

Invest Here!

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[0 : 0 0] Great stuff. Well, great to see you this morning, folks. As Christy said, my name is Graham. I've got the privilege of being the pastor here at the church. And it's just a joy to see you this morning, to see many new faces and to see many returning faces.

It's great. It's like back to the future here at Bruntsfield. It's brilliant. Let me invite you to grab your Bibles and turn back to those verses of Matthew 25. And this afternoon, we're finishing this short little series that we've been doing over the past few weeks where we've been sitting at the feet of Jesus and we've been allowing him to teach us, his disciples, about money.

And we've heard emerge as disciples not to hoard up their possessions on earth, not to live for the things that are temporary, that are here one day and they're gone tomorrow, but rather to store up for themselves treasures in heaven.

And we saw last week that encounter that Jesus had with a rich and religious young man. And we thought about the fact that the problem wasn't that he had money. That's never the problem. The problem was that money had him.

It had him. It had the number one place in his heart. And Jesus unearthed the fact that Jesus wasn't number one in his heart. And this man was unwilling to surrender money and to allow Jesus to be number one in his life.

[1 : 1 6] And as we round off today, we're going to see Jesus outline what he wants his followers to do with the things that he has entrusted to them, what he wants them to do particularly with the money that he has given to them.

And I guess as I've been spending time with this passage this week, it's reminded me of one of the jobs I had as a student one of the university summers. And I used to work as a bank teller.

I used to work as a bank teller. So the people who, as you go into the bank, they're the front of house. They're the people who deal with your cash. And there was a group of us who started this job at the same time.

I'm trying really hard not to say the bank, so I don't get accused of favourite banks. There was a group of us that started working at this bank at the same time. And before they let us loose on the public, they sent us on a two-week training course.

And really the two-week training course was to get us used to doing two things. Firstly, how to use the computers, because they are difficult. And secondly, how to deal with customers.

[2 : 1 7] And when somebody came to draw out money, we were trained, this was in our mindset, we were trained to ask them two questions. Firstly, how would you like your cash? Ever been asked that one at the bank? I'm letting you in on the trade secrets here, folks, okay?

How would you like your cash? That was number one question. Second question was, once you sussed out what they had, second question was, would you be interested in speaking to one of our financial advisors?

We had that one as well, yeah? Would you be interested in speaking to one of our financial advisors? And behind that was the mindset that we want people to be investing here.

Okay? Come and invest your stuff with us. And what we're going to see this afternoon is Jesus tell his disciples quite clearly, invest what you have in my kingdom.

Really simply this morning, invest what you have in my kingdom. So Matthew 25, if you've got it there, Jesus is on the cusp of the cross. This is where we pick it up in Matthew's gospel.

[3 : 20] He's on the cusp of the cross. The days following this, we'll see him die. We'll see him rise. And we'll see him ascend to his father's right hand.

The place where he is today, the place where he rules and he reigns all things. And the place where he lives to intercede for his people. But in Matthew 25, Jesus is telling his disciples to know that one day, on a day that they don't know, but on a day that they won't miss, that he is going to return in glory.

So the disciples will soon find themselves in that waiting time between Jesus' going and Jesus' return. And of course, that's exactly where we find ourselves in God's grand story of redemption, as we see it in the pages of Scripture.

This is God's great story. This is where we find ourselves this morning, this afternoon. And that's why what Jesus says here to his disciples has so much to teach us. Because Jesus' outlines here is his disciples will find themselves waiting in between the going and the coming again of Jesus.

He's teaching them how to wait, how to wait, and how to wait well for his coming. So if you look at it there, verse 42, if you scan your eye just a little bit back, verse 42 of chapter 24 says, Jesus wants them to be ready to meet him.

[4 : 45] You've got to be ready, you've got to be alert. That's the kind of language we see Jesus using here. Verse 46, when he returns, he wants to find them doing the job that he's given them.

And so he tells them this parable that we pick up in Matthew 25, which is actually one of three in this chapter, and he tells it to help them and us understand that as we wait for his return, we're to invest the things that he has given us, entrusted to us, to advance his kingdom.

Sorry, I'm going to talk louder, okay? So, here's the searching question that this passage is going to ask us this morning. Both individually and collectively as a church, here's the question, okay?

What are we doing with the stuff that God has so graciously entrusted to us? That's the question. What are we doing with God's stuff? Our jobs.

Think about what's going on in your life. Our jobs, our opportunities, our friends, our circles of influence, our homes. What are we doing with the things that God has so graciously entrusted to us to use for his glory?

[5 : 58] And particularly thinking about our money. What are we doing with it? Are we thinking kingdom or are we thinking self? So, all we're going to do this afternoon, to feel the challenge of what Jesus, our master, is saying here, is that we're going to walk through this parable and we're just going to ask ourselves two questions to feel the force of what he's saying.

Does that sound okay? Two questions. Here's the first question. What has the master entrusted to us? Picking up the parable of verse 14, Jesus speaks about a master, do you see it?

Who's going on a journey. And given that in verse 19, this master is going away on this journey for a long time and given everything that we've just thought about, you can understand and appreciate that the master represents him.

And so the master gears up for this journey. What does he do? Do you see? He calls his three servants to him and he gives them talents. Now that word in this day does not mean what the word talent means in our day.

This is not like the Incredibles. Okay? This is not abilities that Jesus is talking about. This is not like Dave can play the cello where Judy can run 100 meters in sub 10 seconds. A talent is a sum of money.

[7 : 12] And it's a huge sum of money. Now it's generally understood, commentators will tell you, that a denarii is what the average worker earns in a day in this culture.

And a talent, get your heads around this, is 6,000 denarii. So this is 6,000 days wages. That's what a talent is. Now, this is well over 20 years worth of wages here.

Now, if you think about it, the point is that this is a life's work. Okay? This is a life's work, a talent. And it's important we soak in that word entrusted.

You see, the master doesn't give. He entrusts this huge amount of money to his servants. He doesn't give it to them. He entrusts it to them. You know, every Friday I pick up our girls from nursery.

And we just, quite often we just go to the library. Just go to the library. We love the library. We'll take out a book. A few weeks ago it was Where's Wally? I think I got way more enjoyment out of it than they did.

[8 : 20] Okay? But what happens when you take out a book? Have you had this experience before? You go take out a book. What did the library do? They don't just give it to you, do they? They take it and they open it and they stamp it.

And that's a way of saying, effectively, that this book is ours. And we're giving it to you for a short period of time. But we want it back. Yeah?

Want it back. See, knowing that, I tell you, Wally was well looked after. Know that it wasn't mine. But this is what Jesus is saying here, isn't it? Friends, everything that we have is the Lord's.

Everything that we have is the Lord's. As the psalmist would say that the whole earth and the fullness thereof is his. It says to give, it's to take away everything I have, my money, my home, my family.

It's not mine. If you were to open the front cover of my life, the stamp inside would read, The Masters. This is what Jesus is saying here.

[9 : 18] He's entrusted this stuff to us. And it's sovereignty. According to our abilities. According to what he knows we can handle. He's sovereignly given us things, his possessions, to use for his glory.

You know, we often have that phrase, don't we, in our society, that so-and-so is a self-made man or woman. Now, I know what we mean by that. We all know what we mean by that. But I do always laugh because my first response is, I wonder what part of them did they make?

Was it their two hands? Was it their two feet? Was it their intellect? Was it their mental capabilities? Was it them who decided to be born with opportunities ahead of them?

Former Dutch Prime Minister in theology, Abraham Kuyper, says, There's not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, mine.

You see, the things that we have are not ours. They're entrusted to us by our Master. And we see, don't we, verse 16, these first two servants, they take the Master's possessions and they put it to work.

[10 : 27] Do you see? And do you see how we get that word immediately? They immediately put it to work, which I think is a hint that we're supposed to pick up on, that these servants, they possess hearts that beat for their Master's mission.

They get it, they're bought in, they take it and they immediately put it to use. And because of that, do you see that they make a profit? Now, we're not told how they did it, we're not told what they did, but we're told that somehow or another, both of them, they double the Master's assets.

But the third servant, he, even though he's got less to lose, he digs a hole in the ground and he puts the talent, remember that extortionate amount of money, he puts it there.

He's not working for it, he's not interested in it, it just sits there. So friends, let me ask you, how are you using the stuff that God has entrusted to you? As a church family, how are we using the stuff that God has entrusted to us?

Are we thinking self? When it comes to our things, are we thinking his kingdom? That's the invitation that Jesus is making here, to think kingdom. Secondly, what will the Master say to us when he returns?

[11 : 46] Really simply, what will the Master say to us when he returns? Verse 19, do you see after a long time, the Master comes back? And the first two servants, they approach their Master and they present him with double what he gave them in the first place.

Now, why have they done that? They've done that because they love their Master, they have hearts that have bought into his mission, they want to please their Master, and there's nothing else that they'd rather live for than that. And look what the Master says to them, verse 21 and 22.

Well done, good and faithful servants. Now let's just pause there and think about that for a second. There are, if you think about it in life, there are many great words worth living for.

Many words that are lovely to hear, aren't they? You're hired. You're starting. I love you. You've retained the Calcutta cup.

You didn't think I was letting that one go, did you? But there are many words in life that are lovely to hear. But can I suggest that there are no greater words for us to live for than the ones that the Master gives to his servants here.

[12 : 58] Well done, good and faithful servant. You waited well. Just think about that for a minute. Our Creator, as we were praying earlier, our Saviour, the one who sustains all things, Jesus Christ.

The one who's entrusted us, it's not even our stuff, he's entrusted it to us. And on that final day when we present it to him, he says, Well done, good and faithful servant. Friends, there are no words that compare with that when we hear them in the final day.

Words worth living for. And the Master says, look at it, do you see it? Enter into my joy. You see, they both had different talents. They both had different amounts of talents.

They both gave him back different amounts of talents. But do you see how the word is exactly the same? Because these guys were faithful with what the Master had given them. Just soak in that for a minute.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Can you think of better words to hear? Can you think of better words worth living for? And then chew on this one.

[14 : 05] If our Master was to return today, and that could happen, if he was to return today and give his honest assessment with how we've used his possessions, would those be his words to us?

Now I'm 34 in a few months' time. Let you have that one. 34 in a few months' time. But see, as I look back on my 20s, my one regret is that I played it far too safe when it came to investing in Jesus' kingdom.

Played it way too safe. Now of course, we're always going to look back, aren't we? I wish that we'd made more of our opportunities. We're always going to think that. But as I look back and I think about it, the friends that I had the opportunity to speak about eternal things with, to speak about the things about Jesus with, and I ducked it, thinking that an opportunity might come later on, and it didn't.

And then I think about the money that I used to earn as a young lawyer, and I focus way too much on saving it and spending it on clothes that are long since in charity shops, rather than thinking kingdom with my disposable income.

I think about that, that I didn't use it to bless his people or create opportunities for gospel work or to build the church or reach the lost. I think about that.

[15 : 24] And then I think about it to the time in a few years time when I'm 40. And friends, I do not want to look back in my 30s and think I did exactly the same. Are we using the things that God has entrusted to us?

Not for self. Yes, we enjoy the good things that God has given us, but are we using these things for his glory and for the advance of his kingdom? Life's short.

Both Alex and I, we've both had relatives who've died in the last couple of weeks, and it's reminded us both that life is here today and gone tomorrow. It is fleeting, it is vapor, and there's one life, and then it's gone.

And Jesus says that life, live it for my glory. You know, I was thinking of the words this week of C.T. Studd, the missionary, who said, Only one life, a few brief years, each with its burdens, hopes, and fears, each with its clays I must fulfill, living for self or in his will.

Only one life will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last. That's so true. You know, maybe today, by God's grace and by his spirit, is the day that our hearts become set on those words, and we use our money for those words.

[16 : 41] In actual fact, if you think about it, we're just simply giving back to God what's already his. If you've never thought about it before, if you're a member here, if this is your spiritual family, can I encourage you to think about giving?

You know, not so we can do more things, so that we can set aside and train more people for gospel work, as Heber was saying earlier, that we can send more laborers into the vineyard, that we can support more missionaries, that we can support church planters, both local and global, but first and foremost, so that we can see more people come to know this glorious Savior, Jesus Christ.

Well done, good and faithful servant. This is what he's saying. What amazing words, from the lips of an incredible master. What a privilege it is to serve the King of Kings, as we see him here in Matthew 25.

And I was reading this book last week, when we were off for a few days, called Gospel Patrons. And it's the book that's filled of stories about how wealthy Christians over the years, they've used their money, and they've used their spheres of influence for gospel work.

Now, if you've got your Bible in front of you, you'll notice that it's in English, yeah? Now, let me tell you, there's a story in here about the guy called William Tyndale, who gave his life to make sure that that Bible was translated into English.

[17 : 53] William Tyndale, he put his heart on translating the Bible from Latin into English in the early 1500s. Tyndale had two big problems. Firstly, he didn't have the cash to finance himself, to set himself aside for the work.

And secondly, it was illegal, which is a problem. Two big problems. And he just so happened, as he was praying about this, to meet a man in London called Humphrey Monmouth, who's a very, very rich Christian with tons of contacts.

And Tyndale shared his ambition with Humphrey Monmouth, that he wanted to get the Bible from Latin into English so that the everyday people of England could pick up the Bible, read it, and understand it for themselves.

His famous line, that when I'm finished with my work, the plow boy in England will know more about the Bible than the Pope does. And this is what happened. Monmouth caught the vision, and Monmouth housed him. Monmouth fed him.

Monmouth financed him, as Tyndale went to Europe to finish his work. And when Tyndale had finished the work, Monmouth did, he used his cargo ships, that's what he did in his life, and he used them to smuggle them back over to England and distributed to them up and down the coast.

[18 : 58] And both men paid a huge price for what they did. Monmouth ended up in prison, and Tyndale ended up dead. But the thing is, without their boldness, and particularly without Monmouth's catching the vision, a generation of people wouldn't have had the Bible in their own language.

In fact, the writer here says that every English translation of the Bible has its starting point in Tyndale's work. Friends, living for those words, well done, good and faithful servant.

You see, servants number one and two in the parable, they live for those words, they worship their master, they declare to be trustworthy, but verse 24, what the master says to the third servant should be chilling to us.

What has he done with his talent? He's done nothing with it. Why? We'll see the excuse at verse 24. I knew you were a harsh man. I was afraid of you. So in other words, the fault's not with me, master, the fault's with you, because if you weren't such a cutthroat dealer, if you weren't a cruel taskmaster, then maybe things would have worked out differently for us.

But you see how the master, he sees right through the facade of those words, because if that's what really was the case, he would have nipped down to the bank, filled in the form, opened up the cheeky savings account on the side and placed the money in there and it would have made a profit and he wouldn't have even needed to lift a finger.

[20 : 21] Whereas before him, the servants were met with those words, well done, good and faithful servant. This man is met with the words, you see it in the passage, you good for nothing servant. First two masters, they share in their master's joy.

The third servant is banished to a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth, which is a typical description that Jesus uses to talk about internal condemnation, talk about hell. We just have to make the point that this is serious what we do with these things.

And in verse 28, do you see how he orders that third servant's talent to be taken from him and given to the first one because he's proved himself trustworthy in the master's eyes. He loves me and those are the kind of servants that I'm after, says the master.

But thinking this week, where did it all go wrong for this third servant? We've been thinking that as you've read it through. Where did it all go wrong for him? Because the way the parable's told, the focus is on him.

He's the one that gets the most airtime. Well, I think it all went wrong for that servant in his heart. Because the servants, one and two, their hearts are filled with adoration.

[21 : 25] They love their master. But the third servant, his heart is filled with apathy. He doesn't really know his master at all. And actually, everything that he's saying about him is a slander in his character.

He doesn't love his master. He doesn't buy into what he's about and it reflects himself in his work. So let me ask you this morning, when it comes to your relationship with the Lord Jesus, which heart is more like yours?

Are you like the first two? Do you have a warm and a receptive heart? Do you love the Lord? Or are you like the third servant who has a very low view of his master in his mind? Because, of course, everything that's driving this, friends, is a love for the Lord Jesus.

It's a love for him. Otherwise, this is simply just legalism or moralism and both of them are fruit of dead religion. Do we love this master? Because if you think about it, in Matthew 25, this master who's speaking here has invested his whole life in his father's will.

He's about to do exactly that. Jesus, the one who was rich, became poor. In fact, so poor, so lowly, so did he humble himself that he became sin for us on the cross.

[22 : 43] Why? So that we, who are poor, might become rich, adopted as sons and daughters of the living God. What a master. Friends, do you love him this morning?

Do you love him? The words of Christian missionary C.T. Studd, I know I've quoted them earlier, but I love this quote. If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then surely no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him.

Friends, just as we finish up, Jesus is holding up. Do you see what he wants to see in his disciples? Particularly when it comes to them and handling their money, what does he want to see? He wants to see faithfulness. Faithfulness.

Here is Jesus saying to his disciples, I'm going away, but one day I will return and until then, invest the things that I've entrusted to you in my kingdom.

So just as we close and this morning we leave this little series we've been thinking about money, why don't we just pause for a moment and let's just allow God by his spirit as the word does its work in our lives this morning, just to be silent and to reflect on that and then I'll pray and we'll close.

[24 : 02] Take my will and make it thine. It shall be no longer mine. Take my heart, it is thine own. It shall be your royal throne.

It shall be your royal throne. Our heavenly father, we thank you for your goodness to us, your lavish grace that you shower upon us in Jesus Christ.

And we pray, father, as we've thought about our possessions, as we've thought about the things that you've entrusted to us, we pray that you would help us to be people who live for those words, well done, good and faithful servant.

Would you, by your spirit, help us to be those servants who are marked by a resolute devotion to you and are marked as those who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

So Lord, be with us now, we ask, in Jesus' precious name. Amen.