

**ALL OF THE ABOVE THROUGH THE GOD OF LOVE**  
**“Because I Love Jesus – Compassionate Caring/Evangel”**  
January 31, 2021

**Overarching theme:** John 20:21, “21 Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ In 2021, as DISCIPLES, we are SENT with the peace of Christ to share with others!

P = Prayer

E = Engagement with Others

A = Abundance

C = Compassionate Caring

E = Evangel

**Instructions:**

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

**Core Passages:**

Matthew 25:14-30

<sup>14</sup>“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup>to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

### **Commentary:**

A talent is a large sum of money, equal to the wages of a day laborer for approximately twenty years. The word "talent" came into the English language in Middle Ages as a term for God given abilities, "gifts and graces". The talents in this story refer to money, the differing abilities of the recipients are referred to in other terms.

In Jesus' parable a man entrusts each of his three servants with a large amount of money. Upon his return the first two have worked with the capital and doubled it. Attention focuses on the third who has acted with proper caution not to lose what was entrusted to him and is able to return it whole to the master. When challenged as to why he has not increased the money entrusted to him he responds with a characterization of the master as a harsh and unjust man who inspires only fear and caution. The hearers of the parable are doubly surprised and do not know what to think. On the one hand the hearers have just seen proof of the master's generosity to the first two servants. On the other hand the story has led them to be sympathetic to the action of the one talent man, in carefully hiding the money. To his (and the hearers') surprise the one talent man is condemned for fearful inactivity

and his money is given to the first servant, who already has ten talents. The hearers must decide which characterization of the master to accept. The parable has led them in both directions and it creates a dilemma rather than resolving one.

Such contrasts in Matthew's pictures of the judgement and the ultimate judge serve to guard the reader from too readily objectifying the meanings presented allegorically and to frustrate our efforts to summarize the way God works into neat coherent systems. The pictures point beyond themselves and resist systemization, while still speaking of the reality of judgement and necessity for decision and responsible action.

– adapted from the New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, VIII, 453.

### **Questions to Ponder for accountability in the group:**

1. Using the English language meaning of "talents", what talents do you have?
2. How can you use your talents to show compassionate caring to others? How can you use your talents to share the good news with others?
3. How would you have treated the third servant?
4. How are you progressing so far in your personal PEACE plan?

### **Activity for the life of a disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional and spend time pondering and meditating on the challenge.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Matthew 25:21: *'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'* Have you been considered trustworthy with all God has given you?
3. Prayerfully consider how you can continue to grow as a disciple.