

Invitation to Greatness: Becoming a Good and Faithful Servant (Matthew 25)

This is the invitation that God gives to the entire human race: to be great in His sight.

GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO BE GREAT IN HIS KINGDOM

Roman numeral I. In Matthew 5:19, the Lord is speaking in the Sermon on the Mount and says: “Whoever therefore breaks”—consistently—“one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Paragraph A. God invites everyone to be great in His kingdom. He says that anybody who wants this can have it. This is a core teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, which is the constitution of the kingdom of God. So here we have one of the foundational pillars of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is releasing a call to the human race: for whoever will say yes to Him in the grace of God. The reason that I am making this point is that for many believers, this is a brand new idea; for others, it is an offensive idea that the Lord would call us to be great in His sight. Yet, it is a strong biblical truth and reality in the Scriptures. We cannot repent of the desire for greatness because God Himself is great, and He designed our spirits with this longing to be great.

REPENT FOR FAILING TO SEEK TO BE GREAT, OR SEEKING IT IN A WRONG WAY

You will never repent for the desire for greatness, but we must repent for seeking it in a wrong way, in the wrong spirit, or in a wrong time frame. We must also repent if we neglect to seek to be great in the way Jesus exhorted us to. Many people are in error, and they walk in the flesh because they seek greatness in a non-biblical way and in a non-biblical time frame. But that is not the same thing as the desire for greatness itself because that is a core part of how God designed your spirit. Again, I will say that the great God created you with the longing to be great, and that is why you will never get rid of it. Besides repenting for seeking it, or attaining it in a wrong way, we also need to repent for neglecting to seek greatness.

Some believers have never used this language, but it is like the issue of greatness: some have made the mistake and have decided that they do not really need it. When Jesus issued this mandate to be great, they just do not know why He did that. They are in it just for Him. They realize that Jesus is trying to help motivate them, but here He is giving them a secondary motivation to be great in His kingdom. Obviously, that is not clear biblical thinking, but a lot of people have this thinking.

Jesus taught on the invitation to be great. If you took all of the other Bible teachers in the Scriptures, added them together, and combined all their exhortations on this subject, Jesus spoke more than all the others put together. Jesus understood something about this reality that is very foundational to walking out the Sermon on the Mount. I have found that over the years, when I have this truth, this pursuit, and this vision to be great before God (and not men) clear in my spirit, I find that I can walk out the Sermon on the Mount more consistently with this paradigm in my life. It is not an accident that this paradigm of life is central to the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus talks about being rewarded before God the Father five or six times and receiving treasures in heaven. He hits it over and over throughout the Sermon on the Mount because it is important.

MY LIFE GOAL IS TO BE GREAT IN GOD’S SIGHT

This is something I began to get a vision for many years ago, though I always need to get a bigger and clearer vision of it. He touched my heart with it a long time ago, and I have said for twenty-five years or so that unashamedly, my life goal is to be great in God’s sight. I have no shame, embarrassment, and no hesitation to aim for that. It is called the wisdom of God. When it connects with your spirit, you will look at time, money, opportunity, opposition, and temptation very differently than when you establish this vision in your own life. The point I am making here is this: I have found that having the lens of my life to be great in God’s sight enables me to pursue the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle with far greater consistency.

Most believers I know do not have a vision to be great. That is not on their agenda. Their vision is to get honor and comfort in this life; they hope God smiles on the process. They want more honor and comfort in this life, which equates to time, money, and affirmation from people now. Beloved, that is a trap that will get you into all kinds of trouble. Not very many people actually define that as what they are all about, but if you look at the schedule, the way they spend money, you listen to the words they speak, the way they do entertainment, and the friends they have, it is clear that the primary ambition in life is honor and comfort in this life. I am talking about born-again believers in this life live simply for that; but if you shift that, you can go after something transcendent. You go after this real vision and then, the Sermon on the Mount makes much more sense. It seems much more doable through that paradigm. So I am encouraging you: if you have read the Sermon on the Mount, and think that this is a tough lifestyle, maybe the thing that you are missing is this overall paradigm of God’s calling on your life to be great in His sight. If you connect with this paradigm, it will change how you process your journey with the Lord.

A RANGE OF DEGREES OF GLORY AND GREATNESS IN GOD’S KINGDOM

Paragraph B. Jesus talked about the least and the greatest in Matthew 5:19. He said the people who obey the least of God’s commandments will be called great, but some people will be called least. There is a whole array from those who are called least to those who are called great. I estimate that there will be approximately 2 to 3 billion believers from all of history in the kingdom of God at the time of the second coming and the great harvest at the end of the age. There are going to be many different measures of greatness and glory among those two to three billion believers. There are those who are called the least at one extreme to those who are called the greatest; God and others call them this into this reality.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:41-42

1 Corinthians 15:41-42: “There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.”

This is a key teaching of Paul the apostle that as one star differs from another star in glory, so the resurrection of the dead will be. Each individual person will differ from another person in glory. I just found out today about this *Pistol* star has a mass about 100-150 times that of the Sun and is about 10 million times brighter. It is ten million times brighter! The range of difference of brightness of the stars is vast. There are some that are ten million times greater in glory than other stars. The Scripture says that just as the stars differ, each having a great and vast range of glory; so also will people differ in their resurrected bodies in their assignment and proximity to the Lord. We will differ in how we carry responsibility in the age to come in terms of those things that are dear to God’s heart and the things that He entrusts to them. He will trust us with things that He wants to be done under His leadership.

IRRELEVANT TO THE SIZE OF OUR MINISTRY

God invites us to greatness without regard to our outward achievements, or the size of our ministry impact. That is good news. God does not say, “I want you to be great,” and then He looks at how much you have achieved in life, or how many people are following your ministry. Your greatness in the age to come is not based on the impact of your ministry. Your greatness in the age to come is based on the development of your inner man in meekness, love, and the revelation of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. You can have people in this age who are very prominent and have accomplished many great things in business, ministry, inventions, and all kinds of awards and attainments; but the Scripture makes it clear that many who are great in this age will be least in the age to come. Romans 14:17: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

GREATNESS IS BASED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR INNER MAN

Paragraph C. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-20: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” Jesus exhorts us that obedience in the least and small areas of life will develop faithful character, a secret place, and a hidden life with God. If we will obey the Lord in the small areas of our life, not just the real big dramatic issues of our life, but the small private issues of our thought life, our speech, what we do with our eyes, what we do with our time, the Lord encourages us that, “If you will do these things and obey Me in these small areas and teach others to obey Me, you will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

You do not have to have a teaching ministry to do that. Most of the teaching that goes on in the Body of Christ is not done in a pulpit. By far, the majority of the teaching that goes on in the Body of Christ is done in homes between parents and their children, or small settings of two or three people. We call it fellowship, being together, or talking with one another; most of the teaching in the entire kingdom of God is done in that context.

There are those people who talk people out of zealous obedience. They talk them out of it and minimize it, so Jesus warns us that, “I assure you they will be called least in the kingdom if they use their influence on people to minimize obedience and zeal for the Lord.” There are others of you who are called to this; we are not talking about famous preachers. We are talking about people who just talk one on one with people.

If you do these commandments in these small private areas of your life, and you encourage others to walk in zealous obedience, the Lord promises us that He will remember this. We will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. We are not as interested in what people say about us, as we are interested in what the Lord says about us. But I tell you: if the Lord calls you great, you can be assured that there will be a whole lot of other folks who see the wisdom of that decree of the Lord over your life, and they will agree with the Lord.

OBEYING GOD THROUGH OUR THOUGHTS AND WORDS

Paragraph D. Many believers simply disregard obeying God in the lesser areas, the private areas, the seemingly smaller areas of their life like our thoughts and words. Over twenty-five times in the Old Testament, God urged Israel to be careful to obey all of His commandments

Deuteronomy 12:32: “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.” People do not want to disobey God in the big areas of life like robbing a bank, murdering anybody, or doing some scandalous expressions of injustice and crime; they want to obey the Lord in the really big and

weighty areas of life like justice, and righteousness. But it is in the private, small, internal areas of their life that they disregard. They do not want to wrestle through these issues. I remember when I was twenty years old—I am sure many of you have the same dilemma, as I have had it much more since then—I wanted to obey God, but I could not figure out what to do.

Some guy said to do it one way, and the other guy said to do it this way. I asked, “God, I want to obey You. My desire to obey is not the problem. But, I cannot figure out what is right! One guy said to go here, and another guy said to go there. One guy said go harder, and another guy said go softer. What do I do?” When I was twenty years old, I was very zealous for the Lord, but I could not figure it out. It was a bigger problem trying to sort it out than it was to actually obey it once I sorted it out. How many can relate to that?

I just said, “I cannot figure it out! Do I give the money, keep the money, invest the money, ignore the money, take the money, or sow the money? What do I do? I will do anything God! I am just so confused about what to do!” I did not find obedience the hard part; I found wrestling to get clarity the hard part. I am a little bit older, and I find I have a lot more clarity. But now, to follow through precisely with the deeper issues of my inner man seems like a bigger challenge than the lack of clarity. However, for years, my greatest challenge was to have clarity. Here is the point I want to tell you: it is worth the hassle to work through the issues. I had many days of anguish to sort out—what to do with time, money, feelings, desires, greatness, lack of greatness, humility, or lack of humility. What is humility? What is being bold and assertive? I could not sort out most of that, but the Lord honors the process if you have been wrestling through that.

A DEEP AND FAITHFUL SECRET LIFE IN GOD COMES FROM SMALL STEPS OF OBEDIENCE
He says in Matthew 5:19—the verse that we started with—“Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” If you will do these things in the least areas of your life, how much more will you do these things in the great areas? He was not saying small things versus great areas; He meant both. If you will do it, even in the private areas and even in the small areas that nobody sees, if you will do it and talk others into obeying God at that level, you will be an advocate and an ambassador. You call others to obey at that level that reaches time, money, thoughts, words, and what you do with your eyes.

The Lord says, “If you will do that, I will remember it. I will reward you, and I will call you great when we meet face to face.” Beloved, you want to run with that verse. This is your ticket. This is it in one sentence. The Sermon on the Mount is what you want to run with. You want to say, “I am taking this to the most intimate personal level of my private inner life—the part that nobody sees. I am going to obey it, and I am going to talk as many people into this as I can.” There is a spiritual culture in our nation today, and it is a presentation of the grace of God that is just filled with deception.

It is a presentation of grace that makes us comfortable in compromise and spiritual lethargy. We get fooled into thinking that if we are really into grace, we can live spiritually lazy, selfish lives with no depth in God; we think that we can live with no sacrifice, and somehow grace makes up for it all. We think that we will just end up being godly, and everything will be all right. That is a deception. Grace covers us when we fail, and then inspires us to get back us, and we must press in again.

TRUE BIBLICAL GRACE VERSUS FALSE GRACE

Grace does not tell us to let go and quit pursuing God. Grace says, “When you blow it, I will give you a brand new beginning. I will give you the energizing and wisdom on how to press forward.” Grace teaches you the way to do this thing and empowers you to do it. It does not somehow dismiss zealous, radical Christianity, but rather it calls us to it. There are many people who are teaching the Body of Christ in a one-on-one setting. Unfortunately, many who teach in pulpits and public ministries ignore the small areas of their life.

They say, “Do not worry about that brother; it is just legalism.”

I would be terrified to do that. It is as if Jesus said, “I tell you assuredly that they will be least in the kingdom of heaven when I meet them face to face.” Jesus is really serious about His commandments. Not everybody in the Church is this serious, but Jesus is. You can be sure that when we face Him, He will care about what the Word of God says. We like grace because it gives us confidence, and we understand what is in His heart.

THE PURSUIT OF 100 PERCENT BLESSING GIVES US THE GREATEST BLESSING

Paragraph E. I talk about different issues, and I lay them out; you can look at them later. They are the same ones I say every time: the eyes, speech, our money, our time, and taking time to fellowship with the Spirit, or what I call communing prayer. Some of the matters in the Word of God are weightier than others, but all must be obeyed.

GREATNESS IN GOD’S SIGHT RATHER THAN GREAT IN THE EYES OF MEN

Paradigm G. Jesus revealed a new paradigm for greatness. It is marvelous. He gave us a new view of what greatness is and how to pursue it, but only greatness that is real will stand up in the test of time. Beloved, I want to say again that I am unashamedly living my life to be great in God’s sight. That is my absolute highest life goal. In that, God will be gloried in my life. That is called the wisdom of God. I call you to connect with that at the heart level. You may never ever have a ministry that anybody knows. You do not need a ministry that anybody knows to be great in God’s sight. You just have to do the commandments: the small ones as well as the big ones and talk others into it.

When you blow it, push delete, get back up, and go hard again. Just do that for several decades, and you will be great in God’s kingdom when the Lord returns. This will put an entirely different look and feel on your life if you buy into what I just said. It will put an entirely different touch on the way you spend time and money. We focus on being great in His sight, rather than in the sight of men; this is paradigm shift number one. Number two: this greatness will be fully manifest in the age to come, not in this age. The greatness that is manifest in this age and the greatness that God releases to you in the age to come will be mostly internal. Your heart will grow in righteousness, in communion with God, and in revelation. Even though a little bit of your greatness will happen in this age, most of that small portion will be internal and not external. It is growing in understanding, having a bright spirit, and meekness worked into your heart—that is greatness even in this age. When you touch that and it begins to work in you, you are great now—not just in eternity. It is happening now although most of the world will not agree with it, but God does.

Your greatness is not all in the age to come. But most of your greatness is in the age to come. There is greatness in this age, but men do not esteem it. The Church does not esteem it for the most part. God esteems it even now as you possess it. He likes it a lot. He takes it personally, and it moves His heart to see faithfulness in His people. One of the reasons it moves Him is because He was a man on the earth with real flesh and blood, with

real desires, with Satan, and with evil adversaries; so Jesus knows what it costs you to be faithful in a fallen world. He looks down on your faithfulness, and it is dear to Him because He was on the earth confined to a body, as you are in this age. There is a certain camaraderie; a certain dearness that faithfulness has to His heart.

2 CHRONICLES 16:9: HEARTS THAT ARE LOYAL TO HIM

There is a certain loyalty that He sees in your heart when you are faithful in the secret place of your life. It moves Him; it really does move Him. It says in 2 Chronicles 16:9: “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” He is looking for loyal hearts. The faithful Man is now resurrected at the right hand of the Father, but the Man at the right hand of the Father knows what it costs you to press into the private areas of your life. He know in terms of what you do with your eyes, your speech, your time, meekness, and being misunderstood, but staying steady in servant hood, in obedience, and staying steady regardless if anybody recognizes you or not. No matter if you do not get your due, you are misunderstood, corrected, rebuked, slighted, or mistreated, if you choose to stay steady and rejoice, you win. You bless and do not curse. You do not pay back. Rather, you serve and trust God. He takes that really personally!

It is as if God says, “You are doing what I did!” I know what you are doing, and it is dear to the Lord. You are talking other people into this. It is as if God praises us, “I really like what you are doing, and I want you in My government when I return. You are the kind of woman I want to run part of My government because when nobody is looking, you are going hard after the things I went hard after when I was on the earth in a flesh and blood body. You are the kind of person who I have camaraderie with because we have walked with similar things together.”

If you do this for decades, it moves the Lord’s heart. It is not that He is up in heaven and callously looking at the accounting books and saying, “Well, he did give a lot of money, so give him a good position.” It is not like that! He is looking at you with a real sense of identifying and understanding what it costs you when no one is looking. He knows what it costs to stay steady in the mundane routine of life in a fallen world without all of the fanfare because you love Him. You are doing it because you want to be really great in His sight. He says, “I like that, and take it personally. You will be great in My sight, if you stay with it.”

I assure you of this: the music of earth will draw you away if there is any open place in your heart. The music of this age will draw you. I am not talking about the actual music, but it is the allurements of the music. It will beckon your heart to leave the steady path. It will pull your heart out of that lonely and steady faithfulness in the private places in your life. It will pull you from the servanthood with people who do not really appreciate you; the place where you get the raw deal, are left out, misunderstood, talked about, but you bless and stay steady. The Lord says, “I know what it cost you to do that, and I take it personally.”

IT IS BASED ON OUR HEART RESPONSES, NOT ON NATURAL GIFTINGS AND RESOURCES

Paradigm shift number three is based on our heart responses—not on natural gifting and resources. Thus, it is available to all. In the natural world, the guys with the money end up in the position of greatness. You have to have resources and a lot of money to get to the right places to connect with the right people. In order to get the right positions, we think that you have to have money, or connections, and natural gifting.

The Lord looks at everybody on the earth and says, “No! None of that matters in your greatness in the big picture. You can be slow of mind. You can have emotions that are not fully in the fullness of what other people

have. You may be slow emotionally; you may have no abilities that anybody else can see and make a big deal about. But if you respond to Me, you talk to people one-on-one here and there, if you use your influence even though it may be very small to talk another person into obeying Me in the private areas of their life by these commandments, you will be great in the time of the great exchange.”

Beloved, a great exchange is coming; it is coming sooner than what we think. I do not mean just because the second coming is coming, and a man or woman’s life on the earth is a breath. Our lives are but a moment. A moment ago, I was twenty. Now, I am fifty. In another moment, I will be seventy or eighty if I am still on the earth then. In a minute, twenty years go by. In a moment’s time, twenty years go by, and you will be there. You will think, “What happened to my life? I am going to be before God in a moment!”

Beloved, I want to answer the Lord according to the development of my heart. He is not going to ask me how big my ministry was, how good my preaching was, or what about my handouts. He is not going to ask me about any of my ministry gifts. He is going to ask me about what I did in my inner man in meekness. He is going to ask me what I did with filling my mind with the Word of God, and what I did with the talents that are inside of me—not just the talents shown on the outside in gifting or leadership. The opportunity for promotion in God’s sight is vast and available to all. However, we must pursue greatness in the right way through meekness and servant hood.

Matthew 20:26-27: “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.”

HAVING A RIGHT VIEW OF AUTHORITY IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

Roman numeral II. We must have a right view of authority, of being great, or of receiving rewards. I talked about this for a minute last night, and most of you were here. You can get the notes in the back, or on the Internet if you want them. Most of those who I talked to about this subject have a completely unbiblical idea about authority. They say, “I do not want authority; I just want to love God. I do not want rewards; I just want a little cabin on the edge of glory, to just to sit in the back yard, stare at Jesus, and let the Holy Spirit touch me.” That part is good, but where they are wrong is that their view of promotion and greatness is not based on love. They are imagining greatness as having authority and people honoring them. That is not the greatness that I am talking about, although you will have authority over people.

It is about being involved in a way that is near and dear to the heart of Jesus in governing the earth. It is about connectedness to what is dear to Him and near to Him. I do not want to be great, so I can be over people. I want to be great so I can be near Him doing what He does as He rules the earth.

There is a lot more to say about this: I assure you that the greatness and the rewards that the Bible talks about are not so that you can be over people, or you can strut; it has nothing whatsoever to do with that spirit. It has everything to do with the heart of love. Jesus did not teach on this so often because it was irrelevant. He taught on it so often because it is dynamic and real.

JESUS CHERISHES THE PARTNERSHIP INVOLVED IN RULING WITH HIS FATHER

Paragraph B. The passage that we have spent a little bit of time on last night, and it is just one we need to go over and over every single time. Every phrase is filled with meaning, but the one I want to look at is when the Lord says, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things.”

He says, “I only gave you a few things; a few giftings internally and only a few things externally. I only gave you a little bit inside. You do not have that much gifting inside, and you do not have that much accomplishment outside—that is the will of God. I only gave you a little bit; however, you were faithful with what I gave you. You increased it in righteousness; therefore, I am going to make you a ruler in the millennial kingdom over many things.”

The servant says, “Cool! That is great. I am so used to little things that I did not know I had bigger things coming.”

The Lord might say, “No. You have many things coming. For a long time, you are going to be having deep, intimate involvement over many important thing—things that are important to My heart.”

The servant replies, “Wow! All of that is because I was faithful with the little things on the inside of me, and the little things on the outside of me that you gave my hands to do? They were not even very important, and nobody even noticed what I did.”

The Lord says, “I did! And there is going to be a great exchange; I will cause you to be ruler over many things; many things that are significant and important to My agenda and kingdom. They are things that are dear to me.” I am sure some of you are going to be overwhelmed; those of you who press on through the decades. This is not like a summer of faithfulness kind of new ministry program where we say, “A Summer of Faithfulness 2006! Let’s do it!” No. We are signing up for decades. Faithfulness is not faithfulness that only lasts three months; that was just a good mood. It is not faithfulness until there has been follow through over a long period of time. There will be failures and lapses; there will be negatives in the midst of that. But it is not the person that can claim they never ever stumbled or did wrong, but the ones who got right back up. They charged full steam ahead committing themselves to continue where they were just moments ago before they fell in their area, or did the thing that grieves their heart. They pushed delete, go after this thing, and the Lord will call that faithfulness over years, and decades.

MATTHEW 25:21: “WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT”

Matthew 25:21: “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.’” The part I want to look at here in this verse is, “Enter into the joy of your Lord.” In Matthew 25:21, the Lord has joy over the people who are brought to places of leadership with Him. There is a specific amount of people. I do not know the number, but I am sure that there are a vast number who He wants to be on His leadership team across the globe. Jesus has joy over a new person who has been faithful on the earth. He has really particular sense of identification with them because they were faithful. He was faithful on the earth, so they have something in common. There is a pressing in during difficulty, and He looks and says, “I have a new member on my leadership team!”

The Lord has joy in that; He likes it. It makes His heart excited! It is the joy of the Lord; it is the Lord’s enjoyment. Then He tells this servant, “I want you to feel it!”

The servant says, “I like this!”

Another guy says, “I am not really into the Lord making me a ruler over anything. I just want to be in a little cabin on the edge of glory.”

The Lord says, “You will enter into a realm of joy when you see how I feel about that assignment and the choice of you in that assignment; you will feel it profoundly. You will enter into deep realms of joy when you enter into your eternal reward.” Beloved, it is not a small thing. The exciting thing is we can touch a little bit of that realm of joy now. It is not just something that one day, we have joy at the second coming for eternity. When we understand our faithfulness in little areas and in few things; the Lord is looking at them and remembering them. He is esteeming them and rewarding them. It seems like nobody else knows or cares, but He does! When that connects in your heart, I tell you that you have a token, a down-payment of the joy you will have when you have the fullness of joy in that day.

My spirit has had many expressions of the Lord’s joy, knowing that what I am doing is pleasing Him, and knowing that He will remember it forever. It makes what we do with our time, money, and words sacred and powerful. It makes every given hour of your life sacred. I am not even suggesting that every given hour of your life needs to be in this intense focus. That is not what I am saying. I am not saying that every waking hour of your life is in a full intensity. No, it is in the rhythms of life that you need rest, relaxation, and a number of experiences in the course of life. I am not talking about living in unbridled intensity eighteen hours a day. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about taking the little things that He has given you. You only have a little strength; you only have a little bit of mental ability. You only have a little bit of emotional ability, money, time, and you have a little bit of revelation.

God says, “We will just work with that, and I will multiply it. I will increase righteousness and understanding in your mind. You fill your mind with the same things that I fill My mind with, and your talents will begin to increase.”

This issue of entering into joy is a dynamic reality. You can have the hardest assignment in the mundane routine of life with no affirmation, no feeling of anything all by yourself, and no sense of anybody even caring what you are doing. But that hour is holy to God because you are exercising your spirit in the small capacities that you have. You are trying to be faithful.

The Lord captures the hour and says, “We will talk again about the use of that hour.”

You say, “I do not have money. I do not have friends. I do not have a reputation. I do not have great gifts. I do not have anything, but my days are holy, awesome, and remembered by God.” What a way to live! You know that greatness is coming down the road; it is inevitable to the person who will live this way. This level of faithfulness is within reach of everybody. Do not have in your mind that it is a faithfulness that is so awesome and intense that nobody can do it. It is not a faithfulness that is so out of reach that nobody can attain to that level of being faithful. There will be some millions who are faithful. Remember that there will be some two or three million who will be in the kingdom at the time of the second coming and on through the millennial kingdom. But only some small percent of these people are living; and the percent is small. The point is that it is doable for weak and broken people.

There is no guy out there in history who just showed up full of power and brightness. Everybody was dark and attacked by Satan; they were filled with pride and confusion. They worked from there—everybody. The great prophets of old started in the same confusion and brokenness. Little by little, the Lord cleared their minds and got their lives focused. They began to move in that direction. The great and faithful in history were honestly just like you. That is the message of the Word of God.

Do not have a vision of faithfulness that is not biblical where you conclude that it is not obtainable anyway. Confused, mixed up, prone to quit and depression, people just like you, me, and everybody else on the earth. Weak folk are the group of people whom the Lord brings the faithful from. You are not the only person who is prone to quit. The entire human race is. You are not the only person who feels these great pains and longings to throw in the towel. The entire planet feels this way—believers and unbelievers alike. The Lord says, “I can make that work for you. Do you want Me to make it work for you? I can cause even you to be faithful in the context of this.”

GOD’S WAY TO SEEK GREATNESS: BECOMING A GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

Roman numeral IV. Mathew 25:14- 21: “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”

For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country. Jesus called His own servants and delivered His goods to them. Jesus gave to each one a certain measure of abilities and capacities. Some are internal and some are external; internal means your mind and emotions. External might be a gift such as leadership, ability, a propensity for math, music, science, athletics, raising up a business, or leading a school. They have gifts that are seen externally, and they have capacities that are internal, such as their mind, emotions, and inner man.

In this parable, Jesus gave five talents to one servant. It is a very small amount because Jesus gives to another one according to his own ability, and immediately he went on a journey. Beloved, an example of the talents that we are talking about is emotional ability; we are talking about communication skills. We are talking about the IHOP–KC world—music, dancing, and leadership skills. The man or woman who has much potential for greatness is called a ten-talent person.

The Lord does not look at the size of the talent, but at the multiplication that they do with their talent. He looks at what they do in terms of increasing it in righteousness, revelation, and meekness. He does not look at increasing it in size. The Lord does not look at the pastor of a church with 100 people and say, “If you grow it to two hundred, you have invested your talent.”

It is not about having 100-member church grow to 200, or having a million dollar business go to two million dollar deals; therefore, you have increased it. That is not what He is talking about. He is talking about increasing it in righteousness, meekness and revelation. So we cannot say, “Well, I am not that smart . . . I do not remember very well, and I do not focus very well. I am prone to depression, and I get confused. I cannot even keep my thoughts straight.”

The Lord says, “OK, that is good that you have one talent on the inside, but you can be as great as a ten-talent guy. Here is what I want you to do: I want you to invest it. I want you to increase that one talent in revelation and righteousness. Fill your mind and your speech with the Word of God. Get the Word of God touching your

inner man, and you may only go from one talent to two in the abilities in your entire life on the earth, but you will be called faithful, and you will be rewarded over cities in the age to come.”

INVEST TIME AND ENERGY TO MULTIPLY YOUR TALENTS

You know there are some people on the earth who are much slower mentally than others. There is a small percent of the earth. Some are biological, and some are physiological; but, they are very slow mentally. We are going to be shocked at how many of those who are slower are still exercising their inner man with God. It does not look that measurable from the outside, but God is watching carefully. They will increase who they are in the internal talents, and they will be called great in the age to come.

We argue, “Wait. A second that guy was really slow and could not even get it!”

The Lord responds, “That is right. However, he got it more than before because he gave himself to Me in the secret place. That is all I asked him to do. I asked him to value the talents that I gave him. I asked him to value them enough to increase and invest them in righteousness, meekness and revelation. That is all I asked him to do because he valued me.”

Beloved, when we do that, the great exchange will come where the Lord takes very little and gives back to us many things that we rule over. In Matthew 25:16, the servant invested and multiplied them. Are you multiplying righteousness, meekness and revelation in your mind and in your emotions? Or are you diminishing your mind and emotions by what you put in it? One of my burdens in the past seven years at IHOP–KC is that some who come to do IHOP–KC have two lives. They have the IHOP–KC hours, and then they go rest. However, the way that they rest so diminishes and injures their spiritual life that they come back to IHOP–KC the next day in a worse state. The way they rest and play so diminishes their spirit; it pollutes their spirit. So when they get back to IHOP–KC, they have made no ground whatsoever. I have seen people stay here over a period of time and actually lose ground in the spirit from the way they carry their mind, or hearts outside of the building. It is more damaging than what they are doing inside the building trying to engage their spirits.

STEWARDSHIP

You have mind and emotions; you have talents and those are a part of your stewardship. What are you doing with them? It is not about a sacred trust, or leaders watching you. It is about God watching you. You may be so prone to forgetting, and you cannot stay focused. You cannot get any of it. The Lord says, “None of that matters. You just stay steady and pour yourself into this.” You multiply that talent internally, and you multiply your talent externally. It does not mean that your church grows from 100 to 200 people. It means that you grow in your ability to bring other people to righteousness. I do not mean large numbers. I mean the quality of what you do to an individual heart.

THE LORD IS LOOKING AT QUALITY NOT QUANTITY IN MINISTRY

The external ministry that the Lord is looking at is not the size of it; it is the quality of it. There are more guys around the earth who can dazzle people in stadiums whether they are preaching or singing. However, they do not move people to obedience, and they are not obeying God in the private areas of their lives. They dazzle them, but at the end of the day, it is no gain for the people in their own lives before God. I do not want to dazzle crowds. I want to move people to radical pursuit on the inside of their inner-man before God. Hopefully, I am doing a little of that right now. I am counting on it. I am doing this for real. This is not to get Sunday night out of the way; I am doing this in the name of Matthew 5:19.

I am saying, “Lord, I am going to teach them; I am going to urge them to obey You in the least, private, and smallest areas of their lives. Lord, remember it!”

The Lord says, “Do not worry! I will remember it!”

“Good! I am counting on it! I may just do Matthew 5:19 a couple of months in a row just to build up my account there.” You do not have to use Matthew 5:19. You can do it at any level. Talk people into righteousness; however, you cannot encourage others if you do not do it in your private life first. You do not have energy for it. Neither do you have insight into what to say to them. You are only as affective as the overflow of what you do.

Someone asks me, “What do you do as a teacher to prepare?” There is a wisdom that you get in how to prepare; there is wisdom people can give you; there are classes people take in seminaries all over the world, and I think some of them are really good. But at the end of the day, what I do is the simplest thing: I read the Bible—not to get sermons. I read the Bible to equip my heart to obey in the secret places. Then I take a mirror; whatever I do, I put down in notes, and then I tell you to do it. That is the most affective way to be a teacher; do not read the Bible so you can get sermons to dazzle people. Do not do this so people will say, “Wow! What a woman of insight! What a man of insight!” Forget all that! Read the Bible to stun your heart and motivate you in your private life.

Then, just put a mirror in front of yourself figuratively speaking. Just see what the process is on the inside of you and just tell people that. Tell them what you do in your private struggle to get your thoughts, your mind, your money, your time, and passions more in line with righteousness.

Do a lot of it just in one-on-one settings. You may never have a public preaching ministry, but I guarantee you that you will have a teaching ministry. I taught for years. The first five or seven years that I taught, the vast majority of my teachings were in groups of three to five. I had so many Bible studies of three to five people. I am talking for the first five, six, seven years of my walk; I am talking two or three Bible studies a week. I am talking about when I was nineteen, twenty-one, twenty-two, and twenty-four years old. I called big meetings, but typically people did not come to them. I said, “OK. I will have home groups. I’ll pack them out with twelve.”

I always had five or six usually unless there was a football game on; then, I had three people come. I did so much teaching; I cannot tell you how many hundreds and hundreds of sermons I gave with five pages of notes sitting on my lap in somebody’s living room with four people there. During these studies, two of them would be talking while I was teaching.

I have had people say, “I want to be a teacher like you.” Well, then what I did was I did not even think about preaching in a pulpit. It was not even in my mind. I studied the Bible really hard to figure out how to be great, and then I tried to talk people into being great!

Then some guy said, “We will give you a microphone, and you can tell a bunch of us.”

I answered, “Well, whatever. I will give it a shot!” It was not even my goal to get on a platform. My goal was to talk people into being great in God. If I could get five or ten people, a few of them would pay attention; I would

do it two or three nights a week, and I did that when I was eighteen, nineteen, twenty-two years old. I did that for all of those years. I do not even remember the exact amount; I probably had three or four Bible studies a week with different people. I never got more than three or five people to show up. The big ones had ten or twelve people. I would come with ten pages of notes because I did not know how to say it. They would all be like, “This is a really slow Bible study Mike!”

I would answer, “Well, I am trying to figure out what that verse means. Hang on! No . . . I will tell you next week!”

They would say, “Oh great!”

Beloved, that is how I got into the teaching ministry. I did not get into the teaching ministry because I had the goal to get on a platform. I had the goal to understand the Bible in private for my own reasons—to know God. Then, I got to tell people what I already knew from my own life in God: how to repent better and what to do when I did not repent well. That is a teaching ministry! Just do that for three or five years. Just start doing it! And all of a sudden, other things will happen, but the Lord is not impressed with what I do on a platform. The Lord cares what I talk to people about. As I talk to people one-on-one a lot more than what I preach. I am sure He cares about what all of His children say at whatever level, but what is more important is what I am carrying in my heart. That is what I understand that He cares about. You put your attention on the subject and tyranny of trying to get a big ministry. Just throw that thing off of you. Forget about getting a big ministry. Go deep in God, and learn how to tell other people. I do not mean articulate, brilliant statements: just learn how to talk people into not quitting and going hard in the deep areas of your private life. Beloved, you will have a teaching ministry.

MINISTRY TIME

Amen. We will just end with that. Let’s stand. I will ask those who know that the Lord has stirred your heart about teaching, but you do not know at what level. It may be the three to five levels in the living room. Maybe just one-on-one in the coffee shop, and only if you buy the coffee will they show up. I understand. I did that for a few years. I had junior high kids for a few years, and I had to pick them up. I promised to take them to Dairy Queen in order to get them to come to my Bible study. That is a fact. They would come if I would take them to Dairy Queen, and if I picked them up. They were not really committed, but they came.

I am going to invite those of you who feel the Lord has been stirring your heart about teaching. You do not know when, where, or how to do this; but, that is not my point. You are being stirred about teaching. You are going to start with one, two, or three people, and you would like prayer. I want you to come down and stand on these lines. We will wait a minute. Just play the music. You are saying, “Lord, I want to do Matthew 5:19. I want to teach people to do the least in the small areas of their life. I do not care what the platform is. I do not care if there are only two or three in my living room. I want to teach people what I am learning about—obeying with all of my heart in the secret places of my life.”

Beloved, this is how the true teaching ministry in the kingdom of God is birthed. Right now with what you are deciding, this is how a great tree gets a root system and goes deep with God with these kinds of decisions. You are not going to give the Lord three years, and if you are not on the conference route, then you are quitting. You are going to say, “I do not care. I am not trying to be a hotshot!”

I never thought that I would talk on a microphone. It never crossed my mind that I would talk on a microphone. I thought I would always talk in living rooms, and I was happy because I knew the Lord was watching, and He liked it. You lock into that and just let the wind blow where it blows. You will not be any greater if you get a platform or a stadium; that will not enhance your greatness one degree. All that will enhance your greatness is for you to resolve to do it, and get other people to do Christianity in their private lives. That is the only thing that will make you greater.

So you are talking to the Lord and saying, “Lord, I want to go for this. I want to obey you in the least areas. I am not looking for a way out to make it look softer. I want to go more radical. How far will you let me go?”

You are saying, “I am going after this. I want to be a teacher in your kingdom. I do not care what level. I am going to teach and do what You ask.” The Lord likes what you are saying in your heart right now. I am going to ask others of you who have already established this; I want you to come up and pray for these. We are going to ask for an anointing to touch their hearts. I am not asking for a powerful preaching gift. I am asking for an anointing on your heart to make known the Word of God. I want to pray over them. I want everyone to have hands laid on him or her for grace to activate a new spirit of revelation in their spirit.