

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Great Things, This Is Amazing Grace, Your Love Awakens Me, The Wonderful Grace of Jesus, Majestic

WELCOME

Where were you 35 years ago? How have you seen God's grace at work in your life from that time until today?
(For those not yet born 35 years ago, you may still respond to the second question).

WORD

MATTHEW 25:24-30

²⁴“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.’²⁵ And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’²⁶ But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.’²⁷ Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.’²⁸ Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’²⁹ “For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.’³⁰ Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(Read **Matthew 25:14-30** in its entirety.)

Blessed 35th Anniversary CCF! Now, when we celebrate anniversaries, we tend to look back which is quite appropriate. But as we celebrate 35 years of CCF as a spiritual movement of Christ-committed followers who make Christ-committed followers, we want to look towards the future. We will focus on what Jesus shared to His disciples on the last days of his earthly life.

Jesus wanted His disciples to be prepared for the future. He taught them of His Second Coming and the signs that will precede it (**Matthew 24:6-7**). Today, there are at least 25 major wars and conflicts all over the world. Famine devastates places in Africa despite our high tech abilities. Earthquakes happen more frequently in stronger magnitudes. Diseases are rampant around the world. God is also fulfilling His declarations for the nation of Israel. These signs that Jesus talked about are all around us! After the warnings, Jesus gave a valuable lesson on how his followers must live their lives through the “Parable of the Talents” (**Matthew 25:14-30**). The context for this is for us to BE READY for His return.

1. YOU MUST KNOW YOU ARE STEWARDS.

“You are not the boss... you are a manager!” This is how we can best put into words this first point. God entrusted to each of us something precious: our family, business, finances, health, influence —and we must do our best to manage these gifts properly.

Jesus likened us to the servants in the parable who were entrusted with talents. A talent is a measure of weight (32-33kg). A talent of gold is worth about \$1,400,116.57; a talent of silver is equivalent to about \$16,500 today.

The three servants were entrusted by the master with different amounts of talents – the first servant, five

talents; the second servant, two talents; and the last servant, with one talent (**Matthew 25:14-18**). Similarly, some of us have been entrusted with more “talents”, others with less according to our abilities.

Paul presents the same concept in **1 Corinthians 4:1-2**. We are STEWARDS of the “mysteries of God”, the revelation of JESUS CHRIST and what He has done for all of us. These precious truths are given to us and we must do our best to share these truths to others, that we may gather a great return for our God. Our duty then, as stewards is to make sure we be worthy of the trust given to us. How are we managing our finances? Our families? Our relationships?

2. YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

Matthew 25:19 tells us that there is a day of accountability, between the master and servants. Upon his return, the master settled accounts with the three servants. Notice the differing attitudes of the servants on this day of reckoning:

The first servant (**v20**) was very excited to face the master and report to him that he was able to double the five talents, and so gained a profit for his master. The master expressed appreciation and gave a glowing commendation and a promise to the first servant (**v21**). The same thing happened with the second servant who was able to double the two talents entrusted to him; he gave back four talents to the master (**v22-23**).

Our lives are not our own — it is God's. **1 Corinthians 6:20** reminds us that “we were bought with a price”. We belonged twice to the Lord, by creation and by redemption. Since we belong to Him, a true follower of God should and will eagerly wait for Jesus (**Hebrews 9:28, Philippians 3:20**).

WORD (cont'd)

The clincher of the story, however, is the third servant's response to the Master (v24-25). When it was his turn to give a report, this servant gave excuses for why he did not gain anything for the master from the talent entrusted to him; he even blamed the master for his own failure! The real reason for this servant's unprofitable handling of the talent was his wrong ideas about the kind of master he served.

When we face GOD's real judgment, and give an account to GOD for what we have done with the life He entrusted to us, will we hear Him say, "well done, good and faithful servant, enter into My joy"? Or are we going to stand before Him empty-handed because we have not known Him well enough and have therefore lived unprofitable lives?

3. YOU NEED TO BE FAITHFUL.

It is not the amount gained, but the servants' faithfulness in taking care of the things entrusted to them that mattered to their master. The master called the first two servants as GOOD and FAITHFUL. When GOD gives you something, He expects you to grow it. By faith in who Jesus is, do your best to serve the Master. The parable ends

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. What things have God entrusted to you as a steward? How are you maximizing these to fulfill the mission God has given us?
2. There were three servants in the parable; which one characterizes you more? How can you improve and be a more faithful steward of God's gifts and resources?
3. Do you feel ready for the Lord's return? Why or why not?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for the people that God has entrusted to you—your family, relatives, co-workers, employees, leaders, friends. Ask the Lord to give them an understanding that their lives are not their own, that all of us will one day give an account before God for how we lived our lives on earth. Look for ways to help them be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to them. Be a faithful steward of the gospel and share it with at least one of them this week.

(v.29-30) with the master giving more to the faithful servants as a reward to their good stewardship, while the unfaithful servant ended up with nothing.

It is FAITH in who God is that fuels us to press on and do our best with the lives we have been given, as we await the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11:6 reminds us: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

As we look towards the future, may we be like Paul, eager to see Jesus, and be consistently faithful to give our best for the Lord. In his last letter (**2 Timothy 4:8**) Paul says, "in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

BE READY for that day by being a good steward. By faith in Christ, let us please the King of kings and Lord of lords in everything that we do this 35th year of CCF and the rest of our days as we await our Master's return.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends