

You had one job. That's the name of a website featuring people who had one job but didn't do it right. **[Six Slides] [Slide]** You had one job. That's the big idea in today's parable. And what's that one job? **Know** the generosity of Jesus. Know the generosity of Jesus, not just with my head but with my heart. Not just with my mind, but with my emotions. That's the huge idea in today's parable that teaches us about money management. Know the generosity of Jesus. Let's take a look.

[Slide] The Financial Model. It's all a gift. "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and **entrusted** to them his property. To one he gave five **talents**, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away." (Mt 25:14–15) These verses have two key words. The first is "entrusted." When we put money into a bank, we don't outright give our money to the bank. We entrust our money to the bank. In the same way, when the Lord entrusts the servants with his money he doesn't outright give it. He entrusts it to them.

"Entrusted." The Lord owns the money. The servants manage the money. *The Lord still owns the money. The servants just manage the money.* The first two servants agree. In Mt 25:20, 22, they both use the word "entrusted" when they talk with the Lord. The third servant? He doesn't use the word "entrusted" at all, even though when he talks to the Lord he uses three times as many words as the first two servants. Thirty-one words compared to ten!

The second key word is "talent." Our English word "talent" refers to a person's ability to do something with great success. But in the New Testament, a talent is a monetary unit—like a dollar or a peso. One talent is equivalent to twenty years of wages. Five talents, then, the amount entrusted to the first servant, is the equivalent of one hundred years' worth of wages, an astronomical amount of money. The financial model? It's all a gift—a gift *entrusted* to us.

[Slide] When I was a child, I played a lot of "Hide-And-Go-Seek." When we gave up finding everyone, what did we say? "Ollie, Ollie oxen free." But that's not right. Originally, the words weren't, "Ollie, Ollie oxen free." Originally, the words were, "All and all and all are free." That's Christ's financial model: "All and all and all are free." It's all a generous gift—a gift **entrusted** to us.

That's the consistent message of the Bible. Ps 23:5, "My cup overflows." Jn 10:10b, "I have come so that you may have abundant life." 1 Jn 3:1, "See, what manner of love the Father has lavished upon us." "Overflows." "Abundant."

“Lavished.” “All and all and all are free.” The Financial Model. It’s all a gift—a generous gift *entrusted* to us.

[Slide] The Financial Mission. It’s all about God’s kingdom. “He who had received the five talents went *at once* and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more.” (Mt 25:16–17) He went “at once.” The first servant is so thrilled that he wastes no time. He immediately throws himself into investing in God’s kingdom.

The financial mission? It’s all about God’s kingdom. At our church offerings support kingdom ministry work for our Sunday School, for music, for youth, for senior citizens, for our Lutheran Day School, and so much more. The Financial Model? It’s all a gift. The Financial Mission? It’s all about God’s kingdom.

[Slide] The Financial Meaning. It’s all accountable. “*After a long time* the Lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.” (Mt 25:19) This is the ongoing theme in Matthew 24–25—the last of our Lord’s five teaching blocks in Matthew’s gospel. In Mt 24:48, the Lord is delayed. In Mt 25:5, the bridegroom is delayed. “After a long time the Lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.” And what will he say?

“You had one job! Know the generosity of Jesus.” The first two servants do their one job. How can we tell? When people know, with their heart and head, the generosity of Jesus, they faithfully manage money entrusted to them. Christ responds to the first two servants, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master.” That’s the glad news!

Here’s the sad news. If we don’t know the generosity of Jesus (with our head and our heart); if we ignore the generosity of Jesus; if we reject the generosity of Jesus, we’ll never faithfully manage money entrusted to us. Take a look. **[Slide]** “He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Lord, *I knew* you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed.’” (Mt 25:24) You had one job! Know the generosity of Jesus! “I knew you to be a hard man.” Really? “Reaping where he did not sow and gathering where he scattered no seed.” Really? That’s Jesus? No way! Never!

[Slide] This is Jesus! Betrayed by Judas, mocked by the crowds, denied by Peter, forsaken by the ten, unjustly accused in a kangaroo court, sentenced to death by a weak-willed Roman governor, crowned with thorns, and scourged by muscle-men just short of death.

This is Jesus! God in the flesh, betrayed for you. Abandoned for you. Bleeding for you. Crucified for you. This Jesus did it all for you—for you and for your salvation! This is astounding! This is astonishing! This is true!

You had one job. Know the generosity of *this* Jesus! And if we don't?

[Slide] The Financial Mistake. It's all a waste. "I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground." (Mt 25:25) The third servant ends up doing what with the money? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Why? When we don't know Jesus; when we don't know the generosity of Jesus; we live in fear and fear causes us to misuse money. People make risky investments, they gamble, stockpile, and become greedy. *Fear causes us to completely misuse money.* To misuse money means we waste our lives.

That's the point of the parable. The parable isn't about doubling investments. The parable isn't about accumulating wealth. The parable is about knowing Jesus; the mercy and grace and love of Jesus. Then we cheerfully, faithfully, and generously use the money entrusted to us to invest in God's kingdom.

[Slide] Sometimes I catch myself thinking, "When I make a million dollars, then I'll invest in God's kingdom. When I win the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes; when my second uncle, four times removed, leaves me a ton of cash, then, *then*, I'll invest in God's kingdom." No. I won't. If I'm selfish with my few dollars, I'll be selfish with my million dollars. The issue isn't what I would do with a million. The issue is what I'm doing with the money entrusted to me right now. My financial decisions will never change until I get my one job in this life right—know the generosity of Jesus.

[Slide] Here He is. *Jesus*, the Lord of love and mercy, coming on the Last Day to renew the heavens and the earth. *Jesus*. The Alpha and the Omega. The First and the Last. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah. The Good Shepherd. The Light of the World. The Bright Morning Star. The Son of God and God the Son. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

What a joy it will be on the last day to stand before the crucified and risen Jesus with robes washed white in His blood, rejoicing that the Holy Spirit empowered us to put His money to work—cheerfully, faithfully and generously. All for His glory and the growth of His kingdom!

Christ will then speak words related to our use of money. What we long for Him to say is this. "Well done good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of your Master."

[Slide] How will that happen? We had one job. Know the generosity of Jesus. For to know the generosity of Jesus changes—that changes—absolutely everything. Including the way we use money. Amen.