



THURSDAY 06.03.10

Matthew 25:14-29

Jesus uses the word “talent” to refer to a unit of coinage. Regardless of any confusion we may have in the word usage, the underlying premise of the parable remains the same. Jesus is speaking of a master who shares a valuable asset with his servants expecting them to be good stewards of the master’s resources.

- Why does the master respond so negatively to the final servant who buried his talent? What is Jesus trying to help us understand about our lives through this story? Would you describe yourself as a good “steward” of what God has given to you?
- In Jesus’ parable, the master says to one of the servants, “You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things.” Have you seen this growth happening in your life? Why or why not?



FRIDAY 06.04.10

Luke 18:1-8

“If at first you don’t succeed, try again.” You get the sense that the widow that Jesus describes in Luke 18 would have appreciated the simple wisdom of this phrase parents continue to pass down to their children. Jesus affirms those who act with persistence and determination in this short parable of a woman who will not give up her quest for justice.

- Would you describe persistence as a positive character trait? Why would God honor and value persistence? How has that sense of determination played a part in your life?
- Perhaps the most surprising part of this story is that the “unjust judge” actually chooses to “act justly” for no other reason than that the widow kept bothering him. How does this story guide you as you seek to be a witness for Christ in every area of your life?



GROW • PRAY • STUDY

A RESOURCE FOR DISCIPLES SEEKING TO LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS & SERVE THE WORLD ...

Series: *Making Mondays Matter!*
Sermon: *Whose Ladder Are You Climbing?*
Scripture: **Philippians 1:3-11**

Key learnings from the top of the corporate ladder:

- There is little connection between success and significance;
- Every home has an issue;
- It is possible to be lonely in a crowd;
- Your secrets will eventually get you.



Introduction

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus' teaching contrasts the two divergent paths we must choose in our lives. In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus describes the goal of the Christian faith as "entering through the narrow gate." He continues, "Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." As we continue in our *Making Mondays Matter* series, we want to again ask ourselves the question, "Which path are we pursuing in our lives?"

In our readings for this week, we will look at several of the basic teachings that Jesus shares in the Gospels. In each of these readings we find Jesus teaching according to one of his favorite methods, the parable. "Parable" literally means "to throw alongside," and so in these lessons, we find Jesus taking an important spiritual truth and "throwing it alongside" an everyday activity or a tangible object in order to provide a deeper understanding for his audience. As we invest in these words of scripture this week, we do so with the sincere hope that God will teach and guide us as we consider whether we are on the path of success or the path of true significance.

As we walk this journey together this week, may we be guided by this prayer.

God, we confess that we sometimes find ourselves striving for success over a life of true significance. We are sometimes captured by the spirit of the crowds that surround us and often misguided by our own selfishness and sin. Forgive us for wandering, God, and restore us to the narrow road that leads to the life you desire us to pursue.



TUESDAY 06. 01.10

Matthew 6:19-24

During the first week of our *Making Mondays Matter* series, we intentionally spent five days focusing on expressing gratitude to God for the many blessings we have all received. We did so out of our sincere belief that one of the ways we make Mondays matter is that we take time to recognize and celebrate what really matters. To express gratitude invites us to consider what we really treasure in our lives.

- Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Have you found this to be true in your life? In what ways?
- What type of warning do you think Jesus is trying to offer in this passage concerning "what" we treasure in our lives? What does Jesus mean by the statement "You cannot serve both God and money"? How would someone who knows you really well describe what you really treasure?



MONDAY 05.31.10 Matthew 7:24-26, Matthew 13:44-45

In the early 1800's, Edward Mote penned the words to a song still sung today entitled *My Hope Is Built*. With the words of Jesus from Matthew 7 as inspiration, the refrain reads "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; All other ground is sinking sand." To be a follower of Christ involves affirming what John Wesley called the "essentials" of our faith. Yet, it also invites us to build a life upon the foundation of the teachings of Christ as well.

- In your life, do you see a clear connection between your beliefs and your behaviors? Would you describe your foundation as a solid rock or shifting sand?
- Are there places in your life right now where you might be struggling to "put them [Christ's words] into practice"? What help do you need to firm up the foundation of your life?



WEDNESDAY 06.02.10

Matthew 13:31-33

According to Matthew 13, the kingdom of Heaven is a powerful force. Only a small dose of it creates incredible results. Jesus describes his followers as the "salt of the earth," the "light of the world," and the "leaven in the loaf." Each of these elements are similar to the mustard seed. A little bit goes a long way.

- Are there little things in your life right now that could go "a long way" in bearing fruit in your own life or the lives of others? What might some of those things be? What could you do today to stay committed to those "little things"?
- The mustard seed would have probably been the tiniest seed imaginable to Jesus' audience. Why do you think Jesus wanted to connect the kingdom to such a tiny seed? Does this teaching speak to you about the "potential" of your life? In what way?
