

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**Matthew 25:14-23**  
**Lesson #35**  
**Productive Waiting**  
**05/24/2020**

## “Signs of the Times” (Matthew 24-25)

“The beginning of birth pangs”

**24:4-14**

- ✓ False Christs will come
- ✓ Wars & rumors of wars
- ✓ Famine & earthquakes
- ✓ Believers hated by all
- ✓ Conflict within the ch.
- ✓ False prophets
- ✓ Many are mislead
- ✓ Increased lawlessness
- ✓ Love will grow cold
- ✓ World evangelism

“The great Tribulation”

**24:15-28**

**Intensified**

- ✓ Disrespect
- ✓ Disturbances
- ✓ Deception

Second Coming of Christ

**24:29-31**

We are called not only to read the signs of the times but also to be a sign in & for our times.

**24:32-25:30**

**5 Parables**

- ✓ Fig Tree
- ✓ Thief
- ✓ Servants
- ✓ Virgins
- ✓ Talents

1

## How are we to prepare for waiting?

### Previous Weeks

**External Trials:** Fig Tree

**#1 Don't be surprised by tribulations.**

**Internal Temptations:** Thief, Servants

**#2 Don't be slack while unsupervised.**

**Resource Management #1:** Virgins,

**#3 Don't be standing by unprepared.**

**Resource Management #2:** Talents,

**#4 Don't be standing by unproductive.**



2

## Matthew 25

“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. 15 And 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. 16 Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. 17 In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. 18 But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money.”

19 Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 And 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.” 21 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.” 22 The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, “Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.” 23 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.”

3

## Preliminary observations

- The cultural details (wedding, guarding a house, making money, etc.) of the parables **should not distract from their main point.**
- The five parables in Matt.24-25 address a common issue - **managing the waiting process** for the promised King & kingdom.
- Luke 19:11-27 put this parable in the **same context** but with some different details.

**Luke 19:11**

“... He went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and **they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.**”

4

## Productive Waiting

“14 For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted **his possessions (money)** to them.”

### 1. Clarify your Mission.

**Matthew 28**

“18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,** 20 **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.””

**This has become the mission statement for the church to evangelize the world.**

**It is termed the “Great Commission”.**

5

“There is no higher calling or greater privilege known to man than being involved in helping fulfill the Great Commission.”

Bill Bright



6

“You have one business on earth – to save souls.”

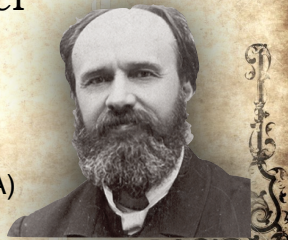
John Wesley



7

“The Christian is not obedient unless he is doing all in his power to send the Gospel to the heathen world.”

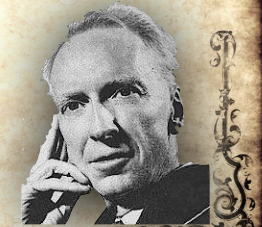
A.B. Simpson  
(founder of CMA)



8

“Any church not involved in the Great Commission has forfeited its biblical right to exist.”

Oswald J Smith  
(pastor / author)



9

### Why don't we see:

- the Apostles **reiterating** the “Great Commission” to the church?
- the Apostles **emphasizing** world evangelism in their letters?
- more **attention to world missions** before the 19th century?
- the term “great commission” used **until the late 19th century?**



**Is this really THE Biblical purpose for the church?**



10

Some observe that the “Great Commission” was **fulfilled by the Apostles in the 1st cent.?**

*Colossians 1:23*

“... the hope of **the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven**, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”

*Romans 16*

“<sup>25</sup> Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, <sup>26</sup> but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been **made known to all the nations**, leading to obedience of faith;”

11



Others suggest that **Eph.4 & Rom.12** may be the Apostles' explanation of **Matt.28:18-20**.

*Ephesians 4*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling** with which you have been called, . . .

<sup>7</sup> But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men." (Ps.68:18) <sup>9</sup> (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)"

12

*Paraphrase*

*Ephesians 4:7-10 (with Ps.68:18)*

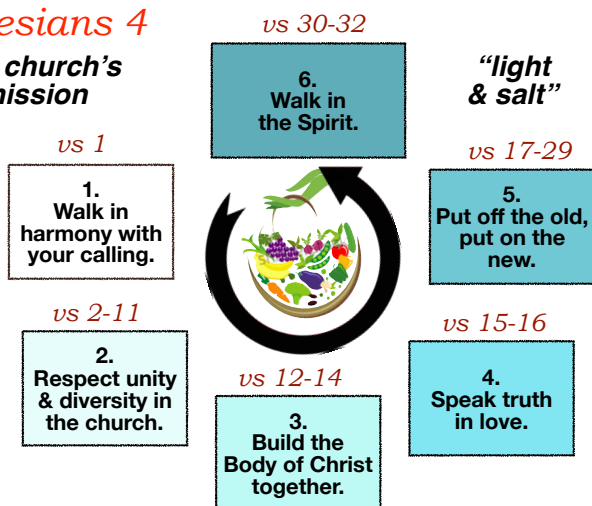
"We have each been given a part of the bounty of Christ's victory over his enemies; as in ancient Israel where the king arrived home and shared the spoils of those he conquered. The Jesus that we follow is Lord of heaven who conquered the rebels in low places to put their skills in the service of his kingdom."

The **image of God** which was stolen by Satan to serve the world's agenda, is now taken back to build the Body of Christ as salt and light to the world.

13

*Ephesians 4*

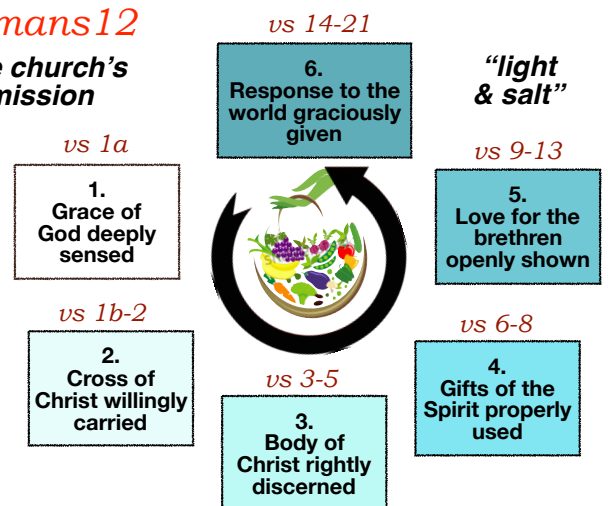
**The church's mission**



14

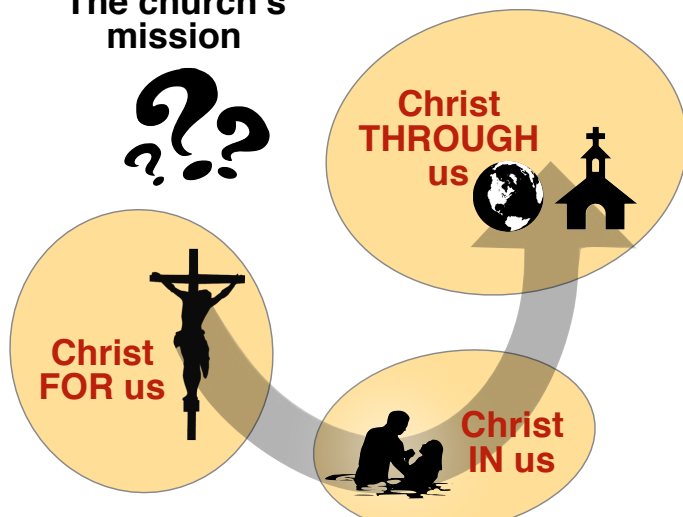
*Romans 12*

**The church's mission**



15

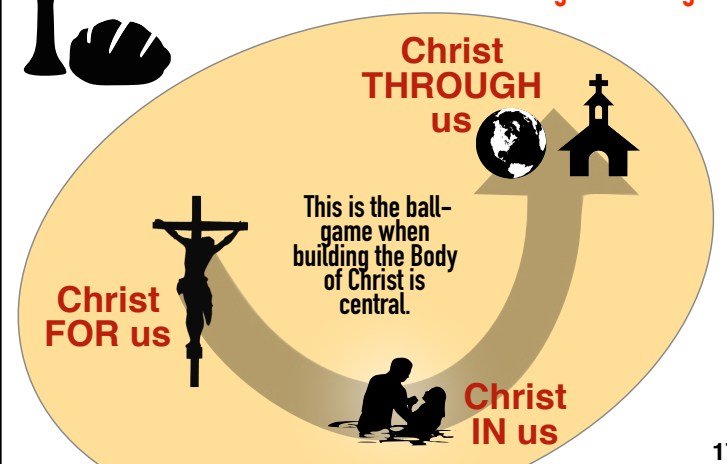
**The church's mission**



16

**The Mission of the church**

**Be true to yourselves bearing God's image.**



17

## Productive Waiting

<sup>14</sup> For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted **his possessions (money)** to them.

### 1. Clarify your Mission.

- to bear the image of God
- as a part of the Body of Christ

*John 1:9*

“There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”

Could it be that at the **core of Christian mission is respect for the image of God** in all people?

Could it be that the suppressed image of God within all of us is **awakened by the Spirit through the indwelling Christ** enabling us to function as the “Body of Christ”?

18

## What is God’s “possession”?

### Is it not Christ (the Image of God) in us?

*1 Peter 2:9*

“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **a people for God’s own possession** . . .”

*Ephesians 4*

<sup>14</sup> As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but speaking the truth in love, we are **to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ**, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

19

## Productive Waiting

<sup>14</sup> For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted **his possessions (money)** to them.

### 1. Clarify your Mission.

- to bear the image of God
- as a part of the Body of Christ

*Ephesians 1*

<sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are **the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**, <sup>19</sup> and what is the **surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe**.”

**Our mission is to be true to ourselves  
bearing the image of God  
as the Body of Christ.**

20

## Productive Waiting

<sup>15</sup> And 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.

### 2. Accept your Responsibility.

- with unique abilities and roles
- coordinated by grace and truth.

*1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

“Now there are varieties of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of **ministries**, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all persons.”

21

*1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

“Now there are varieties of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of **ministries**, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all persons.”

Motivations “gifts”	Ministries “ministries”	Manifestations “effects”
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What God  
has given us  
to use

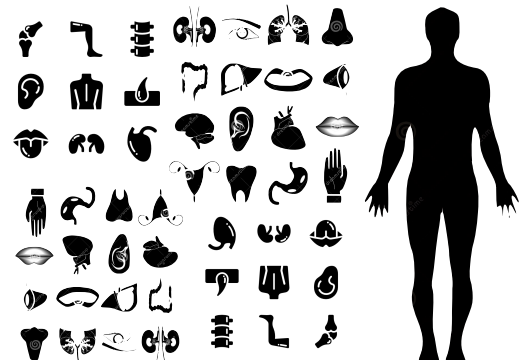
Where God has given  
us opportunity to use  
our gifts

What fruit has  
come from using  
our gifts

22

**The church looks like the Body of Christ  
only when the pieces are attached to one  
another and the head.**

Being  
organized is  
not the same  
as being an  
organism.

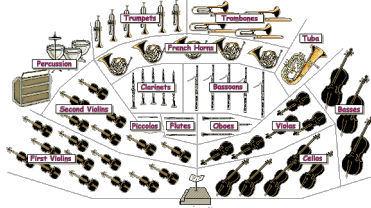


23

**Jesus identifies himself with us as though we were part of the same body.**

*Matthew 25:40*

“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’”



24



**The church is a single body, with diverse parts, responding to Christ, & intimately connected, through a common Spirit.**



**Bride / Groom**  
(Ephesians 5:22-32)



**Branch / Vine**  
(John 15:1-16)



**Sheep / Shepherd**  
(John 10:11)



**Body / Head**  
(1 Corinthians 12:27)

**Building / Cornerstone**  
(1 Peter 2:4-7)

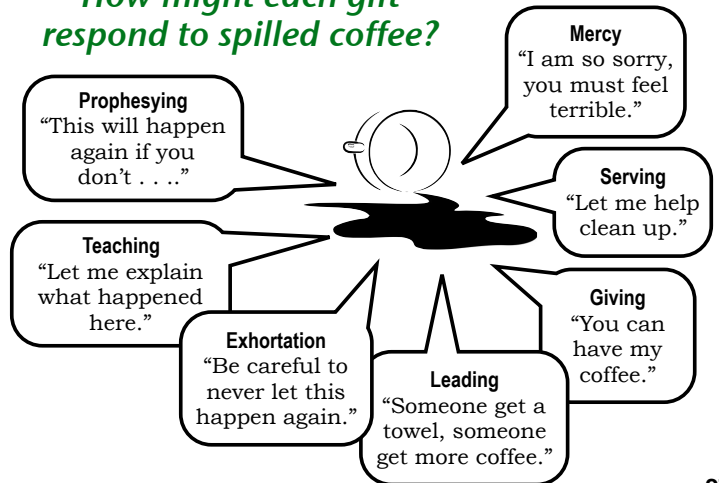
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**We are not all created equal, nor are we called to the same role, nor do we share the same perspective.**  
(Rom. 12:3-8)



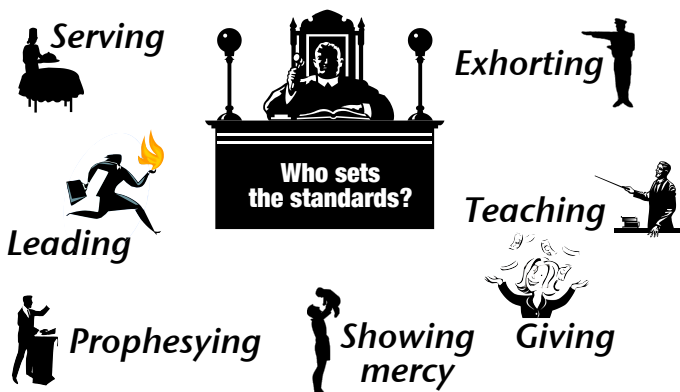
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**How might each gift respond to spilled coffee?**



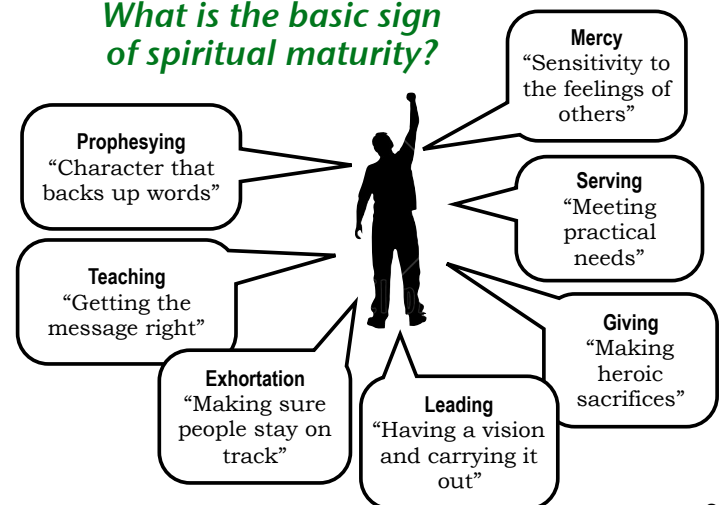
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**Each has a different strength which can become a standard for scorekeeping.**



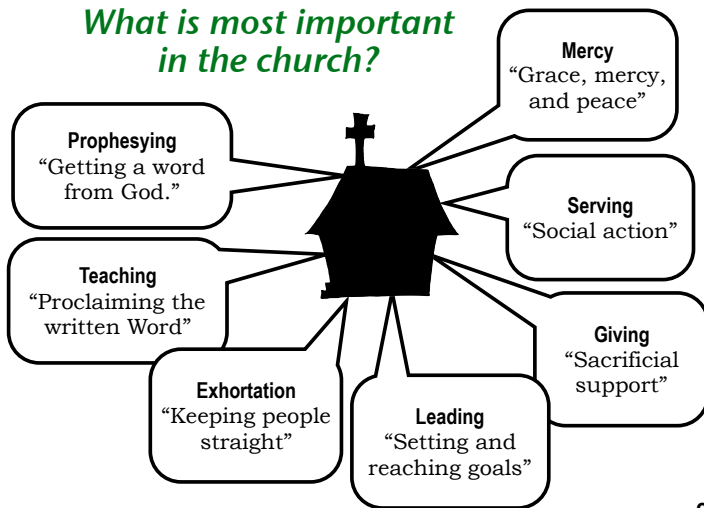
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**What is the basic sign of spiritual maturity?**



29

## What is most important in the church?



30

## Run the race but don't leave your lane, kick your neighbor, or lose your balance.

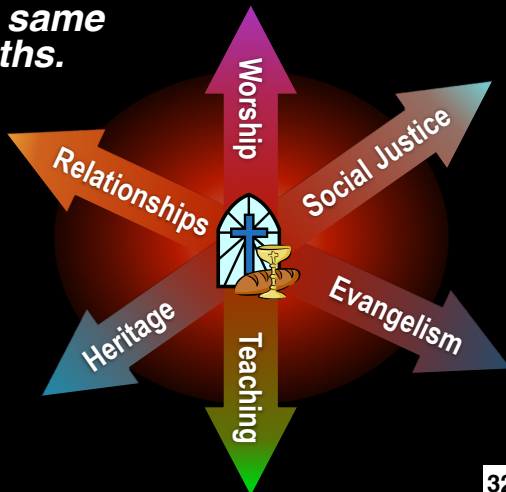
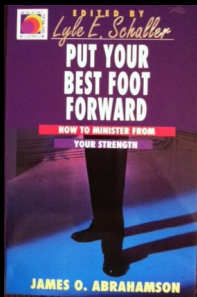
Hebrews 12

"1 let us . . . **run with endurance the race that is set before us**, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. "



31

## Christians do not all have the same strengths.

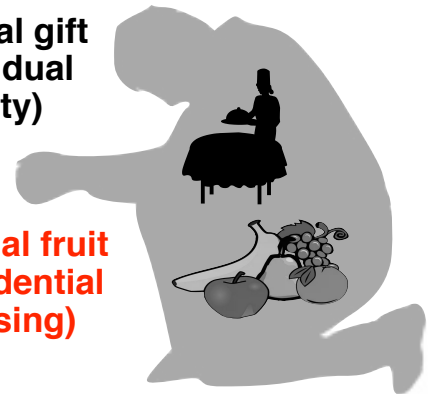


32

## Don't confuse character with gifts or fruit.

Spiritual gift  
(individual ability)

Spiritual fruit  
(providential blessing)



Spiritual character (universal calling)

33

## Productive Waiting

"23 . . . "Well done, good and faithful slave; . . . I will put you in charge of many things; **enter into the joy of your master.**"

### 3. Discover your Joy.

- with personal peace
- and opportunity for greater blessing.

John 15

"8 By this is My Father glorified, **that you bear much fruit**, and so prove to be My disciples. 9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and **that your joy may be made full.**"

34

1 Corinthians 3

"12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 **If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward.**"

**Building on the "foundation (Jesus Christ)" so as to bring lasting fruit will be rewarded.**

**This is a N.T. church application of the parable of the Talents.**

35

## ***Productive Waiting***

### **1. Clarify your Mission.**

- to bear the image of God
- as a part of the Body of Christ

### **2. Accept your Responsibility.**

- with unique abilities and roles
- coordinated by grace and truth.

### **3. Discover your Joy**

- with personal peace
- rewarded with greater ministry.

36

## ***Consider these implications***

*How might this parable change what you understand, believe, and do?*

- How does this lesson affect your **understanding** of the church's mission?
- How does this lesson affect your **expectations** for yourself and others in that mission?
- How might this lesson **motivate** your anticipation of joy in following Christ?

37