

# Use It Or Lose It!

Tim Dubberly, October 12, 2003

Text: Matthew 25:14-30- (Read only 24-30)

## Introduction:

Have you ever stopped to realize what God has given you? We can all say that He has been good to us, but how many of us realize what God has given us to use for His glory? We need to take a hard look at this old story of three men and their reaction to the challenge set before them.

Matthew records the words of Jesus as He reveals a message hidden in a parable, so that, every one that heard could understand the message and the responsibility.

We are living in a day when the church is becoming busier and busier; however, it is in the world and not in the church. There was a time when you could ask for help in the church and you would get it. But now we have to beg people to sing, teach, speak, preach, work, etc... just to have a halfway attempt made.

Just like the man in the story, when the church is in need, excuses are more available than people.

■ A farmer asked his neighbor if he might borrow a rope.

"Sorry," said the neighbor, "I'm using the rope to tie up my milk."

"Milk?" exclaimed the first farmer. "Rope can't tie up milk."

"I know," replied the neighbor, "but when a man doesn't want to do something, one reason is as good as another."

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 183.

The sad thing about our church society today is that there is a spirit of 'what is in it for me?' If they are not going to be paid or compensated some way, you are not going to get them to help.

Notice these men and what they had to offer God. Here are a few "offerings" to God. One offered faithfulness, the other initiative, but the other offered excuses.

I. One man offered his master faithfulness (14-16).

A. He had been given 5 talents and he doubled them because he was trustworthy.

- He had no doubt proved himself before to receive the most.
- He proved through the challenge of his master that he could be trusted.
- Can God trust you to use what He has given you?

B. He also proved he was honest.

- Honesty shines the brightest when no one is watching.
- Honesty is an attitude that is reflected in your actions.
- Honesty is an oddity in the church world today.

■ One day Sam Jones got fifty cents too much in his pay envelope, but he didn't say a word. During the week the paymaster found out his mistake, and on the next payday deducted fifty cents.

Jones said, "Excuse me, sir, but I'm fifty cents short this week."

"You didn't complain last week," replied the paymaster.

Sam came back, "No, sir, I don't mind overlooking one mistake. But when it happens twice, then it's time to say something."

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 285.

C. He was also dependable.

- Some people can be trusted to do things, but not until they have complained and let you know how much you have put them out.
- Others will just accept the challenge and perform the task without any complaint.
- Others will realize that everything they do in or for the church they are doing it for God.

II. The second man offered his master initiative (17).

A. He also stayed focused on his commitment to his master.

- He did not stop to look at how much those around him were doing.
- He did not feel cheated because he did not receive 5 and he did not feel overburdened because he did not receive the 1.
- He accepted his challenge with commitment in his heart.

■ Man who says it cannot be done should not interrupt man doing it.  
Chinese proverb

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 407.

B. Because of initiative, he took every opportunity available to him.

- When a door was not apparent he began to search for a door.
- He would not allow himself to become too busy in personal matters that his master's business suffered.
- He too doubled his gift and the master was blessed.

C. His initiative would not let him give up.

- He would not stop trying- like the bird and the frog.
- He did not spend energy complaining about his challenge; rather he used his energy to succeed.
- How many of us today have quit trying because we feel overburdened or just do not care anymore.

III. The third man offered his master excuses (18-27).

A. He went and hid the talent, but refused to use it.

- Many people have been given gifts, by God, only to hide them away and allow everyone else to do the work.
- Church folk are notorious at making excuses.
- God is looking for people to use and when He looks there way they say, “Keep looking”.

B. He thought only of himself.

- His actions revealed his respect for his master.
- He did not even try – he took the easy way out!
- He lacked faithfulness and initiative.

■ The church choir director was being driven out of his mind at the rehearsals for the Christmas choral concert. It seemed that at least one or more members of the choir was absent at every rehearsal. Finally they reached the last rehearsal and he announced: "I want to personally thank the pianist for being the only person in this entire church choir to attend each and every rehearsal during the past two months." At this, the pianist rose, bowed, and said, "It was the least I could do, considering I won't be able to be at the concert tonight."

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 90.

C. He showed no commitment.

- All he had to offer was an excuse.
- He was not willing to invest anything of himself in the challenge.
- His actions show us that he did not deem this work as important.

## Conclusion

Jesus was trying to send a message to His disciples and too all who would be willing to take us the cross. He was saying to them that soon He would be going away and the work would be placed into the hands of every person who accepted Him as Lord. At that, the responsibility of the work of the kingdom would be up to them.

Today, Jesus is saying to the Simcoe Worship Center in Cullman Alabama, that the work of the kingdom is suffering because of the lack of commitment. He also wants us to take a good look at the judgment that befell that evil servant. He was cast into the lake of fire, to suffer the pains of hell's fire.

Although the talents in this story referred to money, there is a much deeper spiritual significance revealed. God is calling for men and women to present themselves to God to do what they can to build the kingdom on God on earth. Will you invest your life or will you hid it away to enjoy by yourself? Will you "Use it or lose it?"

■ When Dawson Trotman passed away he probably left a legacy of discipleship on this earth that will never be matched except perhaps in the life of Jesus Christ Himself. I've become a real student of Dawson Trotman and believe wholeheartedly in the methods of discipleship that he taught and emulated throughout his days. He died in Schroon Lake, New York. He died of all things in the midst of an area that he was expert in--he drowned. He was an expert swimmer. The last few moments he had in the water he lifted one girl out of the water. He went down and got the other girl and lifted her out of the water and then submerged and was not found again until the dragnet found him a few hours later. A man named Larsen was on that boat when Trotman died, and he said, "The entire United States Navy couldn't have saved Trotman that day--it was God's time." Time ran an article on Trotman's life the next week, and they put a caption beneath his name, and it read, "Always Holding Somebody Up." In one sentence, that was Trotman's life--investment in people, in honesty and humility, holding them up. Are you doing that? Who are you holding up?

Charles Swindoll

--James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 444.

What will you offer God today? Will you offer Him your faithfulness and initiative or will you offer Him an excuse. How many more people will have to die without Jesus because you will not get involved in the work of God? How much more will the church have to suffer because there is no commitment?