

## Different: The Fruit of the Spirit

### The Fruit of Faithfulness

#### Scripture:

Read: Matthew 25:14-30

#### Introduction:

Today's sermon brings us to the "fruit of faithfulness." When you think of faithfulness what comes to mind? I think of someone who has been reliable, dependable, and loyal over a long period of time. These are individuals we enjoy being around. We feel safe with them. We don't worry about them stabbing us in the back because they have been faithful toward us. We are free to be ourselves.

When you see an older couple holding hands as they walk down the street, what comes to mind? Every time I have asked this question, I get responses like: "Aw, that's so sweet." Or "That is amazing, they still love each other after all these years." That is a beautiful picture of faithfulness.

The ultimate picture of faithfulness is God. Here are a few passages that highlight God's faithfulness:

Ps 33:4: For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

Psalms 36:5: Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

1 Cor. 1:9: God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

As God's children, God wants to develop faithfulness in our lives. But how do we grow in faithfulness? The parable in today's passage gives us a few clues.

As Pastor Paul points out, the central point of this passage is: **faithful living is shaped by how you view yourself and how you view God.**

Let's explore these ideas.

#### Discuss:

1. As you reflect on the sermon, what stood out to you?

#### **Faithful living is shaped by how you view yourself.**

2. This parable teaches us that we must view ourselves as God's stewards. Randy Alcorn states:

*Stewardship isn't a subcategory of the Christian life.*

*Stewardship is the Christian life. After all, what is stewardship except that God has entrusted to us life, time, talents, money, possessions, family, and his grace?*

When you think of yourself, do you see yourself as God's steward? Why or why not?

3. William Taylor states: *"Concerning the man with one talent...it is not alleged that he wasted his master's goods; he simply neglected his opportunities. He was not notoriously wicked, but left undone what he had ability to do. Life is to be made productive. Many are content to do nothing because they cannot do some great thing."*

We are called to be God's faithful stewards. What makes it difficult for us to be faithful stewards? How can we invest our resources (our life, time, talents, money, possessions, family, and his grace) for God's kingdom?

#### **Faithful living is shaped by how we view God.**

4. How do you view God? Do you view God as a loving, compassionate, and faithful father whom you love to serve? Or like the slave who didn't invest his talent, do you fear God and his judgment? How might your view of God impact the way you steward your resources?

#### **Apply**

Being faithful to God is to follow his desire for humility, mercy and justice. Helen Keller once said: *I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.*

How might God be calling you to faithfully serve him with your resources and with an attitude of humility, mercy and justice?