May 25/26, 2024

What Are You Doing with the Lottery of Your Life?

Kingdom Stories: Living in the One True Kingdom

Matthew 25: 14-30

Pastor Jeff Petersen

What would you do if I gave you a million dollars? What would you do with it? Or what if, perhaps, you were to win the lottery? What would you do with all of that money? Well, in a sense, I believe that all of us here have already won the lottery. How? I'll explain more about that later, as this morning I invite us to consider the question, "What Are You Doing with the Lottery of Your Life?"

So, if you have a Bible with you this morning, would you open together with me to Matthew Chapter 25? Today we are completing our Kingdom Stories Series, looking at some of the parables of Jesus. And today we pick up right where we left off at the end of the service last week. We're going to look at another parable in Matthew 25, beginning in verse 14. The Parable of the Talents begins with the word "**For**", and that is a connective word which reminds us this connects back to what He's already been talking about. And that's true of the parable that we looked at last week, but expressly true of what it said at the end, in verse 13: **Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. . .** (of the return of the King, and the coming of His kingdom). And so Jesus now tells another parable to illustrate what that is like, beginning in verse 14:

> **"For *it is* just like a man *about* to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them."** (*NASB, Matthew 25:14)

So in verse 14, Jesus sets up the parable by telling us about the characters and the context. The first character is a man who, through the parable, will be called the master. The other characters are referred to as slaves. Now, that is really problematic for us, as hearers and readers today. Because of the horrific abuse of what took place in slavery in America, every time we see or read that word, we have almost a visceral, negative reaction, and understandably so. But we need to understand that is not how the first hearers and the first readers would have read this. They would have heard this more as servants, people who are serving another. So, as we go through the parable today, I'd encourage you also to read it through that lens, because that's what Jesus was saying. And so He continues in verse 15:

> **"To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey."**

Now, when we hear the word **talent**, we almost immediately think of special gifts or abilities that are possessed by a person. That is actually not at all what it meant in this century and in this context. A talent was actually a unit of measure. It was weight, and it was used to weigh precious metal, which was money. So it would be a talent of gold, of silver, of copper, or of bronze. And so in order to understand what Jesus was saying to them, and thus what He's saying to us, we've got to put this into our context.

And biblical scholar D. A. Carson does that well, by telling us that the most commonly used talent in that day would have been a talent of silver, and a talent of silver was worth 6000 denarii. Well, what was a denarius? One denarius was a day's wages for a common day laborer. So Carson then says, "If we were to bring this into our context and understanding, we could think of somebody who's on the lower income scale. Let's say they have a salary of about $15,000 a year, which is pretty low. But if you then run the math of 6000 denarii, that means one talent in our context would be equal to $300,000. That makes the five talents $1.5 million dollars. And so, these first hearers would have been hearing this as extraordinary sums of money, even for the person with one talent.

Now, notice also in verse 15, why did he give differing amounts? Well, the text tells us, **Each one according to his own ability**. This will be important for us to note and remember. And then he goes away on a journey and gives no indication of when he will return. Instead, he simply entrusts his possessions and this work to these servants, expecting them to put his money to work. And that is exactly what the first servant does. Verse 16:

> **"Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents."**

Now, when it says **traded with them**, that's not like trading stock, like we would today, or investing. This literally would have been engaging in business. So, this guy got to work, and he was using the money to create and build something that would bring benefit to others and would bring a return on the investment of the money. And he is incredibly successful in his efforts. What would be for us 1.5 million becomes $3 million dollars. He doubles his master's money. And then the second servant, in verse 17:

> **"In the same manner the one who *had received* the two *talents* gained two more."**

It's the same thing. Now, notice here first, there's repetition. Whenever we see repetition, we know that is for emphasis. And we'll see the importance of that emphasis, as the parable continues. But notice also, there is differentiation in what is entrusted to the servant, but there is the same result. Both double the master's money. And then we find the third servant in verse 18:

> **"But he who received the one *talent* went away, and dug *a hole* in the ground and hid his master's money."**

Which raises two questions: "What," and "Why?" What did he do with the master's money? Absolutely nothing! He didn't do any business. He did no work. He just opted for the easiest solution to an unwanted problem of being entrusted with someone else's money. Why? Well, we'll get to that in a minute. Verse 19:

> **"Now after a long time the master of those slaves *came and *settled accounts with them."**

Notice, the master does return, but notice it is after, what? **A long time!** And when the master returns, he **settles accounts**. And this language of settling accounts would imply the expectation,

from the very beginning, that they were responsible for taking that which was entrusted to them, and bring a gain to it. And then we see this settling of accounts, beginning of verse 20:

> **"The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'"**

What a settling of accounts! What did the master say to him? "**Well done, good and faithful *servant***." And then He promises him something in the future. ***You've been faithful with a few things; I will entrust you with many things***. For the reward of faithful responsibility in the kingdom is greater future responsibility and opportunity in the master's plan. And third, he tells him those glorious words, "**Enter into the joy of your master.**" Do not miss the fact that this is a beautiful scene. This is a beautiful moment of appreciation, affirmation, reward, and joy. And then, look at verse 22:

> **"Also the one who *had received* the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'"**

Notice it is the exact same response from the master…exactly the same. ***Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will entrust you with more; enter into the joy of your master.*** So again, in this parable, we find repetition. Why? It is for emphasis. Jesus is seeking to make sure we don't miss this beautiful scene of His return and His settling of accounts. But notice, too, there is differentiation. There's differentiation in entrustment, but there is absolutely no differentiation in response from the master. The point is not how much one is entrusted with, but how faithful they are in the use of that which the master has entrusted to them. Then we come to verse 24:

> **"And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no *seed*. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'"**

What a difference with the third servant! "**I knew you to be a hard man,** a harsh man. You're the kind of guy who reaps where he didn't even sow. You gather when you didn't even scatter seed. **And I was afraid**. What if I lost your money? So I put it **in the ground**. Now, here; here is what is yours." He seeks to justify himself by impugning the character of the master. He says, "You're a tight-fisted man. I mean, you want a return, but you didn't even invest. I was the one who was supposed to do the work. I did the reasonable thing. I just kept it in a safe place." And how does the master respond? Verse 26:

> **"But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no *seed*. Then you ought to**

have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival, I would have received *my money* back with interest."

He calls him a **wicked, lazy slave** because he was unwilling to act in the service of the master. Now notice what the master does not say. He does not repeat the slanderous description of the master's character. He does not own that he's a hard, harsh, unfair man, because that is not accurate in the description of the master. But notice what he does repeat. He does acknowledge his expectation that his servants would faithfully labor and that they would bring a return to Him, and thus he rebukes this lazy, insolent slave.

Think of it this way. What if you took all the money that you had for your retirement, and you brought it to a financial planner, and you entrusted it to them. And then, after a long time, you discovered that he or she had simply taken all of your money, and they had kept it in a safe in their office for years. You would be furious at the reckless abuse of their role, and their thoughtless disregard for the return on investment that you were counting on. This servant had refused to do even the simplest bare minimum. Why? Because he regarded his master with contempt. He may have been afraid of the master's wrath, should he have lost the money, but he also had no interest in bringing about a good return for someone else, for the master. And thus, the parable says in verse 28:

"Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'"

This represents the twist in the parable, the unexpected response and action, and the original hearer, the original reader, would have been a chorus of people saying, "Oh, that's not fair," to which Jesus says in verse 29:

"For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."

And the twist in the parable is that Jesus delights to pour out abundance on faithful servants who steward well that which has been entrusted to them. But those who reject Him, and reject His plan, will have no part, no inheritance, and, in fact, will have no place even in His kingdom. Verse 30:

"Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

So what was Jesus saying? Why did he share this parable? What was the original audience hearing and understanding? What we need to remember is, "Who was the original audience?" It was His disciples. It wasn't the crowd. It was His disciples, and the context is extremely important. I'd encourage you sometime this week, "Go back and look at Matthew 23. Look at Matthew 24." For where we are right now is in the last week of Jesus' earthly life and ministry. The triumphal entry has already taken place and He is, day by day, teaching in the temple. And every day He is turning up the heat. In Matthew 23, He declares the eight woes, the eight sharp rebukes on the Pharisees and the scribes. And then, by the end of Matthew 23, He is declaring the coming judgments. In verses 37 through 39, He speaks of the desolation of Jerusalem. And then in Chapter 24:1-2, He

speaks of the coming destruction of the temple, and it is in response to Jesus' words on those things, that the disciples are filled with wonder and turn and ask Him two questions. They say to Him, ***"When will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, the end of the age?"*** That is the context in which the Olivet Discourse, this discussion with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, takes place. And in response to those two questions, Jesus shares a series of parables, and this parable is built entirely on the parable from last week. As Ryan told us last week, we are to be ready. We are to be waiting and watching and looking forward to the return of the King. And this parable builds on that, asking the question, "What does it mean to "**Be on the alert"**? as chapter 25:13 says? That is what Jesus is explaining to His disciples.

And for the first reader, the most likely interpretation of the wicked, lazy servant would have been whom? It would have been the scribes and the Pharisees. N.T. Wright says the scribes and the Pharisees are designated by the wicked servant who hid his master's money. They had been given the Law of Moses. They had been given the temple. They had been given wonderful promises about how God would bless not only Israel, but through Israel, the whole world. And they had buried them in the grounds. They had turned the command to be the light of the world, into an encouragement to keep the light for themselves. They had been worthless slaves. And when verse 30 uses this word, **worthless**, it is describing behavior that completely lacks any use in the service of the King. That is what is being described when it comes to the lazy and wicked servant.

But what about the faithful servants? Again, think about the context. Who is He speaking to? What is about to happen? Jesus is with His disciples, and He is preparing them for what is about to come. In the beginning of chapter 26, we will find out that we are actually only two days away from His arrest and His crucifixion, and the disciples will be uncertain, and they will be confused. And Jesus will soon, after the ascension, be going away for a long time. But before the ascension, after His resurrection, in Matthew 28, He will speak words of blessing and words of entrustment over the disciples, entrusting them, in the Great Commission, with bringing His love and goodness, and making disciples among every people on earth. The peoples of the earth, the mission of God, will be the incredible thing of great value that Jesus will entrust to them. And they must realize the importance of who they are, the entrustments that He has given to them, the expectation of the Master for them to work in His field and bring a return, and the promise that He is coming back, and He will settle accounts and reward His faithful servants.

And oh, what hope this must have given to the first disciples, and to the first readers of Matthew's Gospel. What a glorious and certain hope in the expectation that their labor in the Lord was not in vain. No, instead, faithful service to the King in the building of His kingdom, would result in three things. Look at verses 21 and 23 again. First, *great commendation*, "**Well done, good and faithful servant**." Second, *eternal entrustment,* "**You've been faithful with a few things. I'll put you in charge of many things."** If the equivalent for us would be $1.5 million dollars, and that's a few things, I cannot even imagine what is in the heart of God, that He wants to entrust to His faithful disciples for all of eternity. And the third result is *true joy*. "**Enter into the joy of your master**." This is what Jesus was telling those first disciples, those first readers of Matthew.

So then, what about us today? How does the Parable of the Talents apply to you and me today? I think when we read this parable, there are three things that we need to realize and think about. First, the Master said He was going to be gone for a long time, and the Master is still away. Second,

the command to be faithfully stewarding what has been entrusted to us still applies. And third, the promise of His return to settle accounts, is still certain. In verses 14 and 15 we read this master entrusted his possessions to them, and then he went away on a long journey. So, what has been entrusted to us? The parable uses money as the illustration. I believe the reason is because Jesus wants to make sure that we understand that what has been entrusted is of great value. And I would say that, still today, for every one of us who is a disciple of Jesus Christ, what we have been entrusted with, is of incredible worth. The simplest way I could say what Jesus has entrusted to us is to say to the world, literally, Matthew 28: "**Go and make disciples of all the peoples of the world."** Acts 1:8: "**Be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."** Second Corinthians 5:18-19: "**He has entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation, as though God Himself were making His appeal to them, we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."** We are His ambassadors. We are called to represent Him well to a lost and dying world, every moment, in every way, in every place, to serve the King and to build His kingdom.

But what else do we learn from verse 15? We see there is differentiation and entrustment. To one, he gave five talents, another two, and to another, one. Each disciple is given responsibility from God. But it will not be the same for each one of us in the room, which leads to another really important question. "What has God put in your hands? What has He given to you?" Notice at the end of verse 15, it says, **each according to his own ability**. And again, here, Jesus spoke of talents as money, but we think of talents as abilities. Do you know where our word talent comes from? If you search the etymology of that word, it comes from right here. It comes from this parable. And we recognize that there are actually three areas of ability that Jesus has given to us, and they all feature differentiation between each of us in the room.

First, there is *treasure*. God has put money in each of our hands, but He has put differing amounts in different people's lives. Second is *talent,* as we understand it, our abilities and our giftedness, but he has put different giftedness in each and every one of you in this room today. The third is *time*. Now we all only get 24 hours a day. But every one of us has a different number of days, a different number of years, and none of us knows when our days will be done, and when we will face the Master, and when we will settle accounts. *Treasure, talent, time*, all three are important in considering how we might serve the Lord and steward our lives for the greatest possible return.

Now we're all here together because we're a part of this local congregation…Lincoln Berean Church. So, I want to use, as a way of example, our little corner of the kingdom to talk about what this looks like. Do you realize that, week in and week out, hundreds and hundreds of kids, youth, and students are coming to know Jesus, to understand who He is, and to begin to live life as His disciples because of the investment of so many stewarding what God has given them in this local ministry. And about a thousand adults or more are gathering weekly in our Life Groups, plus our Men's Ministry, our Women's Ministry, and other contexts where all of us are learning what it looks like to: *Come together to know Jesus, to become like Him, and to help others do the same.* Simultaneously, this past year, hundreds of marriages and families have been strengthened as they walk through the journey of life together. Hundreds more people have been helped through our counseling ministries, our spiritual care ministries, our recovery ministries, as they walk through some of the most difficult circumstances of life. And week in and week out, we get to come and gather in this incredible place to lift up the name of God. Thousands of us, together, to worship

Him, to love Him, to know Him. And then we go out from this place, representing an army of love and goodness, pouring out into neighborhoods and workplaces all across Lincoln and beyond. And do you realize that we have 45 full-time staff, planting churches and discipling people in 4 of the most difficult countries on earth? And this weekend, while we gather here, about 6000 people will be gathering in some of the most difficult and unreached places on earth. Why?

All of that has happened because people in this body have chosen to invest in building the kingdom of God. But none of that can happen, none of that will continue to happen, unless each one of us chooses to faithfully, regularly, and generously invest into what God has put into our hands, into His work, building His kingdom. Giving regularly, systematically, and generously of the financial resources that He has put in our hands, choosing to regularly use the giftedness that He has given us, each of us with different giftedness, in the building of His kingdom, and regularly, even sacrificially, investing our time in that which will last forever. Because every dollar, every talent, and every hour we give of ourselves to loving Jesus and serving others in His name is never wasted. It's never wasted. It is never lost.

But every dollar, every talent, every moment that is used living simply, purely, selfishly for ourselves, is a hole in the ground. And I believe it leads to three areas of evaluation that I want to encourage us to process with the Lord and, if you're married, with your spouse this coming week. The first one is this: How are you stewarding the resources, the financial resources that God has entrusted to you for the building of His kingdom? Are you giving regularly, systematically, generously to steward those resources so that people might be disciples and make more disciples? Second: How are you using the abilities that God has uniquely given you for the building of His kingdom? Oh, how we need people with every gift, and strength, and ability to be serving in the building of His kingdom. How God will use that to reach more people and to expand and grow His beautiful kingdom on earth. And third: How are you using the time that God has entrusted to you for the building of His kingdom? Are you regularly, sacrificially investing your time and your energy in His church, and in the things that will last forever? For this is what Jesus is calling His servants to do.

By the way, why did the third servant bury his master's money? It's because he saw him as a ruthless taskmaster. He didn't really even know the master and he certainly didn't love the master, and he did not care about building his kingdom. He resented being asked to earn wealth for another. Why should he be asked to expend his precious time and energy working for another?

I asked at the beginning of the message, “What would you do if I gave you a million dollars? What would you do with it?” But what if I follow that up by saying, “Oh, and by the way, it's not actually yours to keep. It's yours to steward. Put it to work, and I'm going to come back to you at some point in the future and I'm going to expect a return. I'm going to want the initial principal back and whatever you did with it.” Are you in? I'm going to guess most of us in the room would balk at that offer. We would probably say, “No thanks,” because why would I spend my time and my life on Jeff's million dollars? That's a fair question. Because I am not the master. But the posture of the third servant was exactly that to his master.

And that's the heart posture of many today. Why would I invest my time, my talent, and my treasure in building His kingdom? I want to build mine. That's exactly how most people live. And the truth

is, we have every right to choose how we will use our lives. God has given us that right. But we don't get to choose the consequences. For many people, the entire imagery of this parable is absolutely offensive. The idea of being a servant, a slave, is horrific! Most people want to be the king or the queen in their own world. They have no desire to be a servant or a slave of anyone else. That is because they are living in denial that there is a Master, and they are living in ignorance of just how good He really is. What's more, they live, choosing to reject the notion that He will return and settle accounts, regarding what we did with the life He gave to us. And even all of us in this room, if we are not growing to know this Master, to love this Master, to recognize just how good He is, and how beautiful and joyful it is to partner with Him in the building of His kingdom, this parable won't be very attractive to us either.

But the reality is, He is so, so good, and His kingdom is so beautiful. It is so wonderful, so right, so true, so good. And the greatest life is found in the life given fully, unreservedly, generously, extravagantly to partnering with Him to build His kingdom and extend His goodness into this very dark world. And after all, what's the point of the parable? It's not just rejection for those who reject the king and fail to steward what he's entrusted to them. It is that he wants to bless and enlarge each one who partners well with him. That's why it's repeated. No matter how much has been entrusted to us, be it a little or a lot, He longs to say to each of us, "Well done, good and faithful servant." He longs to entrust much more into our hands for all of eternity, and He longs for us to experience the greatest joy we could ever know, with Him.

And that is what those first disciples have been experiencing for nearly 2000 years. And that is what can be said of you one day, if we will offer ourselves, and the time, and the talent, and the treasure that God has entrusted to us, back to Him for the building of His kingdom.

And today we get to celebrate some people who are choosing to invest their lives in building the kingdom. Today we celebrate the completion of the first class in our Lincoln Berean ministry residency, and these people have been choosing to say, "I want to invest in building the kingdom as I await God's return. So I want to ask Shawn Welch, who is the director of our ministry residency, along with our first class of residents to come up, and let's welcome them together this morning. (clapping)

(Shawn): Hey, thanks, Jeff. I really appreciate it. The vision of the ministry residency is to equip and launch future kingdom leaders. Our goal is to equip them in three key areas: Theological development: think the head; Ministry Skill development: think the hand serving; and then Personal development: think the heart. This is an intense 22-month program as our residents can attest, but, "You've made it!" and so it is my honor to be able to recognize, as Jeff said, our very first class of residents.

I'm going to start with Mitch Bruner right here. Mitch has finished the residency, and after completing one more class, he will graduate with a master's degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Yes, give him a hand. (Clapping) Next we have Aidan and Sophie Pauley, and by the way, in case you're wondering with the same last name, yes, they are married. And then Danny Petersen is right here. They have graduated from the Ministry Residency and have earned their master's degree in global leadership from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Let's give them all a hand. (clapping)

Jeff is talking about investing our lives for the sake of the kingdom, and we thought it would be encouraging for you to hear, from our residents, how the Lord has used their willingness to invest their lives over the last two years. So I've got a few questions for you. We're going to start with Sophie. "Sophie, what is one thing you've learned about God through the ministry residency?"

(Sophie) Yes, I've learned a lot about God in the last two years. But something that sticks out, and that I've just seen in the Lord, through the Lord, is that He is always, always working, even though I might not always see it. And He's always doing something far greater and better and more, than I even could ask or imagine. And He also invites me into that process. Joyfully He delights in inviting me into that process, to do ministry with Him, co-labor with Him, and be a part of the work that He's doing. But He also doesn't demand perfection and He welcomes my mistakes, my failures, and, despite my mistakes, He is sufficient and He is perfect, even when I'm not.

(Shawn): "Aidan, what's one thing you've learned about yourself?"

(Aidan): A lot! I started in the residency with an arrogance, thinking, "I know who I am. I know what ministry ought to be done, so I think the residency has been a humbling experience for me. Because of that, I've become more aware of areas of growth in my life that I either was downplaying or wasn't even aware of, that were hindering me from caring for others better. So I've gotten to grow in that, but also just getting to see our staff faithfully ministering to others, but also seeing all of you guys who are serving, showing up at church for the youth, the Next Gen class, or serving on a team every other week, and have shown what faithfully ministering to others look like. That's been a challenge and an encouragement to me.

(Shawn): Thanks Aidan. "Mitch, what is one skill that you've gained that's going to help you be a more effective ministry leader?"

(Mitch): Yea, one skill that I would say I've gained over the past two years of being in this residency is knowing when to lean into the community around me for support and for help when I need it, and to be able to ask for it. They say that no man is an island, and that's true. No person is able to do everything on their own, and that was never the way that God intended for us to live. And so it might be surprising to you to hear that, even working in ministry, it can be really hard to ask for help or to reach out to other people and say that you're overwhelmed or needing some support. But that's true, and in my life, in my experience, I can look back to so many times over the past two years, where God chose to provide for me in ways that came through the help of other people, that so often I never would have gotten if I hadn't reached out and asked for it. And so that is a skill that, admittedly, I'm still growing in, and I'm still learning, but I'm so thankful for the residency to start that growth in me.

(Shawn): And then my final question. "Danny, as a result of going through this program, what is one way you are going to be more intentional when it comes to investing your life and the things that matter?"

(Danny): So, I think being in ministry, it's exciting to think that you want to change the world, that you want to do something big. And I think something I've learned in this program is that you can't change the world if you can't take care of today. And I think I can't change the world if I can't learn to love my neighbor, if I can't learn to forgive my roommates. (Sorry-ha) I can't learn if I can't do today well, so then I can't change the world. So I think something I've learned is to continue to submit to God every single day. I'm working on a prayer devotional right now, trying to go through the Lord's prayer every day. It's a daily journey so I'm thankful for that.

(Shawn): As you can hear, God has been incredibly faithful to our ministry residency. I want to thank all of you for your prayers and support along the way. It's sad to see this part of their journey ending, but we are so excited that we get to launch them out. And we're excited that we get to welcome a new class coming in August. With that being said, we do have a few more openings. So if you know of someone who wants to be intentional with investing their life to become a more effective ministry leader, they can apply online, or you can put them in contact with me, and I would love to chat with them. That application deadline is June 1.

Now lastly, after the service, on our 200 level, Room D203, we are going to get the opportunity to just celebrate and recognize our residents at a reception. So, after the service, come by and get some cake and cookies and you can chat with them a little bit more. Thank you! (Clapping)

(Jeff): You know, it is highly unlikely that anybody is going to hand you or me a million dollars, and we probably are not going to win the lottery. But here's the thing. I think every single one of us has already won the lottery—the lottery of life—because we have been given life by God, and abilities and opportunities have been entrusted to us. We have been invited by a good, good God to join Him in building His kingdom. The Parable of the Talents reminds us He has entrusted things to us, extremely valuable things, to every person in this room. He invites each of us to steward our time, our talent, and our treasure in ways that will grow and last for all of eternity.

So, what are you doing with the lottery of your life? Because each one of us is called to steward well what God has entrusted to us, and to build His kingdom while we wait for His return. And what a joy it will be when we actually get to hear Him say, "**Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master."**

Jesus, thank You so much for being such a good God. Thank You for inviting us to be a part of Your plan. Thank You that being your servants and stewarding what You've entrusted to us, is not a burden, or a bummer, but an opportunity. Oh, God, call us to be people who look at our time, our talent, our treasure, and who delight in saying, "I want to invest it for the greatest return, and the best place for that is in the kingdom of God." Use us to build Your kingdom and reach a lost and dying world, for Your glory and the good of others. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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Lincoln Berean Church, 6400 S. 70th, Lincoln, NE 68516 (402) 483-6512
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