

THE COMPARISON TRAP

SERMON NOTES

Week 3 March 9, 2025

"Two Bags Full" (Parable of the Talents)

Matthew 25:14–30; Proverbs 14:30;
James 3:16; Job 5:2

I. Introduction/Review

- A. There is no _____ in comparison.
- B. All of us are looking to someone or to something to tell us if we're _____.
- C. You take your _____ about you from the one who made you, loves you and redeems you.

II. The Parable of the Talents

- A. _____ were a way of helping people understand the way God views the world and his will for us.
- B. The Master entrusted them to manage his money according to their _____ set.
- C. What you have is less important than what you _____ with what you have.

III. Freedom from the Comparison Trap

- A. You are _____, there is no one exactly like you.
- B. _____ we have is a result of God's love and grace.
- C. Behind your _____ is the notion that God short-changed you.
- D. There are two ideas that can give us _____ from the comparison trap:
 - 1. You take your cue about you from the one who made you, loves you and redeems you.
 - 2. You celebrate what God has given others, but you leverage what God has given you.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *March 10 - 15, 2025*

INTRODUCTION

Comparison is being caught in the trap of constantly asking, “Does she have more than me?” “Are they better off?” “Is he smarter? Funnier? Richer?” We preoccupy ourselves with these questions, but God has a better plan. The parable of the talents illustrates the question God would have us ask - a question that will free us from the comparison trap once and for all.

Monday: Matthew 25:14-30

Think about the items in your life—career, health, money, talent, family, skills, etc. How have they shaped you? Which of the items do you most value? Why? Which of the items is the least satisfying to you? What is the one item that is unique to you, the thing that makes you different from everyone else? What is one thing you can do this week to begin to decide what you’re going to do with what God has entrusted to you?

Tuesday: Luke 19:12-27

This passage is Luke’s version of the Parable of the Talents – the Parable of the Pounds (or Minas). A mina, or pound, was literally about one pound of silver. It was worth about 100 days’ wages or \$8,000. What details of this parable are different from, and which are the same as, the Parable of the Talents (our passage from yesterday - Matthew 25:14-30)? What are the Minas or talents that God has given you? How are you using these to accomplish what would please the King? Notice the reward of good stewardship – these were entrusted with greater responsibility when the King returned. Could this tell us anything about heaven?

Wednesday: Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:35-40

Today we look at two parables that pick up on a similar theme to the parables of the talents and the minas. Each of the parables in this category, including the talents and minas, are parables of judgment. How might we be like the faithful and wise servant? Like the wicked and lazy servant? What is the message of the parable from the gospel of Luke?

Thursday: Ephesians 2:4-10

How does the thought that we were “created in Christ Jesus to do good things” spark your imagination? What are one or two good things you didn’t used to practice, but now do as a follower of Christ? What is your life’s purpose? Does your answer change if the question is what is your life’s purpose as a Christian? Is our life and the way we live it steered by our conscious thoughts, or by some inner, unheard voice? What value might lie in spending some time thinking intentionally about your purpose (or rather, God’s purpose for you) in life?

Friday: Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23

How is this parable like the parables of the talents and the minas? In this parable, human beings are represented by the different kinds of soils. What does the soil with weeds and thistles represent? Which kind of soil is your heart? What would it mean to produce a harvest 30, 60 or 100 times what was planted? What does this tell us about God’s expectations of us?

MOVING FORWARD

We can’t run someone else’s race. When we compare ourselves to other people, we’re telling God that our choices are his fault... that if he would entrust us with what someone else has we would behave differently. We need to take a breath, refocus on what God has given us, and run our own races. Celebrate what God has given others and leverage what God has given you.

*Answers to the sermon notes: IA) win, B) okay, C) cue. IIA) Parables, B) skill, C) do.
IIIA) unique, B) everything, C) envy, D) freedom.*