

Losing What You Never Had

Introduction

Paradox

Joyful Fear, Weak to be Strong, Joy in Suffering, Give to receive, Die to Live, Move Forward by Staying Still, Wisdom in Foolishness and Darkness becomes Light

In general, I am an early adopter when it comes to electronics or gadgets, but other things I am very cautious about. Uber...I was a very later user and still not comfortable with it. Another one is the Air BNB....I have not yet learned to comfortably use Airbnb's.. Probably never will.

You will never convince me that I am not being video taped and recorded in every area of the house. I feel sorry for whoever is watching and listening to me...I am pretty boring and not the person they were thinking of when they put up the cameras. Don't try to convince me that they are not there. I am paranoid.

But, If I could trust the owner, there are a lot of great things about Airbnb's....You don't own anything but you get to use it as if it is yours. You have a specified time frame to use the stuff. If the owner has blessed you with something you can use it as if it is your own. BBQ grill,jacuzzi...in addition you get to share all the stuff with your family. You just have to give an account at the end of you time of how you have stewarded the owners resources. If you trash the place and ruin the opportunity you will pay for it. Along the way you can share with everyone how your experience has been....and you get to tell people about the owner. At the end the owner evaluates your stay and gives you a rating. As you show yourself to be a good steward more opportunities are open for you at future stays.

When you think about it...God came up with the first Air BNB. We are essentially living on EarthBNB. We are here for a specified amount of time....we don't own anything but we get to use it... If God adds blessings we get to use them...we get to share everything with our brothers and sisters in Christ...Along the way we get to tell people about God and how great our experiences are...and at the end you have to give an account to Him of how you have stewarded His resources. If you trash the place and ruin the opportunity you will pay for it....At the end God evaluates your stay. If you have been a good steward....He opens future opportunities for you.

Welcome to Earth BNB.

I could not find an Airbnb in the bible, but I found something very similar in one of Jesus' parables. And in that parable, we will find our paradox for the day.

Matthew 25: 14-30

Matthew 25:14–30 (ESV) 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.’ 2

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.’

The parable

Here are three men, all serving the same master. The first two were rewarded with praise, promotion, and joy, while the third one lost everything and experienced loneliness, darkness, and pain.

But what does this have to do with God’s people today? The key to understanding this parable is to understand the context or topic that was being discussed. Do you see the first verse of our parable?

Matthew 25:14–30 (ESV) 14 “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

It will be like.....what will be like? What is "IT"? Well to understand that you must go to the prior verse. This discussion did not start with the parable. It started with what was being discussed before. The parable is an example to highlight a teaching point.

Jesus had been teaching about the coming of the Son of Man. The Return of Christ to judge the world. He told of the fig tree, He told of the rapture, He told of the Ten virgins some of whom failed to have enough oil. They were not prepared for the return of the Bridegroom and were locked out of the wedding. Jesus led into the parable with this passage.

Matthew 25:11–13 (ESV) 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

So in our parable when Jesus says It will be like...He is talking about the sudden unexpected return of Christ at any moment.

When Jesus returns, God's people, alive on earth or buried in the earth, will be taken to heaven

1 Corinthians 15:51–53, 58 (ESV) 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (ESV) 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

On that day, we will all stand before Him in Judgment and give an account of our works....Just like the men in our parable when the Master Returns.

Romans 14:10–12 (ESV) 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (ESV) 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Those who have been faithful will receive rewards; the rest will be saved “yet as through fire”

1 Corinthians 3:12–15 (ESV) 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Each believer’s faithfulness and service today will determine the rewards and assignments he or she will receive at the judgment seat of Christ. Jesus gives us this parable to teach us and to help us become prepared for our Lord’s return and our appearing at His judgment seat. That is what this parable is about.

Ability Leads to Opportunity

Today we use the word “talent” to describe the skills and abilities people are born with, but in New Testament times, a talent was a measure of money. It was equivalent to what the average day laborer could earn in one year.

In our parable, the master gave out talents to each person based on their ability.

Matthew 25:14–30 (ESV) 15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

The Master knew each of these men and gave to them what they could handle based on their ability. If you give someone more than they are able to manage, they will fail. What determined how much they could handle was their ability. Their prior ability to manage resources.

The master distributed the talents according to each servant’s ability, so it was a fair assignment. The talents represent God-given opportunities to use one’s abilities, and if the servant with one talent had earned another talent, he would have received the same reward as the other two servants.

It is not our fault if we lack the abilities that others possess. At our conception in the womb, our abilities were given to us and at our conversion we received our spiritual gifts. The combination of our God given abilities at birth and spiritual gifts at our second birth together help to define our ability. Since God gives both, we are not responsible for how much ability or potential that we have been given, but rather that we make the most of what we Do have.

My siblings are incredibly gifted in music. I think they came out of the womb playing Air instruments. When it comes to music they were given a thousand talents and I was given none.

But change the context to a golf course and things would quickly reverse. This is so important to understand. God will not hold me accountable for my incredible lack of musical talent. He will not hold my sister responsible for being unable to hit a 5 iron.

It is the same with the Spiritual gifts. Stop trying to be someone else or be jealous that they have a talent that you don't have. Instead, thank God for all that He has given to you and you do you. Make the most of what God has given to you. Play the cards you have been given.

You and I must know our personal abilities and spiritual gifts, thank the Lord for them, and use them for doing His will and glorifying His name.

The third servant made the mistake of thinking that he was not important because he had only one talent and therefore very little ability. What can you do with so little?

However, if he had invested that one talent and earned another one, he would have received his fair reward. The master knew that this servant was a wicked, lazy man (v. 26), yet he graciously gave him an opportunity to earn a promotion.

"The real reward," wrote George Morrison, "is not the bigger task. It is the capacity to do the bigger task." Christians who faithfully serve the Lord with a few things will grow in strength so that they can be rewarded with greater opportunities

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.'

Each time we are faithful with what God has given us, He gives us more to manage and thus increases our capacity.

Young Joseph in prison was a faithful servant who ended up second ruler in Egypt. David began as a shepherd boy and ultimately become Israel's greatest king. Ruth was a poor widow and an alien who loved and cared for her mother-in-law and married one of the wealthiest men in Bethlehem. She became an ancestor in the line of Jesus. Joshua began as Moses' servant and became his successor and the conqueror of the Promised Land.

Our Father does not want us to be lazy custodians, carefully protecting what He entrusts to us. He wants us to be faithful servants, workers, and investors who obey His will, grow strong, and become capable of doing bigger and better things

Cultivate the abilities and gifts you have been given, put them to work for the glory of the Lord, and He will develop you—and finally reward you.

Responsibility Involves Relationship

Over the years, I have held many different kinds of jobs and roles. I have had and been the boss, the grand boss and the great grand boss. . I soon learned how they related to the “big boss” and what was expected of them and of me, and I did my best to make my boss look good. An employee who creates problems for his or her boss may end up searching for another job.

It’s obvious that the third servant in our Lord’s parable did not have a happy relationship with his master or his job. The servant’s heart was not in his work or controlled by love for his master. He saw the master as a demanding man who took all the credit for the work that other people performed

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.’

The servant worked only when the master was watching—Paul called this “eyeservice”—and he probably felt humiliated for receiving only one talent. But his master was treating him fairly, for the servant did not have much ability or a great desire to work. His master was actually being very kind to him.

Our personal relationship to our Lord is the key to a faithful and fruitful Christian life. He is the vine and we are the branches, and we must draw our strength from Him. Our Lord makes it very clear in John 15:5 that without Him we can do nothing.

No matter how much we have been trained or how experienced we may be in service, it is the blessing of God that makes our work fruitful. Unless we fellowship with Him daily in the word of God and prayer (Acts 6:4), we cannot know His will and do it for His glory

The third servant despised his master and cheated him out of the service owed to him. Instead of being rewarded, the servant was rebuked and rejected. But notice that everything flowed out of their relationship. The Master knew this man did not have a lot of ability so he gave him one talent to see if he could manage it. The servant despised the master and essentially called him a thief. You reap what you don't sow...in other words you take from others.

Because their relationship was strained the work did not get accomplished. If you and I are to serve the Lord with all that we have been given, it must be based in a healthy growing relationship. One that comes from abiding and seeking nourishment from the vine.

One of the keys to having a long and productive career is to invest in the relationship with your boss. If that relationship is nourishing and supportive in both directions, then the potential of their actions is incredible.

God not only gave us abilities and Spiritual gifts, He gave us something more incredible...a relationship with Him in order to best use these gifts. Our potential for Christ...our potential for the kingdom...is wholly dependent upon the strength of our foundational relationship with

Christ. What we say on our judgment day will not be based on the abilities and gifts given to us but rather the depth and development of our relationship with the gift giver.

Our abilities lead to opportunities....Responsibility of what we do with those opportunities depends upon the strength of our relationship....And that leads us to our next key point...

Stewardship Is Not Ownership

Not only did the third servant have the wrong attitude toward his master, but he also had a wrong attitude toward the talent the master had given him. He thought it was his and that he could do with it whatever he pleased. He was given the talent to invest not possess.

But we must remember that everything we possess—from our mind, body, and will to our home and its furnishings, our financial resources, and even our daily schedule—all comes from the Lord and belongs to the Lord. We are stewards and must use what the Lord gives us to serve and honor Him. We have actually never owned anything in our lifetime except the responsibility for our sins.

Psalm 24:1–2 (ESV) 1 The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, 2 for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

Colossians 1:16–17 (ESV) 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

It is all His...none of it has ever been yours or mine. While we never owned it, we are stewards of what God has given to us...and so Paul reminded us.

1 Corinthians 4:2 (ESV) 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

The servant thought the talent was his so he buried it to protect it until the master claimed it, but he ended up giving it to the servant with the ten talents!

Matthew 25:28–29 (ESV) 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.

The Phillips Translation reads, "Even his nothing will be taken away." There is a paradox for you! The World tells us that we are to work hard, get our share...invest in ourselves...accumulate stuff for our needs and advancement...that you are defined and given status based on what you own...yet God tells us that you never owned anything....All that you have has been given or not given to you by God. God teaches us that we lose what we never had....our paradox. Not just that we lose it, but on judgment day it will be taken from us. Not our salvation, our rewards.

Several people in the Bible thought they had something but really had nothing, and their “nothing” was taken from them. Consider King Herod He thought he owned the world and look what happened....

Acts 12:21–23 (ESV) 21 On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. 22 And the people were shouting, “The voice of a god, and not of a man!” 23 Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.

Stewardship is not ownership

The rich young ruler was owned by his possessions and must give them all away

Mark 10:21–22 (ESV) 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Stewardship is not ownership

Haman thought he had arrived....His UHaul was overflowing...

Esther 5:11 (ESV) 11 And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king.

Soon those riches were given to others as Haman hung from the Gallows.

Stewardship is not ownership

Paul perhaps summed it up for us.

Galatians 6:3–5 (ESV) 3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. 5 For each will have to bear his own load.

And then Paul spoke of Jesus...

2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV) 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Faith Conquers Fear and Leads to Obedience and Blessing

Because the unprofitable servant thought his master was a hard man to work for, he was controlled by fear and not faith. He may have thought, "If I invest this money, suppose my investment fails or my talent is stolen?"

Matthew 25:25 (ESV) 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'

Instead of being lazy on the job, if this careless servant had worked hard with the two other servants, he would have learned how to be successful. But now it was too late. What he wanted was protection, so he hid his single talent in the ground. He was afraid of his master and afraid of failure, yet he did everything he could to experience both

Instead of admitting his own faults and changing his ways, the unprofitable servant blamed his master. It has well been said that the person who is good at excuses is rarely good at anything else.

Of itself, fear is not necessarily an enemy. Children must be taught to fear fire, heights, electric currents, poisons, sharp instruments, and the friendship of strangers. But fear that hides the face of God or turns us from prayer and the Scriptures is definitely an enemy. Fear paralyzes, but faith energizes.

Safety is not the absence of danger but rather the presence of God. The safest place in the world is in the will of God, for when we are in His will, we have no reason to be afraid. Like some people in the word of God, we may be crossing the Red Sea, or in a storm on the sea, or about to be thrown into a deadly fiery furnace. But if we are motivated by a love for our Master and are obedient to His will, we are safe and the Lord will see us through

Isaiah 12:2 (ESV) 2 "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation."

Psalms 27:1 (ESV) 1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalms 34:4 (ESV) 4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV) 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Closing

So how do we apply what we are learning today? How do we make the most of our Earth BNB experience?

Air BNB's come in all varieties....Some are sketchy, some are adequate, some are nice, some are super luxurious and some are way over the top. Many of them most of us cannot afford.

In any event, God has placed us in the Airbnb that He has chosen for us. It doesn't matter if you are in a mansion or a very basic home, what matters is what you do with what you have been given.

We see ourselves in this parable. Are you making the most of what God has provided for you and use it to advance the gospel, or are you trying to get more for yourself? Have you mistaken stewardship for ownership? Have you been poor stewards of what God has given to you and complaining that He doesn't give you more? Which of these three stewards are you? When it comes to God's Earth BNB are you an early adopter? Late Adopter? or not at all? It really does depend upon how much faith you have in the One who owns all things.

Jesus taught that to whom much is given much is expected. Are you using your time here on Earth BNB to serve others or serve yourself. When Jesus returns...what will your time of accounting look like? We can all begin preparing today to utilize whatever God has given us for His purposes rather than our own. We don't own anything and can't take any of it with us...so lets make sure we make wise investments in the Kingdom while we are here. Let's get ready to hear an anccount from our Master. Let's live looking forward to hearing these words...

Matthew 25:23 (ESV) 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.'

One day we leave Earth BNB...and enter into the joy of our Master...Praise God...Let's Pray.