

STRETCH YOUR DREAM Prt 2

Last week we took some time to highlight the fact that each one of us has a dream, a gift you received from God.

We looked at the story of the talents in Matthew 25.

There were 3 guys who were given talents by their master. 2 of them went and did something with those talents and they made a profit but one of them had a different view altogether – he decided to bury the talent.

It's quite easy to see the actions of the one who had the single talent

Matthew 25:24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.25 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

- He was lazy
- He had the wrong view of his master – he thought the master was all out to abuse him.
Does that sound like some of us when we feel abused by the church system sometimes
- He had a wrong attitude towards his talent

However, what is not quite clear is what the other 2 gentlemen had to do in order to stretch their talents.

Matthew 25:16 "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.

That word to trade gives us an idea of what this man was doing:

- Work out, exercise, perform, to bring something to existence by toiling, make gains by working

In as much as we are not given the details, the bible tells us what these guys had to go through in order to put to use the talents that had been entrusted to them.

2 Peter 1:5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. 8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and

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useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.

2 Peter 1:5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence

1. Moral excellence

- It is simply defined as the quality in a person's life which makes them stand-out as excellent. It is a term of moral heroism, moral courage, and moral excellence.
- A person's character is the sum of his or her disposition, thoughts, intentions, desires, and actions.
- Because mankind is born in sin and by nature the child of wrath, his natural tendency is toward moral degeneration.
- Your character determines the weight behind your name – your name can either open doors for you or close doors before you.

1Peter 2:12 Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when He judges the world.

- Why are people sued for defamation of character or character assassination – it is because character is what really matters (quality of service, time keeping, keeping your promises, follow through, let your yes be a yes, be truthful in your dealings) ultimately character trumps competence.
- ❖ Your gift can take you where your character might not sustain you.

Examples of moral excellence

Galatians 5:22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

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2. Knowledge

- Knowledge is a familiarity, awareness or understanding of someone or something, such as facts, information, descriptions, or skills.

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2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth

- God wants to use you in a great way but He wants you to be knowledgeable, be aware of and attentive.

Isaiah 5:13 Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge; Their honorable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst.

- The absence of knowledge can cause you to lose a blessing that God has brought to you.
- If you just got married, how much knowledge do you have concerning dealing with a husband?
- If you got a new car, do you even know how to change a tyre?
- You need to realise that what you don't know will exclude you – if you happen to get to a group of people and they are busy talking about mid cover, full toss, LBW, duckworth lewis method, you would not dare speak if you don't know what they are talking about.
- The absence of knowledge stunts your growth trajectory – you can pray as hard as you want but in the absence of knowledge you can't grow in certain areas.
- You don't acquire knowledge for the sack of it – you acquire knowledge with the objective of applying it

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3. Self-control

- Exactly the same way a master subjects his slave to rigorous control so is control over self.
- When we are able to control self, self becomes a slave to us – “For you are a slave to whatever controls you”
- This is the ability to tell yourself what to do and what not to do
- Paul had control over self – listen to what he says

*1 Corinthians 9:26-27 “So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I **discipline** my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.”*

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- With every true dream, there is a counterfeit – there is something that looks like it and more appealing and exciting. You need a lot of self-control to say no to all counterfeits
- You need self control to overcome the need for immediate gratification -
- On any given day, most people fail to stick with their daily goals about 20% of the time – a percentage that climbs quickly if they're busy, tired, or stressed
- Self-control enables you to focus on the goal at hand disregarding all distractions that come your way – it is the only way to keep the fire of your passion burning.
- Ultimately self-control is a mark of maturity

1Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

- Thought patterns change with age – there is a way that a child thinks and its perfectly fine. They don't have much control over their thoughts.

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4. Patient endurance

- Pursuing a dream is like running an endurance marathon because of the level of testing you will experience
- Patient endurance means that you bear all trials and difficulties with an even mind
- What is the makeup of patient endurance
 - Far from being passive, this quality involves an active resistance to hostile powers.
 - It describes a wounded soldier who endures the pain and keeps fighting the enemy.
 - It describes the ability of a plant to live under hard and unfavorable circumstances.
 - It describes a man who loves honor more than anything and stands firm in the face of those who would persuade him to act dishonorably.
- Stretching your dream will require you to go beyond a great start but to also aim for a great finish
- In the absence of patient endurance, we grow tired

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Hebrews 10:36 You need to persevere, so that after you have done God's will, you will receive what He has promised.

- There is a time during a race that an athlete develops muscle fatigue and that is when there is separation between boys and men.
- You too, in pursuing your calling you can experience emotional and spiritual fatigue. The one way to overcome muscle fatigue is to train until you break a higher threshold of pain.
- This means every battle you manage to overcome, you are setting yourself up for more victories
- Sometimes what fatigues us are things that we have allowed to come along on our journey of life.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

- Fatigue sets in when we don't deal with the bad company – not everyone is meant to come with you
- An athlete must wear the bear minimum in order to reduce drag.

Hebrews 12: 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

- Jesus acknowledged the pain of the cross but did not give in to the pain – he withstood the pain of the cross.
- You need to stare your challenge in the face and despise it

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5. Godliness

- When one is asked to define godliness, it is easy to quickly jump to the definition that says it is Christian character

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- Godliness certainly includes Christian character, but it is more than that. There is another, even more fundamental aspect of godliness than godly character.
- I would like to define a godly life is one that has an unwavering devotion to God – people’s dreams are derailed by losing focus on God. People forget who and how they got where they are.
- Early in the bible, a story of a man named Enoch is narrated

*Genesis 5:21 When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in **close fellowship with God** for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. Enoch lived 365 years, walking in **close fellowship with God**. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him*

- Walking with God and pleasing God is at the centre of godliness
- A complete devotion to God drives you to a place where everything you do is done in light of Him.
- It is a burning desire to be like Jesus – we have people who want to be cheap version of other people
- It speaks of an unwavering conformity to the image of God and mind of Christ.
- It is this basis from which Christian character is birthed – the more time you spend with God, the more you become like Him.

6. Everyone is required to account

19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them

- The matter of giving account is a biblical concept which the world adopted. Unfortunately the people of the kingdom do not understand or like it at all.
- This speaks of the principle of stewardship – everything you have has been loaned out to you. A steward is someone who manages the affairs of another
- God expects a return on His investment in your life.

Luke 12:48 But the one who unknowingly does things worthy of punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from him who has been entrusted with much, even more will be demanded.

- The master came back and settled accounts with them – there was an assessment of their works.

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- Your reward here on earth and in heaven is directly proportional to your effort. In this parable nothing is said about the quality, I guess it is assumed that the talents that they brought back were of the same quality as the capital (the seed)
- However scripture is quite clear is teaching that your reward is also determined by the quality of your works

1Corinthians 3:10 Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have— Jesus Christ. 12 Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials— gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. 13 But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value.

- Everything that God does for you, is an investment in you.
- God wants His glory to spread across the nations, this is the only way that every knee could bow down to the King of kings.
- We have too many Christians who are seating on their talents – it is safer to stay in the boat, they think.