in bigger barns so that he could sit back and relax in comfort, whom Jesus called a fool. And the Spirit whispered to my investor's heart, "I want you to divert money you are investing in your storage barn for the future and instead invest it into my kingdom for this season of the vision. Now, that's me, he has a different invitation for each of us, each according to our ability.

And so I want to continue in that spirit of the challenge that General Jack Woodall laid upon me. We have something special for you each here today on your way out. We are giving you a Brandywine ON THE MOVE challenge coin. That asks the question "How will you faithfully invest?"

At Benediction: NEXT WEEK: We are going to get real practical about our money and possessions- how are we doing managing it? Are we knowing where our money is going is the question we will ask from the Parable of the Shady Manager.

ADVANCED COMMITMENT NIGHT [Slide] next Sunday. And Commitment Sunday Nov. 17