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ACT OR REACT

Matthew 25:14-30

1. God Trusts Us

2. God Tests Us

3. God Treasures Us

God desires that we be good and faithful.

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Act or React

Matthew 25:14-30

Intro:

Today's sermon title comes from a book I read this past year: Act or React. It was written by the founder and president of Upward Sports – Caz McCaslin. He says that reacting is more inward focused on ourselves and how things and people effect us. Acting focuses on other people and what we do for them. Our church does a lot for others, locally and globally. Sometimes reacting causes us to act or not act. What does acting and reacting have to do with serving others? To help us, let's read from Matthew 25:14-30, nlt. Will you stand with me, in honor of God's Word, as we read the words of Jesus:

Parable of the Three Servants- NLT

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.

“The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money.

“After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’

“The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!’

“The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.’

“The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!’

“Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.’

“But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’

“Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” (Matthew 25:14-30, nlt)

This parable has a couple different names depending on what Bible version you are reading. If your Bible calls this the parable of the talents, that is because a Talent was a measure of weight – like a pound or kilogram. Each servant was given a different amount of money to see what they would do with it. The first two made money, we don’t know what they actually did to double their investment, but they did something, they acted.

One commentary I read, said that Jesus is describing Himself as the man going away, meaning he is anticipating His coming ascension into heaven. The man returning from His trip is representing Jesus someday coming back to earth. When the man returns from his trip, he expects them to give an account over the time frame of what they had done with what they were given. Which means when Jesus returns, He expects us to have made the most of all the things He had left in our care.

Jesus uses this parable (like many other parables and other teachings of His) to give us an idea of what the Kingdom of Heaven looks like. The end result of following Jesus is going to heaven. But God has plans for us until our time is up. We should live in such a way that others see heaven in us. Which means if we want to be the Church and be “on earth as in heaven” then we need to learn from the first two servants. These servants were trusted by their master with lots of money. God has given us so much, and he trusts that we will use it to bring glory to His name and in the process, bettering ourselves and others.

Of all they have...

1. God ***TRUSTS Us*** with it.

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”
(Luke 16:10, niv)

You might argue that you don't have much or that God doesn't trust you with as much as someone else. If you compare yourself with someone else, you might be right. In case you are wondering, God has yet to trust me with a million dollars.

In the same way, these servants were not equal in what they were given, and neither is God equal with what he gives all of us. "We are not equal in talent, but can be equal in effort." I learned this in college when I went to my first baseball practice.

There were guys on our team that could throw 95 mph; other guys that could hit the ball 400 feet even though they never lifted weights or ate their vegetables. We weren't equal in talent on our team, but could be equal in effort.

What you have in life, God has given you: your money, your family, the skills and abilities you have, all given to you by God. Think about your family for a minute.

God loves your children, your husband/wife, your mother/father more than you. Sometimes it's tough to picture something we love so much, still being loved more by someone else. It's true though, because we are all His children. He trusts you to care for the ones in your life. Some day you get to stand before Him and show Him what you did with what he entrusted to you.

God trusts you with what is His, which is all that you have. What are you doing with it?

Twelve years ago, Pastor Luis of Wapato, who was on staff here and will be here in a few weeks to speak, had an idea along with a few other leaders in our church about taking the grass area outside that God had trusted our church with and turning it into a soccer league that teaches kids about Jesus, Upward Soccer. There were a little over 100 kids that first year. The average Upward Soccer league in the USA is 130 kids. Last year we had 434 kids in our soccer league; 434 kids and their families that God trusted us with teaching about soccer and sharing the transforming power of a life following Jesus. Last year we were the 5th largest Upward Soccer league in the USA. I could give you a list of reasons why I should not be trusted with anything soccer related, but here we are. 90% of you in this room probably have more talent in soccer than I do. We are not created equal in talent, or things God asks of us, but we can be equal in effort with what we are given. As long as our church is doing Upward Soccer, and as long as I am part of, we are going to do it as best we can. So that each family that steps onto our property knows our church values them and wants to be a blessing to them. Through kicking a ball, these kids are going to learn about Jesus and His love for them. One of the best things is how we are seeing Upward kids connect to other areas in the church. We are seeing these kids come back for Backpack to School, SNOT, and Science Camp, and Sunday mornings, and Homework Club, and Wednesday Night Dinner, and Breakfast with Santa, and Caravan. You can learn more about getting involved with Upward Soccer at the Ministry Center after church; it is one of the many ways our church uses what God has trusted us with.

What we do with what God has trusted us with, is one way...

2. God *Tests Us*.

I used to think that the servant who buried the money wasn't THAT bad, because at least it wasn't stolen or lost. Now that I am older and understand how inflation works, I know that because he did nothing with it, he actually did lose some of it. Ten dollars today won't buy you as much as ten dollars would buy ten years ago. The value of the money most likely went down over time. If the goal of the master was to not lose his money, he would have put it in the bank himself, or took it with him, or he could have buried it himself somewhere. The test was being given a gift and seeing how that gift would be used for bigger and better things. The first two servants "acted" on what they were given. The third servant failed that test. Not because he wasn't smart enough or talented enough to find a way to earn more money but because he was lazy and afraid. He was unwilling to act on what he had been given, even if it meant taking a risk. How often does fear cause us to react towards someone or something in a negative way? How many times does fear keep us from acting on an idea that God can use us to do something amazing?

You know the best way to lose an ability God gives us? Don't use it. Instead, what are you good at and how can you use your talent to benefit someone else?

Paul says in Ephesians 5:15-17

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.
(Ephesians 5:15-17)

We are all given opportunities from God, some bigger or smaller but all are given opportunities. All three men were given an opportunity to make money. They had to make some decisions, but only two of them made the most of their opportunity. The third, reacted thoughtlessly, and didn't make good choices and act with what he had. He lived in fear, afraid of messing up with what little he had been given in the first place. The good news is in the Kingdom of Heaven, there is no room for fear. God doesn't want us living in fear of what might happen if we take a chance or try something new, or do something that we aren't sure what will happen.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7)

If the servants wanted advice or some help in what to do with the money, the parable doesn't give us that detail. It should be comforting for us, to know that if we have questions about what to do with what God has trusted us with, we can have the answers. It's like the teacher in school giving us an open book test. But you have to open the book. The Holy Spirit, God's Word and Godly counsel will help us to not live in fear, but instead to glorify God with what He has given us and the opportunities we face.

God trusts us with what is His, He tests us to use it wisely, all because...

3. God Treasures Us.

We are God's children, all of us. Even the people you don't like. Because of God's love and because He treasures us, He rewards us and blesses us when we follow His direction.

The first two servants were rewarded, but not because of how much money they made. Not because they were capable, or clever. They were rewarded for doing two things anyone can do: **being good and faithful**. Regardless of how much or little God has given you (or how much or little you "think" God has given you), God wants all of us to be good and faithful with what we have.

The kids in our church know they are treasured by all of you. Last week we reopened the grade school area known as the Big City. I began that morning by



telling them how many adults gave their time to help make this room new – new carpet, tables, lighting, screen for worship, other decorations. Because leaders in our church treasure children, budget money was approved to do some of these changes; some people gave extra money specifically for this project because they treasure the children of our church. Later in Kids Church that day we were getting ready to pray and kids were voicing the things and people they wanted prayer for – Grandma, Dog, Grandma's Dog. One little girl raised her hand, and looking around, she said, "We should thank God and pray for all the people who helped give us all of this." So we did. As if last week wasn't amazing enough, at the end of service, in the middle of our check out time when people were coming in to see the new work done, Sielo, came up to me, brought her dad, and said, "I want to follow Jesus." So this is us praying for God's forgiveness and for her new life in Christ.

Using what God has trusted to us, takes action. Following Jesus takes action. Letting someone know that they are treasured, takes action.

Some people don't know what it's like to feel valued or treasured. But when they are in our church, around us, they should know it, they will know it. Because as a church, we strive to **be good and faithful** with what God has given us. As we are good and faithful with what God trusts to us, we are teaching others to be good and faithful with what God trusts to them.



What do you treasure? Is it the same as what God trusts you with? At the end of your test, will He tell you, "Well done my good and faithful servant"? Take action and find out.

Pray