

MESSAGE – “Assuring a Return”

November 13, 2020

Rev. Lisa Kruse-Safford with Mr. Kevin Williams

Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴ “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,^[a] each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹ “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

²¹ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²² “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

²³ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²⁴ “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

²⁶ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

²⁸ “So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

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It doesn't take a financial genius to know that in most cases, investing money is going to be to your advantage instead of stuffing your mattress with cash. Now we can most likely get into a long discussion about what kind of investment is going to be most beneficial. Regardless of that, the basic principle of "putting your money to work" as the scripture puts it...indicates that at the end of the day, when this tactic is used, there is an expansion of resources. In economic terms – the concept of a "money multiplier" is used to talk about this.

However, I like to think that this principle is not only true for money. Its true for how we live life. It's true for how we do faith.

That keeping it all to ourselves is really not helpful, productive nor healthy.

Even if we're afraid

Even if we're uncertain

Jesus certainly makes it clear in this story that God has made an investment in each one of us

And it's up to us to decide what to do with our resources, our gifts, our talents, our time.

We need to decide what to do with the forgiveness that's been given to us;

What to do with the kingdom that has been planted in us;

What to do with the faith that has taken root in us...

Do we keep it to ourselves

Do we invest it?

....and Jesus's story should help us answer that: God expects a return on that investment. An expansion. A growth.

This is exactly what happens when we give to church to make ministry happen

And what happens when we give through church with faith promise.

And today church member, Kevin Williams, is here with us to share more about our biggest Faith Promise project: Summon2Serve

- What started Summon2Serve....what was the initial vision and purpose and how have we seen that evolve?
- Why is this important for us to do as a faith community (how does this impact the size and scope of what we accomplish)?

- People know the big day of packing – what are the background things that Summon2Serve also accomplishes?
- Tell us about Kids Around the World – the organization we work with to pack all those meals.
- We pack the food.....we know that. Can you tell us more about where all those big bags of grain and supplies come from
- And after we pack the food...what happens to it all next?
  - What does food distribution look like
  - How do people receive that food? Is it through partner agencies?
  - Does Kids Around the World have to overcome obstacles in order to get that food delivered?
- How can we stay connected to the spirit of Summon2Serve in between Augusts?
- How do you see “summon2serve” accomplishing what Jesus taught in this parable?

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Today we invite you to make a pledge to invest.

Today we’re not referring to our church budget pledge, though that is important..

This is our pledge to invest through Faith Promise.

You may have found a pledge card in the mail....but if you’re not on the mailing list or if you want to use the online pledge card on our First Church website.

And once, prayerfully consider your pledge as you pray: *Lord, how much would you provide through me that you would not provide to me if I am committed to pass it along through the local church for your mission?*

Because passing it along assures a return:

It expands the kingdom in this world

And it expands the faith inside each one of us.