

Title: “Be Bold.”

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Matthew 25:14-30

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Lesson: *We all have been given talents - each one of us, regardless of our age. And all based on our ability to use them boldly for the glory of God. It doesn't matter what the gift is, and it doesn't matter if you even like it. What matters is that it you have been entrusted with it and you must not let it sit idle. Just as it is sinful to use these talents to further ourselves, it is sinful to not use them at all.*

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. **2**The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

We are all familiar with this passage from Genesis and the continuing verses that describe the creative work of God, and we typically discuss it from the perspective of God's mighty power, or God's creativity but less often do we view it from the vantage point of God's boldness. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." That's bold! There was nothing - no time, no space, no "thing" to build anything from. There was only the triune God and out of himself he creates. I can't imagine any action bolder than that.

And how did we respond? In the garden, our first parents were bold. They knew God, personally. They talked to him regularly, and they experienced his love constantly. And yet, they boldly defied him, seeking to acquire for themselves more than what they had been given. That boldness. That boldness apart from God, we call sin. And the consequences of that action, the consequences of them being bold against the will of God reverberates even today. It's devastating and would have been catastrophic if not for God's bold response.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, (God says to Satan)
and between your offspring^(s) and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel."

And he sends his only son, Jesus Christ, to live a perfect life and to gather unto himself the bold, sinful acts of every person, from every moment in time. And he carried those sins upon his shoulders as he was hung on the cross. And with a boldness only possible by God, he suffered the punishment for every one of these actions - every one of these sins. Don't let this slip by. Each sin was a bold action *against* God, and yet his response was to bold for us.

I bring this up because it lays the groundwork for the parable in today's Gospel reading.

¹⁴“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants^(a) and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents,^(b) to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.

There actions were bold. A talent would be worth almost \$400,000 today so the first servant received something like \$2,000,000! And based on his abilities, not his interests or desires, but on the abilities that were given to him by God, he boldly used what was loaned to him. He created; *they both created.*

But the third servant? Not so much.

¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

He was bold, too! Very bold! But in a way that paralleled Adam and Eve. Into his hands were placed gifts that belonged to the master, gifts that he was expected to use. Gifts that he could have used because of his abilities. But he did nothing with these gifts. He boldly let them sit idle, unused and even hidden. His boldness was apart from God, it was sinful. And that's why the master was so angry.

²⁴He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

“Why were you not bold,” the master asks? His anger was not about an increase of money, it wouldn't have even been about a loss of that money. It was about the servant's lack of boldness. You see, when we contemplate this parable, we view it through the lens of investment - of increasing or decreasing it. We see the risk as one where we either make money or lose it. But like everything else with Jesus, the world is flipped on its head. This parable is not about gaining or losing - it's about using the gifts that God has given us to further his kingdom. It is about being bold with the talents and gifts that he has provided to you. It is about using them for his glory and not your own.

We all have been given talents - each one of us, regardless of our age. And all based on our ability to use them boldly for the glory of God. Some have been given the gift of teaching. Others, of science; still others, of art. It doesn't matter what the gift is, and it doesn't matter if you even *like* it. What matters is that it you have been entrusted with it and you must not let it sit idle. Just as it is sinful to use these talents to further ourselves, it is sinful to not use them at all. But what joy there

is in using these gifts to God's glory. I have often seen tears of joy in a teacher's eyes as her student is confirmed in their faith, or the delight that a musician brings in a wedding service.

God gives to each of us these gifts and calls on us to use them in creative ways. I had heard once that we have been invited into the imagination of God and I think this is what they meant. That we are to use the talents and gifts that in ordinary but also in extraordinary ways. That we are invited to be creative in how we use them for his glory. We are to be the dreamers and visionaries of today's church and to use these talents to boldly proclaim to all the world that Jesus is as alive today as he was when he first walked on this earth. We are to use our gifts to reach into the hearts and souls of those who disbelieve, those who persecute us. We are to be creative in our pursuit of them. We are not to be afraid of failing in our "investment" - whatever that means, but to use that which has been given to us in boldness and resolve. **We are the church. We are the body of Christ** and so we should act with the boldness that mimics God.

Let us pray.

Father,

We each know the gifts that you have entrusted to us and we know the many times that we have hidden them or used them for our own glory. But today we stand boldly - ready to renew our commitment to use what you have given us to bring others back to you. To use what you have loaned us for the glory of your name. We will not squander or hide that which you have entrusted to us but will instead go forth as the church triumphant in bold proclamation to the world. We will be creative and passionate in our pursuit of all your people just as you have been creative and passionate in your creation and salvation of us. Lord, we ask you to strengthen and encourage us as we face the forces of evil that work against us. You go before us in boldness; Lord let us follow in the same. In your name we pray. Amen.