

The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller. (Prov 11:24, Message)

1. V14 “Again” – explanation of the new normal that is the “Kingdom of heaven.”
 - a. Context; Olivet discourse.
 - b. Gospel. See Eph 2:8-10.
 - c. “It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone.” (John Calvin; *Antidote to the Council of Trent*, 1547, answer, Can 11)
2. V14 “a man” A parable by contrast (hermeneutical errors abound here)
 - a. The key point not that God is mean (because He isn’t), or how much we have (which is variable), but how we *use what He has entrusted to us* (faithfulness).
 - b. God gives us exactly what we can handle. 1 Cor 10:12-13
 - c. “far country” – ample time to be tested.
3. V14 “entrusted His wealth to them” – ownership v stewardship contrast. ‘The Burden of Ownership’ *Christian Stewardship Network*; (see <https://www.christianstewardshipnetwork.com/blog/2020/10/29/the-burden-of-ownership>)
4. V15 “five bags of gold...two...one”
 - a. Lit. ‘talents’ (1 Drachma = day’s wage for a common laborer; and was (4.3grams of silver); 100 Drachmae = 1 Mina; 60 Minae = 1 Talent.
 - b. Huge sum they were entrusted with! (~20+ years wages)
 - c. The ‘unfairness’ of a God who loves us all equally yet trusts us all variably!
5. V15 “each according to his ability”
 - a. Stewardship questions: what to give UP; what to give TO.
 - b. TIME – Ps 90:12
 - c. TALENT – 1 Pet 4:10
 - d. TREASURE – 2 Cor 9:6-8
6. V16 The first two servants “went at once and put [*his* talents] to work”
 - a. Vv20/22 “you entrusted me” – understands stewardship.
 - b. Core of sacrificial generosity is risk. Risks increase when we give time, talents and treasures to things other than feathering our own nests. (Or, do they!?)
7. V18 “dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money”
 - a. Fear based; and see Vv24-25 “you are a hard man...So I was afraid”
 - b. Human security v Kingdom security.
8. V 21,23 “Well done good and faithful servant!”
 - a. God’s pleasure was on faithfulness with what they DID have – not dependent on the size of the responsibility.
 - b. Luke 12:48b (and 24:45-51; context of servants who know what the master wants) – cf 25: 31-46 sheep v goats!
9. V26 “You wicked and lazy servant” – How so!? “The fault of the third servant was that he did not recognize the master’s intention, and *opted for safety instead of service.*” (Richard France, ‘Matthew’ in *New Bible Commentary*, 938, emphasis added.)
10. V27 “you should have put my money on deposit”

- a. OT Israelites forbidden to charge interest to each other, tho could to Gentiles (Deut 23:19-20)
- b. If you don't trust yourself with stewardship, give it away.
- 11. V28 "So take the bag of gold and give it to the one who has ten." Kingdom fairness.
- 12. V29 "For whoever has will be given more" – reminiscent of Luke 12:48.
- 13. V29 "Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken away". Miserable if literal. But better interp. 'Whoever doesn't understand that whilst they don't have ownership, they DO have stewardship'
- 14. V30 "throw that servant outside" (see the particulars and culmination of Vv31-46!)

WORTH A LOOK

- BOOK: *Money, Possessions & Eternity* by Randy Alcorn; or if you can't swing for it-
- ARTICLE: 'God Takes Our Stinginess or Generosity Personally' by Randy Alcorn – see <https://www.faithfi.com/eternal-perspective-ministries/god-takes-our-stinginess-or-generosity-personally-6108>
- WEBSITE: *Crown Financial Services* – tools for financial thriving. www.crown.org
- COURSES: *Financial Peace University* (stewardship & flourishing) – run at NCCC often!

CHALLENGES FOR THE BRAVE OF HEART



Time

This week I served others for _____ minutes.
 Next week I will serve others _____ minutes.



Treasure

Annually God directs me/us to:

	AD 2024	AD 2025
Steward	\$ _____	\$ _____
Tithe	\$ _____	\$ _____
Sacrificially Give	\$ _____	\$ _____



Talents

My Top 3 Gifts: _____ I (could) use this to serve others by:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____