

I WILL ENTRUST YOU

1. What stood out to you from the sermon? In what ways were you personally challenged?

I drove past a sign for TAFE the other day, and the tagline was “Be anything you want to be”. It’s a nice idea, isn’t it? It’s what we tell our kids, it’s what we are taught at school, it’s the message of every self-help book and seminar - that with enough work, you can be anything you want to be, you can be the best, you have unlimited potential, you are special, you can and you will “succeed”.

Success has got to be one of the greatest idols in our culture. There’s nothing wrong with experiencing success in life, family, work, or even ministry. However, when it success becomes everything, when we look to it to satisfy our deepest longings, it will inevitably disappoint us. The reality is that most of us never achieve everything we set out to, we all have unmet dreams and hopes, and despite our hard work and best efforts, we often experience failure. When success is God, then failure becomes not just difficult, it becomes soul destroying.

2. We pursue success in all different areas of our life – work, education, family, ministry etc. In what ways has ‘success’ been an idol for you? Have you looked to success and achievement to give you what only God can?

Read Matthew 25:14-30

3. The master entrusted his wealth to his servants while he went on a journey. What ‘wealth’ does our master Jesus entrust us with? What has he specifically entrusted you with?

4. Why does the master give different amounts to each servant? What does this say to us about the way in which God gifts each member of the church?

5. A ‘talent’ was an ancient unit of measurement and a denomination of money (translated ‘bag of gold’ in the NIV). It was worth a staggering 20 years wages in Jesus’ day, perhaps \$500,000 to \$1million in todays value! What does this say about how we as a church ought to view each member of the body of Christ?

6. What praise does the master offer the first two servants? What’s the significance of both servants receiving the same praise?

7. What does success look like in the economy of the Kingdom of God?

This parable reframes how we see success, not from a worldly perspective, but a Kingdom perspective. Success, according to this parable, is **faithfully stewarding what God has entrusted to us**. We don't have to be the best, we just have to be faithful with the gifts God has graciously given to us, in order that we might produce a harvest for our master.

8. Why did the third servant bury his money?

9. In what ways does fear inhibit our own use of our gifts to serve the Kingdom? What is that fear for you? Be specific?

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to take risks as we step out in faith to participate in God's mission. The first two servants doubled their master's money because they invested it – an activity that involves inherent risks. The third servant however took no risks whatsoever, simply burying the money out of fear. It's our fear of failure that so often holds us back from living fully for Jesus. Yet, as the saying goes, 'no risk, no return'. And the same is true of our faith – no risk, no harvest. The New Testament often likens mission to sowing seeds (Matt 13:1-23). To plant a crop is to take a risk. You don't know if or when the rain will come. It's up to God to send the rain and the sun, and produce a harvest. One thing is for sure though, if you plant nothing, nothing will grow.

10. Are you using your gifts to their full potential for service in God's Kingdom? Or, are you burying your gifts, or using them to selfish ends?

11. There is a somber reminder in this passage that all believers will be held to account for how they used the gifts God entrusted to them. If Jesus returned tomorrow, what would he say to you?

12. What does it look like for us to "live in expectation of our master's return"? How does the coming return of Jesus change the way we live today?

13. Describe someone you look up to as an example of Biblical 'success'? How did they faithfully steward the gifts God entrusted to them, and what was the return?

PRAY