

The Vineyard – Investing for God's Glory

We've been examining the Master's Business, (John 15:15-16) specifically, that which brings him glory: "*This is to my Father's glory, **that you bear much fruit.***" (John 15:8).

It's Wednesday, two days before Jesus crucifixion. He has so much to teach the Twelve because, whether they know it or not, they will be entrusted with the Father's business.. So, the Kingdom parables at this time are extremely important! Interestingly, one of them is most informative about multiplication in the Master's business.

"The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going into another country, who called together his servants and **loaned them money to invest for him** while he was gone. He gave \$5,000 to one, \$2,000 to another, and \$1,000 to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities—and then left on his trip. The man who received the \$5,000 began immediately to buy and sell with it and soon earned another \$5,000. The man with \$2,000 went right to work, too, and earned another \$2,000. But the man who received the \$1,000 dug a hole in the ground and hid the money for safekeeping. **After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to him to account for his money.** The man to whom he had entrusted **the \$5,000 brought him \$10,000.** His master praised him for good work. Next came the man who had received the \$2,000, with the report, **'Sir, you gave me \$2,000 to use, and I have doubled it.** Then the man with the \$1,000 came and said, **'Sir, I knew you were a hard man, and I was afraid you would rob me of what I earned, so I hid your money in the earth and here it is!'** "But his master replied, **'Wicked man! Lazy slave! Since you knew I would demand your profit, you should at least have put my money into the bank so I could have some interest.**

INVESTMENTS! If you have them, you know two facts: 1) you want to make a return and 2) you know there are risks involved! Both facts are in the forefront here. A wealthy person risks \$8000, an exorbitant sum for that day, on three servants!! Those to whom the money was given were not investment professionals at T.

Rowe Price. They weren't even ordinary people. They were household servants (check out the pedigree of the Twelve!). I doubt if anybody today would choose this motley crew as financial advisors! Second, two of the servants immediately took risks, buying and selling (both would have been comfortable on Wall St!).

Warren Buffett returned and immediately wanted an accounting as regard his investments. Being the risky kind, two of the servants did extremely well for the big shot. I believe the third servant is merely a foil in the story. A guarded protectionist, not wanting to risk at all, he totally missed the mind and heart of the Master! Consequently, He lost it all!

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s we are members of the Kingdom, the Master's Business. Our supreme purpose is to increase the glory of the Father. The parable above indicates five points, the first of which is most important. The Master is deeply concerned about his return on investments. Second, literally everything about your life, time, talent and treasure, is a loan with a well defined purpose; namely, to increase the Father's glory by producing much fruit. Third, the amount which you are given to invest is NOT the point. Rather, how you put it to work IS! Fourth, using the Master's money will involve risk! Contrariwise, if in following Jesus, you are rather comfortable and content, you might want to examine the third servant. This is especially pertinent relative to fruit on your branch! Fifth, the Apostles' Creed declares: "*he's coming to judge the living and the dead.*" The context of this statement is: "***I BELIEVE*** ..." What's the standard of judgment? Most, I suspect, would attach this statement to "*believing in Jesus.*" I do not think the context will permit this. Like the returning wealthy owner, Jesus is returning to "*call account for his money*" relative to his servants. John Calvin, one of the two instigators of the Protestant Reformation (Luther was the other) stated that Jesus "*prime motive was zeal to illustrate the glory of God.*" (Calvinism and the Glory of God)

Finally, in the last three posts I have attempted to establish but one fact: **to bring glory to God we must be about His business of "*producing fruit*"** (John 15:8) and "***making disciples***" (Matthew 28:18) Undoubtedly, there are other

Kingdom activities none of which I'm trying to denigrate. However, the scriptures, as well as early church history, compel me to assert this: **the heart of the Father is to bring the whole world into his Kingdom!** I know this is most likely offensive to many "*church-goers*", yet, please examine the heart of the Father. Apart from fruit on your branch, what's the point, really?