

“Talents on Loan from God”

(Luke 12:41-48)

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I. Introduction

A. Fascinating book, “Cradles of Eminence”

1. Preparing for series on “Parenting”
2. In 1962, Victor and Mildred Goertzel published a revealing study of 413 “famous and exceptionally gifted people” called *Cradles of Eminence*. They spent years attempting to understand what produced such greatness, what common thread might run through all of these outstanding people’s lives. *Surprisingly, the most outstanding fact was that virtually all of them, 392, had to overcome very difficult obstacles in order to become who they were.*
3. *“Times of calamity and distress have always been producers of the greatest people. The hardest of steel is produced from the hottest fire.”* (Andy Andrews)
4. Some of you are going through some pretty hot fire

B. What opportunities are staring you in the face?

1. Many are carefully hidden inside of difficult problems
2. An old saying,

“Don’t ask for a light load, but rather ask for a strong back”
3. God uses greatly those that have suffered greatly
 - a. Don’t let your sorrows go to waste
4. When we finally stand before our God....He will not look you over for medals, degrees, or diplomas, but for scars (Elbert Hubbard)
5. What opportunity is facing you this morning?

C. Let’s see what Jesus had to say about “opportunities”

II. Review

A. The gathered crowd

1. Contained the curious, the critical, and the close disciples

B. The shocking sermon

1. No dancing around
2. He cut right to the chase

III. Text....Luke 12:41-48

A. The Key Question (v. 41)

(41) Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”

1. Which parable?
 - a. The preceding parable about the master who went away to a wedding feast
 - b. Left his servants in charge
 - c. The need to be ready at all times
 - d. Applied to His own return
 1. The Rapture
2. Jesus closed the parable with a strong warning

(40) You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

3. Who was Jesus talking to...who was the “you”?
 - a. Speaking to a massive crowd
 - b. Contained the curious, the critical, and the close disciples
4. Jesus answered with another parable
 - a. See if you can spot his answer

B. The Faithful Manager (vs. 42-44)

(42) The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? (43) It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. (44) I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

1. “Talents on loan from God”
 - a. Every person in the world has been given a portion of time, talent and treasure
 - b. Together, they spell “opportunity”
2. We are to manage our opportunities like a trust fund
 - a. What has God entrusted to you?
 - b. They’re on loan from God
3. Some entrusted with more than others
 - a. The story of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30)
 - b. To whom much has been given...
4. So that’s the “faithful manager”
 - a. Will receive additional opportunities
5. Now let’s look at three other types of managers

C. The Types of Servants (vs. 45-48)

1. The Insubordinate Servant (vs. 45-46)

(45) But suppose the servant says to himself, “My master is taking a long time in coming” and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk.

- a. Believes he can get away with horrible things
- b. The surprise return

(46) The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

- c. The degrees of punishment
 - 1. Willful disobedience
- d. Who are these people?
 - 1. A vile hatred for God
 - 2. Know the truth and wave their fist in the face of God
- e. Jesus will return not just for the faithful, but also the unfaithful
- f. Separate time...but also unexpected
- g. Insubordination

2. The Indifferent Servant (v. 47)

(47) That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.

- a. Knew what the master wanted but never got around to doing it
 - 1. Distracted
 - 2. Didn't take it seriously
 - 3. Priorities
- b. His fate will be better than the previous guy

Everybody's hell is his own hell. You don't suffer collectively; you suffer individually

- c. Who are these people?
 - 1. Those who know the truth
 - 2. Apathetic or indifferent
 - 3. The vast majority of unbelievers
 - 4. Many attending churches this morning

3. The Ignorant Servant (v. 48)

(48) But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows.

- a. Ignorant of the master's instructions
 - 1. But still did things worthy of punishment
 - 2. Much lesser punishment
- b. Those who have never heard the gospel
 - 1. A much lesser punishment
- c. But...even though they were ignorant, they're still sinful

Ignorance doesn't get you into heaven; it just diminishes hell

D. The Central Lesson (v. 48)

(48)From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

- 1. Let me tell you the story of the "Talents" in Matthew 25:14-30
- 2. The master returns
 - a. After a long time
 - b. Purpose?
 - 1. To reclaim kingdom
 - 2. To reward faithful
 - 3. To chastise unfaithful
- 3. Results?
 - a. The 5-talent guy used his opportunities to gain more for the master
 - 1. Gained five more
 - 2. "Well done, good and faithful servant!"
 - 3. Made him *ruler* over many things

- b. Two-talent guy
 - 1. Gained two more
 - 2. Got the *same* reward
 - a. Smaller portion, but...
 - b. Equal proportion
- c. One-talent guy
 - 1. Had buried his talent
 - a. Didn't want to lose it
 - b. That doesn't sound so bad
 - 2. However, check out his heart
 - a. "I knew you to be a hard man"
 - b. "Reaping what you did not sow"
 - 1. A thief?
 - c. "Gathering where you have scattered no seed"
 - d. "I was afraid"
 - 1. Buried it
 - 2. Here—take it back
 - 3. Lord's answer
 - a. "Wicked and lazy"
 - b. Key to this servant
 - c. Should have at least put it in the bank!
 - 4. Give his talent to the 5-talent guy
 - a. He'll put it to use

- b. Use it or lose it
- 5. Cast out the wicked servant
 - a. Outer darkness
 - b. Weeping and gnashing of teeth
 - c. Hell
- 4. Answer to Peter's question
 - a. Everyone in the vast crowd needed to be ready for his unexpected return
 - b. For blessing or judgment

IV. Some Closing Thoughts

1. We should be looking for opportunities to use the skills God has entrusted to us

- a. With whatever opportunities God has given you
- b. God doesn't want them to go to waste
- c. Will some day have to give an accounting
- d. Invest them in other people
- e. Don't let fear cause you to miss your opportunities

2. Many opportunities lie hidden inside our pains and failures

- a. Great blessings are preceded by great opposition
- b. Helen Keller

Character can't be developed in ease and quiet. Only through the experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.

- c. Chapel Pointe is a 5-talent church
 - 1. Speaking the truth in love
 - 2. Worshipping in spirit and in truth

3. Not afraid to deliver God's message verse-by-verse
 4. A non-denominational family
 5. In a hurry to reach our community
 6. Where all generations feel at home
- d. Satan wants to stop us
 - e. There's pain in growth
 - f. Clyde Reid

One of the most common obstacles to celebrating life fully is our avoidance of pain. We dread pain. We fear pain. We do anything to escape pain. Our culture reinforces our avoidance of pain by assuring us that we can live a painless life...but to live without pain is to live half-alive...pain and joy run together. When we cut ourselves off from pain, we have unwittingly cut ourselves off from joy as well.

- g. The secret is to **press on**

3. Sufferings and setbacks prepare you for special opportunities

- a. Winston Churchill

Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm

Success is never final. Failure is never fatal. It is courage that counts.

- b. E. Hubbard/Koole

The greatest mistake you can make in life is to continually fear you'll make one

- c. People hate to fail
 1. Therefore, never try
 2. Mediocrity
- d. Thomas Watson, president of IBM

If you want to double your success rate, double your failure rate.

- e. F.D. Mattiesen

He who has never failed somewhere, that man cannot be great. Failure is the true test of greatness.

f. Koole

You can never tell the strength of a tea bag until it's in hot water

g. Thomas Alva Edison

In the process of inventing the light bulb, I understand that Thomas Edison failed almost eight thousand times before he got it right. That's burning a lot of midnight oil. When asked how he felt about all that failure, the great genius replied simply: "They weren't failures," he said. "They were education." There is no better education than your own failures, if you've the eyes to see. We must have the courage to fail. It's evidence that we're risking to be our best.

h. Chapel Pointe

1. Must be willing to take risks
2. God rewards the bold
3. If it isn't scary...it isn't a leap of faith

i. What step of faith does God want you to take?

1. To pursue a dream
2. He's looking for your availability, not ability

4. Never underestimate the value of a really big problem

When God wants to send you a gift, he wraps it up in a problem, and the bigger the gift that God sends you, the bigger the problem. (Norman Vincent Peale)

5. Don't waste the sorrows you've already paid for

- a. What past sufferings can you now invest in service
- b. You're a "high-value asset" to God
- c. "You can trust him. He's already been broken"
- d. "When God needs to accomplish an impossible task, He finds an impossible person and crushes them"

6. *Don't let discouragement short circuit opportunity*

- a. Some of you are exhausted and discouraged
- b. Discouragement is the sworn and constant enemy of perseverance
 - 1. "Perseverance is courage stretched out"
- c. Two words...**Press on**
- d. Calvin Coolidge

Press on. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

- e. How Paul worded it in Philippians 3

(12) Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. (13) Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, (14) I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- f. Pressing on is the cure for discouragement
- g. People become discouraged
 - 1. Disillusioned
 - 2. Want to quit
 - 3. Our building program and Dave Stevens

We are now in the enthusiasm stage of the project; which is followed by panic, search for the guilty, punishment of the innocent and glorification of those who took no part.

- h. Looking for the perfect—
 - a. Wife
 - b. Job
 - c. Kids

- d. Neighborhood
- e. Church
- f. Ministry
- g. Pastor
- i. They don't exist
- j. People who leave—
 - a. Marriages
 - b. Jobs
 - c. Areas of ministries
 - d. Churches
- k. Never get the full blessing

7. The key to getting started is getting started

- a. Most people have trouble starting
- b. The first steps are the most difficult
 - 1. Woody Allen—“Eighty per cent of success is showing up”
- c. In serving Christ
 - 1. “Start NOW...literally. ‘If you don't get started in the next seventy-two hours,’ one very wise man has said, ‘you aren't going to get started at all.’”
- d. Let God worry about the obstacles
 - 1. As Samuel Johnson said,

“Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objects must first be overcome.”

8. Check your attitude and motives

- a. Let's talk about the “why”
- b. Your attitude

c. Let me give you an example to follow

d. Philippians 2:3-5

(3) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. (4) Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

(4) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

(9) Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

****Press on!***