

Sermon: Give as Good as You Get –

Talent Commitment

November 20, 2022

GIVE AS GOOD AS YOU GET



A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE SERIES

Introduction

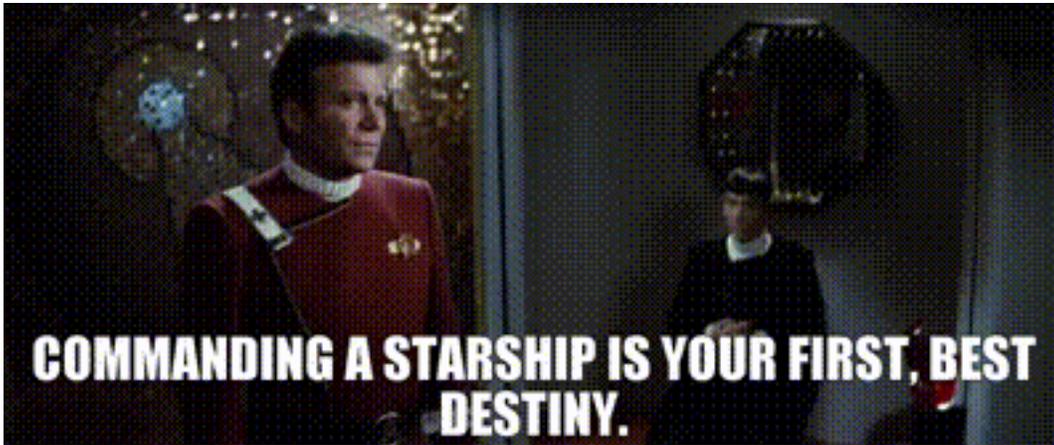
Today we conclude this message series on stewardship called “Give As Good as You Get.”

So far we have explored making a “time commitment” – hearing how we all have all the time in the world to use for God’s glory and serving our neighbor, all the while being encouraged by the saints who have been where we are and are now worshiping Christ in eternity.

Last week I drilled down a bit on the “treasure commitment”- as I shared with you what our national treasure here in the United States is – our nation’s veterans! But an even greater treasure is ours as followers of Christ – the salvation that Jesus gives us through His death and resurrection. I encouraged you to “give as good as you get” by making a

commitment of your personal treasure of wealth – a gift from God – to the church so that we can tell more and more people about Jesus.

This week, in conclusion, we're going to take some time to explore the importance – but also the blessing – of committing our talent to God and to the Church.



Your First Best Destiny (and what to do with it)

I think I've established for you that I'm a nerd. I'm a geek. I love computers. I love off-beat music groups like Rush and Saga, Styx and Genesis.

And I love movies.

Last week I referenced the movie *Silverado* – one of my top 5 favorite westerns.

Here's another movie reference that I'm afraid is more geeky, but also helpful to this message on Talent Commitment.

In the movie *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan*, Spock and Kirk are having a discussion about who should command the Enterprise.

Kirk has taken promotion to Admiral – quite an honor, usually. But this necessitated that he give up the captain's chair on a starship.

Spock has filled that role on the Enterprise as part of training another generation of officers and crew.

But when a crisis arises while Kirk is aboard, Spock tells him that he should resume command. Kirk demurs with a dismissive wave of his hand. But Spock doesn't back down. And he said these words that I think are relevant to today's message.

"Commanding a starship is your first, best destiny. Anything else... is a waste of material."

Kirk's gifts – his talents – are to command a starship and to save the galaxy time and time again.

I told you I was a geek!

But as with all good stories – even the fictional ones – there is an element of Gospel truth in them.

You have been given gifts – talents – by God.

To use.

For His glory.

To love and serve your neighbor.

And to not use them would be a waste of God's material in you!

Let's take a look at Matthew 24:45-46. This comes in Jesus' warning about the Second Coming.

A photograph of a person standing on the roof of a car on a dark road at night. The background is a vibrant green aurora borealis (Northern Lights) against a dark, starry sky. The scene is illuminated by the green light of the aurora.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

Matthew 24:45-46

And after this, Jesus teaches a parable about Talents. In that parable, Jesus makes clear that not everyone has the same kind or amount of talents. But we are all to use what we have been given – basically saying that not to use them is a waste of material.

So, let's double click on this: [Give as Good as You Get: Talent Commitment.](#)

What You Enjoy – That’s Your Talent

Mark Twain once said, “Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

I have found this to be mostly true. Have you?

I realize that some people have taken this to illogical extremes to not work at all. Sadly, our current make-up of government actually does pay people to not work.

To which I would answer with another Scripture: *“If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.”* 2 Thessalonians 3:10

That’s a message for another time, however.

You may have noticed that when you are doing something you enjoy doing, time seems to fly by.

A day spent at Disney World is the shortest day of your existence!

A day spent taking achievement tests at school is the longest day!

Same amount of minutes, seconds and hours – that all depend on how much you enjoy (or don’t enjoy) what you are doing!

Another example: The last minute of the football game – when you are up by two points that sixty seconds seems to take hours. When you are down by two points, sixty seconds seems like six!

Here’s what I’m getting at with this lesson taught by Mark Twain:

What you enjoy doing changes your attitude about life.

But I want to take this a bit further, from the perspective of a follower of Jesus.

What you enjoy doing is most likely the talent(s) that God has given you.

Maybe you enjoy working with technology – phones, tablets, computers. That could be a talent from God. In my case it is one of those talents that I had wished was more dished out as much as it has with others like my friend from high school Mike who has worked with super computers at U of I and Los Alamos in New Mexico.

Or maybe your talent is music. Our church is full of people with varying degrees of this talent! We have singers, bell ringers, guitarists, trumpeters, percussionist, and on and on. Again, while I can sing, I wish I had the talents to play the organ like Michael. But that isn’t how God gifted me.



Woodworking and carpentry are talents that are found here at St. Matthew – like John, Roger, and Glen have. Or cooking! Like Nancy, Helen, and Darlene have.

A talent for organization of events like our Pig & Corn Roast – a couple of people have stepped up to take on the initial planning and the financial aspects of the event. We're still looking for a few more talented and gifted people to take on a couple more leadership roles for this event.

Whatever your talent happens to be, and whatever amount of that talent that God has given you, He wants you to use it to bring Him glory and His love to your neighbor.

That's what Jesus is getting out with His parable in Matthew 25. He prefaced with a warning about the Second Coming and how we should be using our talents when Christ comes back!

IV. Parable of the Talents

Let's take a quick look at the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30.

14 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 24 He 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, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' 26 But 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? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

This parable is about using what God has given you. Not in order to get right with God, or in order to earn heaven or an abundance of wealth here on earth.

You are saved by grace alone through faith alone. Jesus gave up His life on the cross to forgive all your sins. He gives you a new life through His resurrection from the dead. A life to be lived to the fullest, as He says, *“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”* (John 10:10)

God, who gives you salvation as a free gift through Christ Jesus our Lord also gives you the talent(s) you have. Those things that you not only like to do but are also very good at doing.

God has given you these talents to use, not misuse or not use at all.

God wants you to be blessed (another way to put it: happy) and created you in such a way that you are only truly blessed by and through Him *using the talents and gifts He’s given you.*

Encouragement/Exhortation



Sometimes we miss this important truth about being a follower of Jesus.

God wants you to be blessed/happy. He doesn’t want you to be miserable. He doesn’t bring misery into your life at all.

If you find yourself unhappy, miserable, or just down in the dumps, consider two things – the people around you are contributing to this attitude. So do something about that!

And second, you just might not be using the gifts and talents God has given you!

This won’t always be the case – it can be more complicated than that, certainly.

But God does what you to be happy and to find fulfillment in your life.

First and foremost, He makes you His child through salvation in Jesus Christ.

But He also has given you talent(s) and when you use your talent(s) you tend to find happiness and fulfillment.

You will find even more fulfillment when you use your talent(s) as a way to bring the Gospel to others!

That’s why we are making a talent commitment this year. 1. So we can find fulfillment. And 2. So, we can bring the Gospel to other people!

Time Commitment.

Treasure Commitment.

Talent Commitment.

All are responses to the salvation won for us by Jesus Christ.

And it is how we will fulfill our mission and ministry to bring the Gospel to others!

Conclusion



“Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” – Mark Twain

What you enjoy doing is most likely the talent(s) that God has given you.

And God gives you the talent(s) to bring Him glory and His love to your neighbor.