

引言 INTRODUCTION

Do you enjoy what you are doing? Most of us have a day-job, others are students, house-wives or retirees. How do you find the motivation to get up in the morning? I read an article based on a recent global survey. It found that 60% employees feel emotionally-detached from their jobs. Half of the people interviewed also said that they are stressful on a daily basis. Quitting work is not practical for most people, because they need income. That will only drag the problems to the next employment too. The author suggests some solutions. They include assessing your contributions to the company's success, focusing on duties that you enjoy the most, celebrating accomplishments, showing kindness to coworkers and looking for meaning outside of your work. Surely work is just part of our life. Family, relationship and church ministries are all God's calling for us. The parable we will look at today speaks God's expectations on us. This story is a continuation of the parable we studied last week. The theme for both stories is about the second coming of Jesus. The Lord went back to heaven after His resurrection. But He will return one day. To the disciples and to all Christians, the second coming of Jesus is both a comfort and a command. Jesus' promise brings us comfort because He will bring followers to heaven. No matter what hardships we may experience in this life, they are short and insignificant compared to the joy and glory we will receive. At the same time, Jesus' future arrival is also a command. He asks us to manage the duties He gives us. We will give an account of our lives to Him when we meet Him in glory. The lesson in this parable is straightforward: our faithfulness to God proves our faith in Him.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 受託巨額財富 Commission of Huge Wealth

In the story, a master commissioned huge wealth to three servants. He then went to a faraway place. He expected the servants to make a profit on his return. Verse 15 tell us how much money they received: **“To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.”** A talent was the largest denomination of money at that time. One talent is about 75 pounds of silver, or 20 years of salary for a day-labor. You can calculate in your mind how much it is like based on your income. The master gave each person different amount “according to his ability.” The three persons might have various skills in investment or insight on what businesses would be profitable. The more capable the servant was, the higher should be the return. Any company operates by the same principle. A manager and a janitor contribute to the company in different ways. The manager has more knowledge and training. He is given more decision-making tasks that will directly affect the revenue of the company. Therefore, he earns a higher paycheck. After the master had left, the three servants started handling the money. Look at verses 16-18: **16 “He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.”** The three persons actually represent two contrasting attitudes. The ones who got 5 and 2 talents went to work right away. Their loyalty to the master was showed in

their diligence. They both obtained 100% return. How much they made was secondary to the fact that they obtained some profits through work. In contrast, the guy who received one talent did nothing except burying the money in a hole. We shall see how the master treated the servants based on their effort, or the lack of it later. Just like the landlord commissioned huge wealth to his servants, God also gives each believer a lot of resources. For example, Paul mentions spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. Verse 4-6 of the passage read: **4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.** Those gifts are special abilities God gives to Christians for them to serve in the church. Examples are teaching, a stronger faith or a more compassionate heart. Besides spiritual gifts, all of our talents are also from God. You may be able to paint or cook. You may be good at numbers or technology. The master in the parable gave the servants certain amount of money according to their abilities. The Holy Spirit gives each believer specific gifts based on His will. Paul continues to say in verse 11: **All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.** God created us, and He shaped us differently as He sees fit. You can admire the strengths other brothers and sisters have. You can ask God for certain gifts and talents. But it is up to God to answer you. However, do not overlook the abilities you have that others do not have. I can preach and I love to sing. But I cannot hit a nail straight and I have no clue how to teach little kids Bible. God puts us in the same church so that together we will complete a jigsaw puzzle and make it a beautiful picture. No one person can do it all. God has equipped you in a certain way. He puts you in this church to serve Him by serving people. It is unbiblical for coworkers to think that they do not need others. It is unbiblical too for people to think that they are not needed. There are retirees in the job market. But there is no retiree in God's family. I pray that each of you will find a role to serve.

2. 因勤勞得稱讚 Commendation for Hard Work

The master entrusted the three servants huge wealth. He returned home after a long time. Now it was the time for the workers to report their results. Two of them received commendation for their hard work. The five-talent guy earned another 5. The two-talent servant also double the capital. The master must be very satisfied. He gave the same commendation to both persons. Verses 21 and 23 are identical in wordings: **... 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'** Both men put the master's money to good use rather than squandering it away. They demonstrated their faithfulness in three ways. First, they were **dependable**. They worked hard even though the master was away. They did not hang around sipping coffee, thinking that the master might not return any time soon. They cared about the master's interest by bringing back an interest. Second, they were **diligent**. They went to work soon after they got the money. They did not want to waste the master's money by wasting profitable opportunities. Third, they were also **devoted**. Accumulation of wealth takes time and careful planning. Nowadays, some people look for short-term gains by flipping houses and cars. The more eager they look for quick money, the higher will be the risk. However, we can imagine that those two servants went to work daily. Because of all that, the master rewarded them for their faithfulness. The reward was two-fold. First, they were given more **responsibilities**. What kind of bonus was it for getting more work? The master should have given them a paid vacation. They actually received a promotion. Workmen became foremen. Your boss will do the same to you if you work hard. A title upgrade means more duties

and a higher pay. Second, they were able to share the master's **joy**. Perhaps they could celebrate with a feast at the master's table. They might even receive a monetary gift. Similar, your manager may treat the team a nice dinner for hitting certain goals. Your company may reward you with a year-end bonus. A happy owner wants his subordinates to be happy too. The scene where the servants gave an account to the master symbolizes the future judgment. The Bible tells us that there will be two judgments in heaven. The first one is called "the Great White Throne" judgment. It is when unbelievers will be condemned. They will forever be separated from God. The second judgment is more like an award ceremony. God will present rewards to His children. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 3:13-14 – **13 Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.** God will evaluate our works much like using a fire to test the durability of a house. Those who accumulate eternal value by their works will be similar to people using stronger materials in their construction. They will pass the test with flying colors. God will reward them. He does not look at how big or fancy the structure is. His emphasis is on our faithfulness. God gives each of us different roles in the society. Your job nature, the number of people you impact and how far-reaching the results will be are different from others'. God demands faithfulness from you regardless of your position. You claim Jesus as your Lord the moment you are saved. He gives you a new life instantly. You still carry the same title at work. Your assignments and salary remain unchanged. However, you now work for a heavenly Boss. You still report to your manager on a regular basis. But ultimately, you will give an account to Jesus. Even if your earthly boss does not notice your contributions, your Heavenly Master will keep a record of your good work. That should motivate you to work hard.

3. 因懶惰受責備 Condemnation for Hardly Working

The first two servants received commendation for their hard work. In contrast, the man who was entrusted one talent received condemnation for hardly working. He returned the money in full to the master. He explains in verses 24-25 why he did nothing with the money: **24 ... 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'** Perhaps he worried that the owner would ask him to compensate from his own pocket should he lose money in trading. He reasoned that the safest way to avoid a loss was to leave the money untouched. Was he not afraid that the master would punish him for staying idle the whole time? By doing nothing, the money actually lost value over time. The current inflation teaches us a few things about finance. Even kids know that everything is getting more expensive! Say, a bag of candies that used to be a dollar is now \$1.25. Children have to ask parents for more money, or they demand a raise in the allowance for doing chores. The parents have to buy fewer non-essential items, invest more, find a part-time job or simply ask their kids to cut the sweets. The servant in the parable at least had one thing he could do. The master suggests in verse 27: **'Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.'** A bank borrows your money and invests it. In return, it shares a portion of the profit with you in the form of an interest. The master blamed the lazy servant for failing to do the bare minimum that guaranteed a sure return. He was punished in two ways for his negligence. Look at verse 28: **'So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.'** In essence, he was fired by the boss. The money would be given to a more

capable servant. Besides, we see a more severe penalty in verse 30: ‘**And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’ Jesus uses expressions of “casting out into darkness” and “weeping and gnashing of teeth” a few times in the gospels. They depict people who are shut out from God’s eternal blessings. In short, they will end up in hell. Surely, Jesus was not teaching salvation based on works. The Bible tells us that we are saved by God’s grace through faith. However, our faith in God must be demonstrated through our work for God. The lazy servant showed that he did not belong because he did not invest the money the master entrusted him. Jesus said that when we are saved we are reconnected to Him like a branch grafted to a grapevine. Producing fruit is the only sign for a successful attachment. The Lord says in John 15:8 – “**By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.**” There are two effects when we live a fruitful life for God’s Kingdom. First, it verifies our status as Jesus’ followers. Second, it glorifies God. We show faithfulness to God by our fruitfulness. Besides gifts and talents we mentioned earlier, God also gives you time, good health, relationship, opportunities, etc. to invest. We can never be perfect in this life. However, we should pursue excellence. Most managers expect their subordinates to learn new skills. You should find ways to improve ministries too. Be humble to receive input. Say you serve as a Sunday greeter or usher, you can be more friendly to people. Show a warm smile and say “good morning” with sincerity. Teachers can learn new ways of teaching. Be more interactive with students rather than doing a monologue. Not just explain the Bible but also help students apply the truths in daily life. No matter what your position is, challenge yourself to do better because God deserves the very best of you. Church is a place where you will not be fired because you make mistakes. The fear of failure should not make us hesitant to try new things.

結論 CONCLUSION

Our faithfulness to God proves our faith in God. Most of us will resume our day-jobs tomorrow. What will energize you as you open your eyes in the morning? What gives you the incentives to take initiative and work? Recently, I heard an interesting story on the Christian radio. The son of a DJ plays football in school. He is surprised to see that a teammate has major improvement this season. He asks him what causes the progress. The boy replied: “My dad says he will pay me if I do better. So far he has given me \$500.” That is a lot of money for a high school student. You can guess what happens next. The son of the DJ then asks his parents for money! Monetary reward is surely a strong attraction to most people. However, one day we will stop earning money. Does it mean that we should stop serving God? After all, most churches will not pay people for teaching or cleaning. When we see God, money will become useless because the Master of Heaven will give us everything we need. Do not let dollars, duties, deadlines and people’s demands be the only reasons that compel you to work. But let your love for God be the ultimate driving force. Love lightens our burden, strengthens us when we are tired and gives us joy even when no one shows appreciation. We know that God will give us a fair judgment when He sees us. Blessed are those who hear God’s approval: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.”

引言 INTRODUCTION

你喜歡你所做的事情嗎？我們大多數人都要上班，其他人是家庭主婦或退休人士。你如何找到早上起床的動力？我讀了一篇文章，它的內容是根據最近一份全球調查的。研究發現，百份之六十的人並不投入他們的工作。一半的受訪者也表示，他們每天都覺得有工作壓力。對大多數人來說，辭職是不可能的，因為他們需要收入。這只會把問題拖到下一份工作。作者提出了一些解決方案。其中包括評估你對公司的貢獻、專注於你最喜歡的任務、慶祝得到的成就、向同事表示友善以及在工作以外尋找意義。當然，工作只是我們生命的一部份。家庭生活、人際關係和教會事奉都是神對我們的呼召。我們今天要看的比喻談到神對我們的期望。這個故事是我們上週學習的比喻的延續。這兩個故事都是有關耶穌的再來。主復活後回到天上，但是有一天祂會回來。對門徒和所有基督徒來說，耶穌的再來是安慰，同時也帶有命令。耶穌的應許給我們安慰，因為祂會迎接跟隨者去天堂。無論我們今生經歷多少困難，與我們將要得到的喜樂和榮耀相比，都是短暫而微不足道的。同時，耶穌的再來也帶給我們命令。主要求我們完成祂交託給我們的責任。當我們在榮耀中遇見主時，我們必須向祂交帳。這個比喻的教訓很簡單：我們對神的忠心證明了我們對祂的信心。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 受託巨額財富 Commission of Huge Wealth

在故事裡，三個僕人受託巨額財富。主人把錢交給他們之後便出遠門。他希望僕人們能為他賺錢。第 15 節告訴我們他們被分配到多少錢：「按著各人的才幹給他們銀子：一個給了五千，一個給了二千，一個給了一千，就往外國去了。」一千是當時最大面額的貨幣。一千銀子大約相當於 75 磅白銀，等於一般工人 20 年的薪水。你可以根據自己的收入估計大概是多少錢。主人「按著各人的才幹」給他們不同的金額。這三個人可能擁有不同的投資技能或是洞察力，知道什麼生意可以賺錢。僕人的能力越強，回報就應該越高。任何公司都遵循相同的原則運作。經理和清潔工對公司有不同的貢獻。經理的學歷和訓練比較豐富。他負責更多決策的任務，直接影響公司的收入。因此，他的薪水也更高。主人走後，三個僕人開始經營得到的金錢。請看第 16-18 節：16「那領五千的隨即拿去做買賣，另外賺了五千。17 那領二千的也照樣另賺了二千。18 但那領一千的去掘開地，把主人的銀子埋藏了。」這三個人其實代表了兩種截然不同的態度。獲得五千和二千銀子的人立刻開工。他們對主人的忠誠表現在他們的勤奮上。他們都獲得了 100% 的回報。他們賺了多少

錢是次要，重點是他們因為努力而獲得利潤。相比之下，拿到一千銀子的僕人除了把錢埋在地裡之外什麼也沒做。我們稍後會看到主人如何根據僕人的努力或缺乏努力來對待他們。就像地主委託僕人巨額財富一樣，神也賜給每個信徒很多資源。例如，保羅在哥林多前書 12 章中提到屬靈的恩賜：**4 恩賜原有分別，聖靈卻是一位。5 職事也有分別，主卻是一位。6 功用也有分別，神卻是一位，在眾人裡面運行一切的事。**這些恩賜是神賦予基督徒在教會中服事的能力。例如教導、更大的信心或是憐憫等等。除了屬靈恩賜之外，我們所有的才能都是來自神。你也許會畫畫或做飯。你可能擅長處理數字或是科技。比喻中的主人根據僕人的能力給他們不同數量的金錢。聖靈依照祂的旨意賜給每個信徒特定的恩賜。保羅在第 11 節繼續說：**這一切都是這位聖靈所運行、隨己意分給各人的。**神創造了我們，並且以祂認為合適的方式塑造了我們。你可以欣賞其他弟兄姐妹的優點。你可以向神祈求某些恩賜和才幹，但最終是神決定是否給你。但千萬不要忽略你擁有而別人沒有的能力。我會講道而且我喜歡唱歌，但我連敲釘子都會歪掉，也不知道如何教小孩學聖經。神把我們放在同一個教會，讓我們好像拼圖一樣互相連接，合成一幅美麗的圖畫。沒有一個人可以完成所有的事情。神以某種方式裝備了你。祂把你放在這個教會裡，使你透過服事人來服事祂。如果任何同工覺得不需要別人的幫忙，那是不符合聖經的。如果任何人認為沒有他們參與的地方也是不符合聖經的。就業市場上有退休人士，但神的家裡卻沒有退休人士。我期望每個人都能找到自己的服事。

2. 因勤勞得稱讚 Commendation for Hard Work

主人委託給三個僕人巨額財富。過了很長一段時間後他終於回來。現在是工人匯報成果的時候了。其中兩人因勤勞而得到稱讚。得到五千銀子的僕人又賺了五千，得到二千銀子的僕人也有一倍的收穫。主人一定很滿意。他給兩個人同樣的稱讚。第 21 節和第 23 節的措詞是完全相同的：**...『好，你這又良善又忠心的僕人，你在不多的事上有忠心，我要把許多事派你管理；可以進來享受你主人的快樂。』**兩個人人都善用主人的錢，而不是揮霍掉。他們以三種方式表達忠心。首先，他們是**可靠**的。縱使主人不在，他們仍然努力工作。他們沒有偷懶喝咖啡，以為主人可能不會很快回來。他們帶來利潤，表示他們關心主人的利益。其次，他們很**勤奮**。拿到錢之後，他們就馬上去投資了。他們不想因為浪費賺錢的機會而讓主人有損失。第三，他們也很**盡責**。財富的累積需要時間和仔細的計劃。如今，有些人透過炒房子、炒車子來尋求短期利益。他們越心急想要快速賺錢，風險就會越高。然而，我們可以想像兩個僕人每天都去工作。因此，主人獎勵了他們的忠心。他們得到雙重的獎勵。首先，主人交給他們更多的**責任**。工作量增加怎麼會是獎勵？主人應該讓他們免費渡假才對。他們實際上被升職了，工人變成了工頭。如果你努力工作，你的老闆也會同樣回報你。頭銜升級意味著更多的職責和更高的薪水。其次，他們能夠分享主人的**喜悅**。也許他們可以與主人一同吃大餐來慶祝，他們甚至可能會得到一筆獎金。同樣地，如果你的團隊達到某些目標，經理可能會請員工吃大餐。

你的公司或許會給你年終獎金。一個快樂的主人希望他的下屬也快樂。僕人向主人交帳的場景象徵將來的審判。聖經告訴我們，天上會有兩場審判。第一個審判稱為「白色大寶座」的審判。那是非信徒被定罪的時候。他們將永遠與神分離。第二個審判其實更像是頒獎典禮。神會獎賞祂的兒女。保羅在哥林多前書 3:13-14 說：**13 各人的工程必然顯露，因為那日子要將他表明出來，有火發現；這火要試驗各人的工程怎樣。14 人在那根基上所建造的工程若存得住，他就要得賞賜。**神會評估我們的工作，就像用火來測試房屋的耐用性一樣。那些有永恆價值的成果類似於堅固的材料。這樣的工程會順利通過驗試。工人會得到神的獎賞。祂不看房子有多大或多漂亮，祂注意我們的忠心。神給每個人在社會中不同的角色。你的工作性質、你影響的人數以及影響的深遠程度都與其他人不同。無論你是什麼職位，神都要求你忠心。當你得救的那一刻，你就宣告耶穌是你的主。祂立刻賜給你新生命。你的職位頭銜、任務和薪水保持不變。然而，你現在為一位天上的老闆工作。你仍然定期向你的經理報告。但最終，你要向耶穌交帳。就算你地上的老闆可能沒有注意到你的貢獻，你天上的老闆也會記念你的努力。這應該會激勵你更加勤奮工作。

3. 因懶惰受責備 Condemnation for Hardly Working

前面兩個僕人因為勤勞得到稱讚。相比之下，拿到一千銀子的僕人卻因為懶惰而受到責備。他把錢原數還給主人。他在第 24 至 25 節解釋他為什麼不去經營那一筆錢：**24 ...『主啊，我知道你是忍心的人，沒有種的地方要收割，沒有散的地方要聚斂，25 我就害怕，去把你的一千銀子埋藏在地裡。請看，你的原銀子在這裡。』**也許他擔心如果虧本的話，主人可能要他來賠償。因此他認為，避免損失最安全的方法就是不碰那些錢。但是，難道他不怕因為懶惰被主人懲罰嗎？其實如果不採取任何行動，錢是會逐漸貶值的。目前的通貨膨脹教會了我們一些有關金錢的知識。連小孩子也知道東西越來越貴！比如說，一包糖果以前是 1 美元，現在是 1.25 美元。孩子們必須向父母要更多的錢，或要求增加做家務的零用錢。父母必須少買一些非必需品，多投資，找一份兼職工作，或乾脆叫孩子少吃糖果。比喻中的僕人至少可以做一件事。主人在第 27 節中建議：**『就當把我的銀子放給兌換銀錢的人，到我來的時候，可以連本帶利收回。』**銀行借你的錢來進行投資，銀行把部分賺到的利潤給你作利息。主人指責這個懶惰的僕人沒有盡到最低的本份。他因為失職而受到兩方面懲罰。請看第 28 節：**『奪過他這一千來，給那有一萬的。』**他被老闆解雇了。他的錢將交給更能幹的僕人。此外，我們在第 30 節看到更嚴厲的懲罰：**『把這無用的僕人丟在外面黑暗裡；在那裡必要哀哭切齒了。』**耶穌在福音書中多次使用「被丟在外面黑暗裡」和「哀哭切齒」這些形容。它們描述那些得不到神永恆祝福的人，意思是他們最終會下地獄。當然，耶穌不是教導靠行為來得救。聖經告訴我們，我們是靠著神的恩典，憑信心回應得救的。然而，我們對神的信心必須透過服事神表現出來。這個懶惰的僕人因為沒有投資主人託付給他的錢，就表明了他不屬於那個家。耶穌說，當我們得救時，我們便與祂和好，就像樹枝連接在

葡萄樹上。結出果實是成功連接的唯一證明。主在約翰福音 15:8 說：「你們多結果子，我父就因此得榮耀，你們也就是我的門徒了。」當我們為神過著豐盛生活時，會產生兩個效果。首先，它證明我們是耶穌的跟隨者。第二，它能榮耀神。我們結出果子表明對神的信心。除了我們前面提到的恩賜和才幹之外，神也給你時間、健康、人際關係、機會等等來投資。我們這一生不可能達到完美。但是，我們應該追求卓越。大多數經理都希望他們的下屬進修新的技能。你在教會裡也應該不斷改進你的服事。你必須謙卑地接受建議。假設你是主日的迎賓或招待員，你可以對人們表示友善。露出溫暖的微笑，真誠地說「早安」。老師可以學習新的教學方法。多與學生互動，而不是獨白。不僅解釋聖經，也幫助學生在日常生活中應用真理。無論你的角色是什麼，挑戰自己做得更好，因為神配得你獻上最好的給祂。教會是一個你不會因為犯錯而被解僱的地方，因此不應該因為怕失敗而不勇於作新嘗試。

結論 CONCLUSION

我們對神的忠心證明了我們對祂的信心。我們大多數人明天都要上班。當你早上睜開眼睛時，什麼因素會使你有衝勁？是什麼動力激勵你主動工作？最近，我在基督徒電台聽到一個有趣的故事。一位節目主持人的兒子在學校打美式足球。他很驚訝地看到一個隊友這個球季的技術突飛猛進。他問他有什麼原因使他大有進步。男孩回答說：「我爸爸說如果我打得好便會給我錢。到目前為止他已經給了我 500 美元。」這對一個高中生來說是很多錢了。你可以猜到接下來會發生什麼事。節目主持人的兒子回家後便向父母要錢！金錢對大多數人來說無疑具有強烈的吸引力。然而，有一天我們會停止賺錢，這是否等於我們應該停止事奉神？畢竟，大多數教會不會付錢給聖經老師或清潔的義工。當我們見主面之時，金錢就會變得毫無用處，因為神會給我們所需的一切。不要讓金錢、職責和別人的期望成為你唯一工作的原因。讓你對神的愛成為最終的推動力。愛幫助減輕我們的重擔，在我們疲倦時給我們力量，在沒有人表示讚賞時使我們仍然喜樂。我們知道，當我們見到神之時，祂一定會給我們公正的判斷。那些聽到神讚賞的人是有福的：「好，你這又良善又忠心的僕人，你在不多的事上有忠心，我要把許多事派你管理；可以進來享受你主人的快樂。」