Series Road Map: Story Teller

Series Overview: Jesus loved using stories to teach important life lessons. He frequently told parables that would highlight spiritual truths and allow the listeners to learn lessons for themselves. In this series, we will be looking at three amazing parables and what Jesus has to teach us through them.

Week Overview: God has entrusted each and every one of us with different gifts, talents, and passion. He did this for a reason! The parable of the talents gives us insight into how to use the gifts and talents God has given us for his glory. It’s not about what you have been given, it’s about how you use it!

 Outline:

Grab the Room (Intro): Personal story

Tension (what’s the struggle): God entrusts us each with different things, but so many times we either don’t recognize what he has given us or

Text: Matthew 25:19-30

THP: Don’t Waste God’s Gift

Supporting Points:

Application (call to action):

What has God entrusted you with, and how are you going to use it?

**Storytellers**

**Week 4**

**Northview Students**

**Intro:**

*(Transition from hosts underground)*

Thanks guys…

Hello hello Northview Students. Welcome BACK for our final week of StoryTellers. You know Jesus--for all of the things that Jesus was; Savior, Healer, Redeemer, Friend--he was also a MASTER storyteller. Hopefully, over the last few weeks, you’ve picked up on that as we’ve heard some incredible messages and retellings of these fascinating stories.

I believe today, wherever you’re watching, this story will be an encouragement to your heart as we take an extensive look into the story of three servants.

Will you pray with me?

*Prayer.*

*Amen.*

**Personal Story:**

I want to tell you about the love of my life as a 12 year old boy. Unfortunately, it was NOT my wife--I didn’t meet her until later in life. At 12 years old, the love of my life was a girl named Hot Sauce. Now--don’t judge or laugh at her name, it was a name given to her with great love and care. It was a name given by yours truly. See, Hot Sauce was my pet leopard gecko. And she was named Hot Sauce after my favorite And1 street-ball basketball player who went by the same name. Oh, I also thought she was a boy when I first got her okay, give me a break haha. I wasn’t a leopard gecko expert haha.

But she was this beautiful creature and we were best friends. All day long, when I was home--whether I was watching TV, playing video games, eating dinner (okay maybe not then), Hot Sauce would sit right here on my shoulder. I loved having this little lizard as a pet.

The great thing about leopard geckos is they’re both reliable and sustainable pets. Not too difficult to take care of and they live on average 10-20 years so they’re around for a long time!

One day, shortly after Hot Sauce’s 3rd birthday, my family and I were in the process of moving. We moved around quite a bit growing up so this wasn’t out of the ordinary. We had an efficient process to ensure that everything was moved carefully and safely. Somehow in this move’s process however, Hot Sauce managed to escape from her cage. Because we were moving all day long, no one noticed until the late afternoon. It was later that evening--after searching for hours on end--that we found Hot Sauce out in the backyard unresponsive. (moment of silence)

Now, I know on the one hand, it was just a lizard, but I was entrusted with the life of another living thing and I took that responsibility seriously. When Hot Sauce died, it stirred something deep within me that wanted to ensure that whenever I was given responsibility for a task, an event, a pet, a calling or a person, that that responsibility would be handled seriously and with great care.

Why do I tell you this? I tell you this because Jesus actually tells a story in the book of Matthew that touches on this idea of responsibility, and it applies to each and every one of us! We introduced Jesus at the beginning of our time as a Master storyteller and this case is no different.

There is a purpose and meaning behind this story that we’re tasked to read, understand and implement into our lives. If we do this, it has the potential to be deeply formational in our apprenticeship to Jesus. I want to share with you the story or “The Parable of the Talents.”

**SCRIPTURE**

But, before we jump into this, we have to look at the context surrounding this story to understand *why* Jesus is telling it and *what* he means by it. For instance, it’s important to understand that this parable doesn’t stand alone. It’s actually a part of a *group* of parables. Whenever Jesus does this he’s saying, “listen! Lean in right here! What I have to say is so important. You can’t miss this.”

The group of parables or stories Jesus tells in this portion of Scripture all relate to Jesus’ second coming. He tells us that at some point, he’s going to die, be buried, resurrect from the grave and then ascend into heaven. Jesus--as we know--fulfills this prophecy but he also says that eventually, he’s going to return again to redeem and reclaim all of creation in the making of a new heaven and a new earth. He makes it clear that no one knows when this is going to take place except God alone. His challenge and encouragement to us is to wait with expectation and to live our lives with hope, excitement, integrity and anticipation of this final coming. His main point in all of these stories is, “this then, is how you should wait for me and live for me until I return.”

With that, we jump into the story! Jesus starts by setting the scene of the story…

There’s a rich man who has tons of money and possessions--he’s the Elon Musk of the Bible okay? And this rich man decides to go away on a journey--doesn’t need to work, wants to go travel, all is good.

BUT, when he leaves, he decides to entrust some of his possessions, some of his wealth to his workers. So, to one he gives 5 bags of gold (or “talents” as the Bible calls them), to another he gives 2, and another he gives 1.

So, pause. How much we talking here? I mean...bags of gold--we talking like ziploc sandwich bags or hefty trash bags?

How about *20 years* worth of work bags.

Think about this--in Biblical times, historians believe it would take the average man *20 years* to earn *one* bag of gold. So, this isn’t chump change. He’s entrusting full on retirement accounts--multiple investment accounts--to these servants.

The rich man departs and says, “I’m entrusting this money to you. Do with it as you wish.” So the servants get to work. The first servant says, “you gotta spend money to make money” and he turns 5 bags of gold into 10. The servant who was given 2 bags says, “I’m going to make money moves” and turns 2 bags of gold into 4. The last servant who’s given one bag of gold freezes. He freaks out. He has no idea what to do. He’s never had this much money before and so in fear, he buries his bag in the ground to ensure that it’s safe and secure upon his masters return.

Eventually, the rich man comes back from his journey, so let’s pick-up in Matthew chapter 25 (repeat), starting in verse 20, here’s what the Scriptures say:

[**https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/parable-talents/**](https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/parable-talents/)

***20****The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’* ***21****“His 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 your master’s happiness!’* ***22****“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’* ***23****“His 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 your master’s happiness!’* ***24****“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.****25****So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’* ***26****“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?****27****Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.* ***28****“‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.****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.****30****And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*

Woah… talk about an absolutely BRUTAL reaction! I mean, it’s not like the guy wasted all of his money. Why’s the master so...mad? So hurt? So disappointed?

In case you haven’t picked up on it yet, each of these characters represent someone. The rich man represents Jesus and the men he entrusts the money to represent you, me, and every other person.

So as we read, we have to insert ourselves into the story and ask questions. Questions that help us understand where we fit into a story like this.

And so, the first question that comes up is this: “what has God entrusted you with?

Just like the men in the story, Jesus has entrusted all of us with something (and really probably a few things!). Maybe you’re really athletic or school comes easy to you; you play in the band or you’re really good at making friends. Maybe you have a specific talent that not many other people have or a passion that not everyone is passionate about. Guys, God gives us these gifts, these talents, and these passions for a reason. We’ll dive into that in just a minute, but first I want you to notice something else…

Did you notice that the rich man gives each servant a different amount of money? Why is that? You see, every person is unique, and God entrusts everyone with something different than anyone else. Unfortunately, we live in a society and culture that is ALL about comparison.” What do I have and how does it compare to what he or she has?” We also love to put all of our value in certain skills and gifts, and we also love to devalue other ones.

But if you read the end of the parable, it becomes so clear that it’s not about what you have, but *what you do* with what you have! One man only earned 3 bags of gold for the rich man, while the other man earned 5, but the rich man’s response is exactly the same “Well done my good and faithful servant!”. Why? Because both men were *faithful* with what they were given!

At the same time, not every man did a good job with what they had been given, and this is really what Jesus is asking us to hone in on… He’s saying, “my son, my daughter, **DON’T WASTE GOD’S GIFT” (repeat).**

The man who was entrusted with 1 bag of gold played it safe--sure, but he did nothing to try to multiply it, to move his talent forward in a positive direction… and the rich man was MAD! Why? Because the rich man had entrusted these “talents” to these men so they’d put them to work! So they’d do something with them! So they’d, as the philosopher Cardi B puts it, “make money moves!”

It’s the same with us, students. God has given you gifts, talents, and passions for a REASON! Just like the men were entrusted with money to earn more for the rich man, God entrusts us with gifts to use them for His glory. To point others to Him. To multiply the amount of people who will enter His kingdom. **Don’t waste God’s gift.**

**APPLICATION**

So what does this mean for you and for me? Let’s take a moment and let’s get real specific. I’m going to invite a few of my friends up to help me demonstrate exactly how this plays out in real life, in YOUR world.

(Bring Clark and Emmie up on stage).

Perhaps you’re like Clark and you’re watching this and you’re an incredible football player. Stud. Great athlete. Clark, do you understand that God has given you that gift for more than just scoring touchdowns and winning games. He has given you that gift so that you can be an influence and a light on your team. A counter-cultural, humble, God-first athlete.

Or maybe you’re like Emmie and maybe math and science come easy to you. You eat pi for breakfast, lunch and dinner, you know what I mean? You smart ones will get that, haha! But Emmie, did you know that God has given you that gift for more than just getting good grades, earning a great degree or getting a well-paying job!

My friends, the people you meet along your path to success are people you can tell about God. The money you make is money you can be generous with. You can share your knowledge with others who struggle with this subject.

Are you starting to see my point? God has given you gifts so that they could be directed back to him! And notice something, the person who is a great football player is going to have influence with completely different people than the person who excels at math and science. That’s awesome! That’s why God gives a diversity of gifts! One is not better than the other, they are both AMAZING opportunities to reach different kinds of people.

I can’t pretend to know what this will look like for you. Out of everyone, you know best about the gifts, talents, and passions God has given you.

So this is my challenge for you… take some time to find a quiet place. Remove all distractions--phone, TV, air pods, etc. and just sit. Just sit and pray and think and write down whatever God brings to mind that you’re good and gifted at.

Take some time to decipher what God has entrusted you with and then ask Him what He wants you to do with them. How can you use those talents, gifts, and passions to bring glory back to Him? That’s why he gave them to you in the first place!

Maybe you’re watching this today and there is this ache, this passion, this God-sized dream that you have felt within the core of your being for months, years, decades and you’ve been to afraid to pursue it. NOW IS THE TIME. GO AFTER YOUR DREAM! START SOMEWHERE, TODAY! TAKE YOUR 1 BAG, 3 BAGS OR 20 BAGS OF TALENTS AND USE THEM TO INFLUENCE OTHERS, TO MULTIPLY THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Think about this for a moment...one day, we’ll enter through the gates of Heaven and have a chance to reflect on our lives here on Earth. Think about how amazing, how miraculous, how overwhelming it would be to hear the first words out of God’s mouth towards you be, “Well done my good and faithful servant.”

That’s my goal, and it should be yours too. Students, I’m begging you:

Don’t waste your time!

Don’t waste your gifts!

Don’t waste your talents!

Don’t waste your relationships!

Don’t waste your witness!

Don’t waste your life!

YOU WERE MADE FOR MORE!...and you have what it takes.

Say yes to God. Work at developing the gifts that God has given you! Don’t wait until you’re older, tomorrow isn’t promised! Don’t wait until you have it all together, that will never happen. God wants to use you right now, at this very moment. You just need to say YES! Don’t waste God’s gift. You never know how God might use you to change the world!

*(In life groups, take time to talk about what keeps us from using what God has given us. This could be the first question of the life group curriculum)*