

# The CORE TEACHINGS of JESUS

## The Portrait of a Faithful Man

Rough Transcript

Patrick Morley

### Patrick Morley:

Okay. Hello, men. Welcome to Man in the Mirror Bible study. I want us to reintroduce our hurrah, or if you prefer Oorah to our group in welcoming our online visitors. And so we will begin that again today like right now. And so I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm rousing Man in The Mirror. Welcome to all of our online visits. One, two, three, hurrah. Welcome men to the Bible study. I'm Pat Morley today. We're in the series on the core teachings of Jesus. And today, what we're going to be talking about is the portrait of a faithful man, the portrait of a faithful man. Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew 25:14, Matthew 25:14.

There is a proverb that says many people claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful person who can find. My greatest emotional needs are number one, to feel like I'm in the presence of Jesus. And then number two, to feel like I am being faithful. I don't know why that happens to be, but this is my biggest human emotional need, is just to feel like I'm faithful. I love the story about St. Francis of Assisi. One day he was hoeing his garden and someone asked him, "Francis, if you knew that you were going to die at sunset today, what would you do?" He said, "Well." He looked down at his hoe, "He said I would finish hoeing my garden."

### THE CALL TO BE A STEWARD

And that kind of says almost everything I want us to hear today. The idea is just to be faithful to this thing that God has already called you to do. The first thing I want us to look at is the call to be a steward. We're going to look, as I say, in Matthew 25:14 and following. This is the parable of the five talents or the bags of gold, depending on what version of the Bible that you're using. It's a very familiar story, but I think there's some things we can learn from this that maybe we could see at a different light. And so let's read the text.

He's talking about the kingdom of God. He says, "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants." And remember last week, two weeks ago, rather, we were talking about the mindset of serving others, the ethos of the Christian life is best described as the mindset of a servant. So he called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. So basically a stewardship, a steward is someone who's given something to manage, so he entrusted his wealth to them. And it's a parable. So you can play around with this, it doesn't have to be just money, it could be possessions, it could also be different things, it might be relationships that you've been entrusted with, it might be certain aptitudes, abilities, spiritual, all kinds of different things.

Verse 15, "So to one, he gives five bags of gold, to another two bags and another one each according to his ability." Now the word ability here is the word *dunamis*, which is the word power. It's the same kind of power that you get when you get the power of the holy spirit. So there are powers here. So it's not just some random, it's actually power that you have. It could be an aptitude, it could be a natural ability, an acquired competence, it could be a spiritual gift, for example. So five bags, two bags, one bag. So the word bag here it's the word talent, a talent of gold.

Let's just picture that, how many of you go to the gym? How many of you ever been to the gym? How many of you know what a dumbbell is? How many of you are dumbbells? So just picture that you walk over to the rack and you pick up 2 35s, right? Now, imagine that those 2 35s fives are solid gold. You have 2 solid gold, 35 dumbbells, that's a talent of gold, it's about 72 pounds. One talent of gold is about 72 pounds, about 2 35 pound dumbbells. One talent of gold is equal to 6,000 dinari, and one dinari is one day of labor. So 6,000 denari, I'm going to cut through all of it. Basically you have to work about 24 years to earn one talent of gold, these 2 35s. All right. So about a quarter of a century of your life to earn one talent.

So one guy gets about in today's dollars, about 10 million, the five talents is worth today about 10 million bucks or 4 million bucks or 2 million bucks, that's what this man is entrusting. And if you think about your lifetime earning capacity and so forth over a quarter of a century, maybe you make a million dollars, \$2 million, maybe you make \$10 million. So all of that is sort of encompassed hypothetically in this parable. God is giving these men these possessions to take care of.

Reading on. So the man who received the five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more, and the guy with the two bags did the same thing. But the guy with the one bag of money, the one talent of gold, he went and dug a hole and put the money in the ground because he thought his master was a tough guy. When the master came back, the man with a five bags, verse 20, the man who had received five bags of gold, five talents of gold brought the other five, mastery he said, "You've entrusted me with five bags of gold, so you have gained five more." His master replied, "Well done, good and successful servant. You have been successful with a few things."

Doesn't say that, does it? It doesn't say good and successful servant. It doesn't say you have been successful with a few things. It says, in verse 21, the master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, come and share in your master's happiness." Then the guy with the two bags, he came and said that he gained two more. And then in verse 23, we read, his master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things, I'll put you in charge of many things, come and share in your master's happiness."

We'll notice something here interesting. First of all, our God is not rewarding them on the basis of their success, He's rewarding them on the basis of their faithfulness. God doesn't call you to be successful, He calls you to be faithful. And then notice that they both receive the exact same commendation. Verse 21 and 23 are word for word identical. So the point is it doesn't matter the degree of produce, the degree of production. The size of the return on investment it's not what is being rewarded, but it's your faithfulness to produce according to the abilities that God has given you. Is to be faithful to be 100% with what God has given you.

And then the man who had the one bag came and kind of made excuses. Verse 25. "So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground, see here's what belongs to you." And Jesus pretty well ripped him and took his money away and gave it to the guy with the 10 bags. In verse 29, "For whoever has, will be given more and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have even what they have, will be taken from them." So here's the second point. First of all, it's in proportion to your ability, your faithfulness and proportion to your ability that really matters not the amount of your success. And the second thing is that doing nothing is not an acceptable option. Doing nothing is not an acceptable option. If God has given you certain aptitudes and abilities and you would rather go play some kind of... I don't want to leave that impression.

Anyway, if you want to be a couch potato and watch TV all day or all night instead of using some ability that you have, that's just not acceptable, that's not being faithful. Now that doesn't mean... I think every man needs a couple hours a day to himself, frankly, whether it's watching TV or smoking a cigar or reading a book or whatever it is, playing video games, whatever it is, I think every man needs a couple of

hours to himself every day in order to just to replenish and recharge. But the idea here is not to misuse the talents that God has entrusted to you to be faithful with. So what are your bags of gold? What are your bags? Think about it just for a sec, what are your bags of gold? So it might be financial. I mean, you might actually have literally have money or you might have possessions, maybe you have rental properties or maybe have investments.

It could be natural abilities that you have that you have developed, you have certain skill sets, acquired competencies, aptitudes to do certain things. It could be spiritual gifts that you have, the gift of service, the gift of leadership, maybe it's a speaking gift, maybe it's the gift of evangelism, sharing your faith. You have some kind of a spiritual gift. These are your bags of gold. Maybe you have the ability to sit down with a man and listen to men in such a way that they feel like someone really cares about their lives. Then this is something that you can do, this is your bag of gold. And so the question is, what do we do with our bags of gold?

And the answer we see in this text and sort of summarized in one of the big verses for Man in the Mirror of the ministry. One of our core verses is first 1st Corinthians 4:2, 1st Corinthians 4:2 which says, "Now to whomever has been given a trust it is required that they be found faithful." To whomever's been given a trust it is required that they prove faithful. Now to be given a trust, it's the word steward, it's to be a manager. To whomever's been given something that they must take care of a bag of gold or more, it is required, it is commanded that you be found successful. Not successful, that you be found faithful, that you'd be found faithful. God is not calling us to be successful, He's calling us to be faithful. Now there is a paradox here, because if you are faithful, there's a much more a high likelihood that you will be successful, but there's no guarantee that you will be successful.

For every Mother Teresa, there are thousands of people who are laboring and serving in obscurity and will never be recognized. So you may not have that worldly success. When we develop the no man left behind model at Man in the Mirror to help churches, disciple men more effectively, we did some research. And in this research, we discovered that churches who use the model in an average of two and a half years saw 48% increase in the number of men attending their churches. That can't be true, almost 50% more men attending in two and a half years by using this model, that can't be true, but that's not at all.

We found that in those same churches, in that same period of time, those same churches were seeing an 84% increase in the number of men engaged in discipleship, well, that can't be true, that can't be. 50% more men and almost doubling the number of men of discipleship in two and a half years, that can't be true. Well, so we sent it off to some PhDs out in some university in Texas, and they came back and said, "Yep, that's pretty much what it says." And at that point, we knew that we had been given a trust. Now it is required that whomever has been given a trust must be found faithful. So we began to ask the question, "Okay, we have this bag of gold here, what does faithful look like?" That's the question. What does faithful look like? And that's the Big Idea for today, men. **In every situation, ask "What does faithful look like?"** What does faithful look like?

### **WHAT DOES FAITHFUL LOOK LIKE IN ACTION?**

Now I want us to take a look at what faithful looks like in action. I have been giving you versus, I've big giving you probably too many verses is because I've been trying to put two tons of fertilizer in a one-ton truck, I think, but I've reduced it down a little bit just to give you sort of a sample, okay? Of some of the verses that have to do with faithfulness. Now you can take a picture of this if you're seeing this visually. You can write down the verses, I'll repeat them if you're listening to this on audio.

So these are a few examples. 1st Timothy chapter 3:2-12, one way that God calls us to be faithful is to be faithful to your wife and by extension to your family. These are the qualifications for deacons and elders, they must be faithful to their wives. Luke 16:10-12 talks about whoever is faithful with a little bit of

money will be entrusted with a great. But if you're dishonest with a little bit of money, then you're not going to be entrusted with more money. By the way, when I was learning this whole concept of distinction, very faithful and successful, I had a real estate deal that was sideways and I had to go up to the Northeast and see the investor

The reason I had to go is because we were talking on the phone one day and I was trying to explain why the deal wasn't working out the way it was supposed to be working out. And I made the mistake of saying God has not called me to be successful, He's called me to be faithful. "What? We put this money in this deal and you're saying that you're not required to be successful. You're required to be faithful. You better get on a plane to get up here, buddy, because we're going to talk about this one." So I did shaking in my boots. But anyway, it's true. I mean, the idea is if you're faithful, if you're faithful with money, then God will give you worldly possessions. He will entrust more to you.

But if you're not faithful with a little bit that he's given you, why would he give you more? That would be stupid. I mean, you wouldn't do that, why would God? If you're that smart, don't you think God's smart enough to figure out that if you gave you, if you're not faithful with a little money, why would he give you more. 2nd Timothy 2:2 is which happens to be the foundational verse for this Bible study since 1986, when we started it, this has always been our foundational verse. 2nd Timothy 2:2, Paul says, "And the things that you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses and trust to faithful men, to reliable men, to trustworthy men who will also be qualified to teach others."

One great example of that. One of our table leaders right here, Vlad, during the pandemic started another group, a video Bible study group that meets on Wednesday nights with three men in their 30s. So as a group we've been in trusting Vlad, if you will, a faithful man, and then Vlad has taken what he's been learning here. And there are many others of you are doing similar things, but I'm just featuring Vlad here this morning. But Vlad has been a faithful man, and he's entrusting in these things to other men who will then hopefully be qualified to teach others. That's how the gospel spreads and other example of faithfulness to God.

Then finally, 1st Peter 4:10-11, I can't remember this verse to save my life. I mean, it's one of the four verses that has to do with spiritual gifts, but let me just read it. Each of you should use whatever gift and that's the spiritual gift that you have each of you should use whatever gift you've received, to what? To serve others. As faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. So that's faithfulness to God in action. Again, the Big Idea here today is this; **In every situation ask, "What this faithful look like?"** Whether it's in your marriage? With money? In helping other men know about Jesus or in using your spiritual gifts or in whatever way, what does faithful look like? And then last thing, what you can do?

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

Well, you can be filled, you can be tent and you can be faithful. First of all, you can be filled. One of the fruits of the holy spirit is faithfulness. Now this doesn't exactly apply, but I did have a guy call me, well, it's related. I had a guy call me on the phone today, he said, "Pat, please pray for me to have patience, please pray for me to have patience." And I said, I said, "Ted, I don't need to do that, just be filled with the spirit." He said, "What do you mean? What do you mean?" I said, "Well, if you had, if you've asked God for patience, He's going to put you all through kinds of stuff that you don't want to go through in order to get your patient. Or you can just be filled with the spirit because it's one of the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, you see? So just be filled with the spirit." He said, "Oh."

So the same thing applies to faithfulness, faithfulness is one of the fruits of the spirit. So you don't have to pray, God make me faithful, God make me faithful, and then him have you get crushed in a mortar with a pestle. You don't have to get crushed in order to be faithful just be filled with the spirit because it too is one of the fruits, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness. You see. So be filled with the holy spirit. And then second is be content. I was on the phone one day with another author and

he was sharing something that everybody in every position is felt at some point. And that is it, that there are other people around you of seemingly lesser abilities who are more successful than you are, everybody has experienced that. And so he was struggling with those feelings.

The ability to be content with our lot in life, whatever it is, is linked to this idea that God is calling you to be faithful, that's the calling. The calling of a steward is not a calling to success, the calling of the steward is a calling to be faithful. It may go to the left, it may go to the right. In the parable of the four soils, the seed that fell on the good soil produced a crop, 30, 60, a 100 times what was sown. You might produce 30 times, somebody else might be producing 100 times. And it may look like you should be the one producing 100, they should be the one producing 30. But that's not what matters, what matters is, is that you're faithful. Look, God has called me to a very narrow calling - men's discipleship.

And so it's a limitation when you write men's books, for every one men's book that gets written 100 women's books get read, okay? For every one men's book that gets read, 100 or whatever the number is it's multiplier, right? So I know that I'm never going to be Max Lucado, okay? I don't care. I'm very content with who I am. This is my calling, this is what I supposed to do. I am so contented what I do that I'm free to just try to be faithful and not worry about being successful.

And then the final piece of this, so you'll be field be content. These are things you can do. It is to be faithful. "Hey, look, what do you think would be better to own a 40-acre farm and be 100% faithful or to own a 400-acre farm but only be able to take care of half of it? What do you think would be better? I mean, if that's all you could do because of the abilities that you had, wouldn't it be better to have a pristine, smooth running, very fine 40-acre farm than a 400 acre crappy farm that nobody thought anything of, and they all thought you were an idiot for trying to do it? And you weren't very good at it and you didn't have a very good reputation? You'd rather have the 40-acre farm. Wouldn't ya?

I mean, at the end of the day, we had one of our table leaders wants the cane to me and he said, "You know, Pat? I really feel like God is calling me to do this other bigger ministry over here." And I don't usually just tell people, this is what you need to do or give advice, I like to ask questions. So I just asked him a few questions. And on his own, he came to the conclusion that I already knew. He said, "I think I probably should not do that bigger ministry because I really have not been faithful to do the ministry right here that God has already given me." He was not being a faithful table leader at that point, and he was getting ready to jump ship for a bigger ministry. The Big Idea today; **In every situation ask "What this faithful look like?"** What does faithful look like?

Let's pray. By the way this, this goes with that other one where we talked about God's will a disciple asks, what does the master need? Not what do I want? So these are the two questions. I ask these two questions at least once every day, most days, multiple times. These are my two questions, I've worked at the end of the series, what does the master need? And then when I know that, Okay, well, what does faithful look like? These are two powerful questions. Let's pray. Our dearest, Father, thank you so much for your word. Thank you, Jesus, for this parable. Thank you for showing us that you put the emphasis on our being faithful, not necessarily on being successful. Lord, so help us to pray for success, but work to be faithful. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.