



Dollars and SEEDS | Eric Parks | 11.25.18

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

Have you started decorating for Christmas yet? When it comes to decorating, would you consider yourself a minimalist or do you go all out?

SHARE

As we approach the end of the year and anticipate 2019, it is a great time to get back to the basics. As Shawn reminded us last week, "We have to learn the basics, before we can excel!" In this short series, we are going to get back to the basic principle of giving. Being generous is one of the greatest things we can do for our spiritual journey! It is close to the heart of Jesus as well as one of our core values here at Red Rocks Church.

How was your week? What one way you've seen God at work in your life recently? Take some time to check in with your group.

Last week we challenged everyone to give something away this week. Were you able to do that? If so, tell the group about the experience.

G R O W

Read Matthew 25:14-23

This week Eric reminded us of the power that gets unleashed when we are generous. When we are willing to invest our money into a greater cause, God does immeasurably more with it than we ever thought possible.

The Parable of the Talents is an excellent example of this principle. Jesus is a few days away from taking His place on the cross, as He is being challenged by all sorts of different religious leaders. Instead of fighting back, He shares with them parables (stories) that will ultimately challenge their perspective on the way they see and know. This particular parable is about a master who, in preparation for a journey, entrusts varying degrees of his wealth to three of his servants, expecting them to go out and do some good.

The first two servants take the resources given and get to work, investing them and doubling their worth. When the master returns, he is ecstatic with both of them. “You have been faithful with a few things,” he tells them. “I will put you in charge of many things” (v. 21).

In this series, it isn’t merely about giving; it is also about investing. Like the master, God has given us all our own unique set of skills, resources, and passions. If we are willing to use them to be a part of something much greater than ourselves, something inside of us comes alive! It begins to feel like we are living the way we were created to live!

What do you think the Master meant when he said, “Come and share your master’s happiness!”?

What are some of the talents and treasures God has entrusted you with? How are you actively finding ways to use them for good?

M O V E

Read Matthew 25:24-30

At first glance, the second part of this story seems quite harsh. Although the master is happy with the first two servants, he is furious with the third. He turns on him rather abruptly and casts him out into the outer darkness.

What do you make of that? The master uses strong language for this man, calling him “slothful” and “wicked.” Why do you think he is so frustrated? Discuss it with your group.

Jesus is the masterful storyteller. Like all great storytellers, He knows how to wrap several layers of meaning into His parables. At one level, this feels like a fear-based warning not to be lazy. But there is something much deeper happening. Jesus is showing us how much we miss out in life when we have a death-grip on our resources. When we use our time, talents, and treasure solely to build our own selfish kingdom, we isolate ourselves. When we can't get past ourselves, we miss out on the life of building the Kingdom of God together with others. The warning of “outer darkness” is talking about the very real reality that when we refuse to be a part of a communal cause, we just keep isolating ourselves by building more and more walls around our own kingdom.

Jesus includes the third servant in the story to remind us not to miss out on the great joy found in participating in something greater than ourselves!

It's important to point out that the first two servants approach the master with joy. They are operating out of gratitude, thankful for the opportunity to be a part of what the master is doing. But the third servant has a different approach. He hesitantly approaches the master and says “I knew you to be a hard man...so I was afraid and I went and hid your talent in the ground” (v. 24-25). The third servant is operating out of fear, and as a result, he doesn't get too far.

If we want to be effective in God's Kingdom, we first need to realize that God has a deep love and affection for us. When we operate out of God's love, fear will have no place in our lives. Fear is not helpful; it's paralyzing. God didn't entrust us with all this time, talent, and treasure begrudging. He delights in us as we find our role in His Kingdom. Don't read this story and believe the lie that you aren't doing enough, instead see it as an invitation to be grateful for

the life you have been given. Out of that gratitude, you will be given a different perspective, one that will allow you to experience abundant life!

When you read this story, which of the three servants do you resonate with most?

What would it look like to metaphorically bury the talents God has given you in the sand this week? What would it look like to plant them in good soil and watch God multiply them? Share with the group and decide on one practical step to take before the next time your group meets.

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

T O G O

Matthew 6:19-20

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

