

Monday, November 12 - Read Matthew 6:19-21. It is real easy to think about today and what I need for today. Many of us simply try to make it through each day. But since our lives are relatively short when thinking of eternity, then our focus needs to be on the eternal and not the temporary. Paul reminds us what that looks like each day. **Read 1 Timothy 6:17.** And then read **1 Timothy 6:6-8.** What is your contentment level? How is your eternal preparation going?

Tuesday, November 13 – Read Matthew 25:14-28. Take your time and read this parable again. Your mind may wander to the inequitable distribution of funds or the lack of sympathy by the master. We will look at different parts later. But for now understand that Jesus told parables in this chapter to further clarify what it means to be ready for his return and how to live until he comes. In the parable of the ten virgins, we are taught that every person is responsible for his or her own spiritual condition. Our story today shows the necessity of using well what God has entrusted to us. The third parable in this chapter (the sheep and the goats) stresses the importance of serving others in need. No parable by itself completely describes our preparation. Instead each paints one part of the whole picture.

Wednesday, November 14 – Read Matthew 25:15. The master divided the money among his servants according to their abilities. No one received more or less than he could handle. If he failed his assignment, his excuse could not be that he was overwhelmed. Failure could only come from laziness or hatred toward the master. The talents represent any kind of resource we are given. God gives us time, gifts, and other resources according to our abilities, and he expects us to invest them wisely until he returns. We are responsible to use well what God has given us. The issue is not how much we have, but how well we use what we have. Take a mental inventory of what you have been given, how well have you used what you have?

Thursday, November 15 – Read Matthew 25:21. Jesus is coming back - we know this is true. Does this mean we must quit our jobs in order to serve God? No, it means we are to use our time, talents, and treasures diligently in order to serve God completely in whatever we do. For a few people, this may mean changing professions. For most of us, it means doing our daily work out of love for God. It is close to the end of the week and you are looking forward to the weekend, take a few moments to re-focus and to realize you ARE serving God right where you are. What can you do today to honor your Creator?

Friday, November 16 – Read Matthew 25:24-30. The last man was thinking only of himself. He hoped to play it safe and protect himself from his hard master, but he was judged for his self-centeredness. We must not makes excuses to avoid doing what God calls us to do. If God truly is our Master, we must obey willingly. Our time, abilities, and money aren't ours in the first place - we are caretakers, not owners. When we ignore, squander, or abuse what we are given, we are rebellious and deserve to be punished.

Saturday, November 17 - Read Matthew 25:29-30. This parable describes the consequences of two attitudes to Christ's return. The person who diligently prepares for it by investing his or her time and talent to serve God will be rewarded. The person who has no heart for the work of the kingdom will be punished. God rewards faithfulness. Those who bear no fruit for God's kingdom cannot expect to be treated the same as those who are faithful. Which will you be?