



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

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#### The valuable coins

Recap of Sermon from 3/19/23 by Robb McCoy  
Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30

It was about one year ago that I made a lot of changes in my life. I started seeing a counselor. I started piano lessons. I started going back to the gym. When I think about these changes, the most visible come from the size and shape of my body. I have spent a lot of time in the gym in the last year, working out about 5 times a week. I have done a lot of weight training, and enjoy it very much.

I like how my body changes when I do weight training. I like feeling my muscles hardening. I like the objective progress I make as the weights that I lift move steadily up. I like how my clothes fit and I like my image in the mirror. When I think about the motivation behind my weight training though, I realize that there are two competing voices that push me toward the weight training.

One voice is one of negativity. It is the voice that tells me that I am fat and ugly, unlovable, and unworthy of feeling better. This is the voice that tells me I had better do something or else. This voice however, gets old and tiresome. I probably listen to it too much, but I have realized that I cannot listen to it for long, because the negative voice eventually demotivates. It is the voice that pushes me eventually into apathy. It is the voice that pushes me into giving up. It is the voice that pushes me to hate myself and let the ugliness win.

The other voice though, is different. It is the voice that rejoices of the newfound strength. It is the voice that enjoys shooting baskets and playing catch. It is the voice that reminds me of the joy of taking along hike in Blackhawk park with my family. It is the voice that craves good food, celebrates victories, and loves not losing its breath after climbing a flight of stairs.

These are the two voices that push me toward weight training, but I have a feeling they push me – and other people – to a lot of other things, too.

I believe it was these two voices – the one that comes from positivity, generosity, and celebration, and the one that comes out of fear, scarcity, and the desire to avoid punishment – that are at work in Jesus' parable of the Talents. First of all, remember that a talent is the equivalent of 20 years' pay. One biblical translation calls it "a bag of gold," which is a pretty good way to describe it.

This parable is not a beacon of the prosperity gospel. It is not telling poor people that they deserve to be poor. This is the same Jesus who preached "good news to the poor." This is the same Jesus who will separate the sheep and the goats over who took care of the poor. This is a story about wait training (a concept I picked up from the *Dynamite Prayer* book I picked up at Covenant Keepers).

Jesus is talking about how two different servants waited. One waited like a kid who's mother warned him "Wait till your father gets home." The others waited like a kid who is going to a birthday party. All you need to know about these servants is their first words after the master comes home. The first two speak of the master's generosity. "You have me so much," they say. "Look what I did with it." The other doesn't start with generosity, but with fear, "You are a hard man."

There is a part of me that is sad for this servant. Why was he unable to see the generosity of the master? He was given a bag of gold! What kind of hard man gives away bags of gold? He has misread the master entirely, thinking only of fear and punishment. The others see the generosity of the master, and respond with risk-taking mission. They emulate the master, creating something even more amazing than what they had started with. The other servant emulates his concept of the master, hiding in fear.

This is a story about wait training, and listening to the right voice. Do we wait with the expectant hope of a God who is generous, frivolous with gifts, and wants to celebrate joyfully? Or do we wait with the fearful dread of a God who is coming back angry. The thing is, all three servants get the Master they are expecting. The first two expect a master who is joyful, and that's what they get. The other expects a master who is hard and in the end he is separated from the joy that the master wants to share.

Theology matters. Our understanding of God matters. In so many ways, I feel like this is the heart of our divisions and struggles as a church. There are some that understand God as one who is waiting to punish, and we had better not do anything to upset or anger the master. There are others who understand God as the one who is preparing a great banquet, and we can live our lives in joyful expectation of what is to come.

I'll keep doing my weight training, trying to listen to the voice that is calling me to celebration. We can do our wait training together, living with generosity, risk-taking mission, barrier-conquering community, and exuberant celebration.