

Don't Waste Good

2.25.18

Mark Series

Message 18

Mark 4:21–25 (NIV)

A Lamp on a Stand

²¹ He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? ²² For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. ²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear."

²⁴ "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. ²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

1. My Mom always said, "If you don't use it you will lose it".

A. I always hated that advice.

1. That advice meant that I must constantly work and steward what I had been given.

a. I had this idea in my head that once I reached a certain age, a certain education, or a certain season of life, I would not have to try any more.

b. But life isn't like that.

c. A fundamental aspect of humanity is this: **We don't coast into order, we coast into chaos.**

d. Chaos is our default setting because of the influence of sin.

2. We must also remember that we were created to be stewards and managers of God's creation.

a. When God created Adam, Adam was instructed to tend to the garden.

Gen 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

b. To use his gifts and abilities to cause the garden to grow and flourish.

c. The Garden was created to grow, and humanity was created to help it grow.

B. Let me introduce you to a Christian principal: Don't Waste Good.

1. Special Agent Gibbs on the TV show, NCIS has a rule that says, "Don't waste good".

a. That means you don't waste talent.

b. You don't waste opportunity.

c. You make the most of what has been given.

2. This rule wasn't created by the writers of NCIS.

a. This rule was created by God.

b. Don't waste what God has given.

c. And don't waste what God has done for you.

C. Today we look at a very simple parable.

1. Growing up, many of us learned the song "this little light of mine".

2. The message is very simple.

3. We have a light and we are supposed to let it shine.

4. This morning we are going to look at the parable that inspired that song and its implications for believers today.

2. The parable uses the lamp as an illustration.

A. Lamps or candles have one purpose: to shed light.

1. That is what they were designed to do.
 - a. That is why you buy one.
 - b. And you expect that when you light it or turn it on, that it will produce one thing: Light.
2. Why?
 - a. Because that is what it was created and designed to do.
 - b. This is what we expect to happen...
 - c. There is nothing wrong or unjust about having expectations.

B. Jesus said that no one brings in a lamp and then covers it up.

1. That defeats the purpose.
2. The lamp is put in a prominent place so others can benefit
3. Jesus said the light discloses what is hidden and brings out into the open what was concealed.

C. What was Jesus referring to?

1. Primarily, he was referring to the truth of the Gospel being revealed.
2. The time had come for the plans that God had had since the creation of the world to be revealed.
 - a. The time had come to meet the Son of God.
 - b. The time had come for sins to be forgiven,
 - c. And for grace to be extended.
 - d. The light was shining and everyone who wanted to see could now see the Son of God.

3. Consider carefully what you hear.

A. Then Jesus adds to this thought.

1. Salvation is being revealed in Jesus.

2. The Message of the Kingdom is being preached.
3. So listen carefully.
4. Why?
5. Because "with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and even more..."

B. What does it mean by measure?

1. It means that if you are generous, then the Lord is generous.
2. If you are stingy, the Lord is stingy.
3. If you withhold good from others, God withhold good from you.
4. If you love generously, you will experience God's love generously.
5. The measure refers to the size of the container with which you sow.

C. There is a spiritual principle called sowing and reaping.

1. You harvest what you plant.
 - a. You plant tomatoes, you harvest tomatoes.
 - b. You plant apple seeds, you grow apple trees.
 - c. You plant hate, you grow hate.
 - d. You plant distrust, you grow distrust.
 - e. You plant love, you grow and reap love.
 - f. You operate in mercy, you experience mercy.
2. This principle goes all the way back to Genesis 1-2 where the animals, the plants, and the Earth produces according to its own kind.

- a. On the day Jesus was telling this parable, He was telling those in the audience that they must not allow what they are seeing and hearing to go to waste.
- b. They were to be generous with the Gospel and to not hide it from view of others.
- c. To hide it was to put their own spiritual life and the future of others in danger.

3. In other words, don't waste the Good that they were hearing and seeing.

4. There is another spiritual principle at work: The principle of spiritual wastage and spiritual growth.

A. The principle Spiritual wastage and spiritual growth says:

1. If I'm not growing, I am dying.

2. Because there is no such thing as spiritual coasting.

B. Every winter, baseball players have what they call the "offseason".

1. There are no games to be played.

a. No official practices.

b. In years past it has been a time for trips, for sleeping in, and doing whatever the baseball player wants to do.

2. But this year, there was a group of players celebrating what they called, "No Offseason".

a. These guys got up early every morning and put the work in.

b. They lifted weights.

c. They trained hard.

d. They threw the ball, caught the ball, and hit the ball.

e. They were preparing for what they knew was coming: Baseball season.

C. Too many Christians reach a place in their lives where they feel they have nothing else to strive for, and so they quit.

1. Even the Apostle Paul admitted he had not yet reached the goal so he continued to strive for all that God had for him.

a. Yet many of us reach a place in our walks with Jesus that we start, "calling it in".

b. We stop praying.

c. We stop studying.

d. We stop striving and we stop growing.

2. And instead of growing, we begin to waste away.

a. We lose sight of what God has given us.

b. We lose the thrill of being in a powerful service where God moves upon us.

c. We lose the thrill of discovering a part of the Bible that we had never read before or never had understood until now.

d. And we forget that there are others who would love to hear about Jesus for the first time.

5. The Measure we use is up to us.

A. Think about that for a moment.

1. Men, do any of your wives have multiple sizes of measuring cups?

a. Julie has measuring devices everywhere and she uses all of them.

b. When I cook, I grab the first clean container I can find and start from there.

2. Jesus has lavished grace, love, and mercy upon us.

a. He has generously forgiven us of our sins, and He has generously given us gifts to use for His Kingdom.

b. In other words, God found the largest container he could find and that is what he used to pour out His gifts upon us.

3. Question: **IF God is so generous, then why are we so stingy?**

a. It's because God operates in a different economy than we do.

b. Let me illustrate:

1. Last week, me and the elders and pastors sat down to discuss the Church's tithe.

2. As a Church, the leadership tithes 10% of the income.

3. This past week, we were able to bless two smaller churches with \$3,000 apiece.

4. In our economy, that doesn't make sense.

5. But God reminds me that He has been generous to us, and we are to be generous to others.

6. Our economy maybe limited, but His is not.

c. Many of us feel that we can't be generous because if we let go of what we have we won't have it anymore.

1. But God says if you will sow what you have, then even more will be given.

2. And this isn't just about money.

3. In fact, money is not even mentioned.

4. What is mentioned is the good news of the Gospel.

6. Takeaways from this Text

1. Generously share the Gospel.

- a. There are people in your life that can't afford you to not be generous with Jesus.
- b. This past week, Billy Graham passed away at the age of 99.
- c. It was remarkable how many people were saved under his ministry.
- d. And his ministry was remarkably simple: He simply shared about what Jesus had done for him, and he shared that message every opportunity he had.
- e. He started in a small-country church.
- f. His faithfulness led him to preach to millions and to be an adviser of presidents.
- g. Don't waste Good, so generously share the Gospel.

2. Generously share what God has done for you.

- a. If you have ever been healed, that healing wasn't just for your sake but for the building up the faith of someone else.
- b. If you have seen God bless your finances because you tithed and gave, there are others who need to hear your testimony.
- c. If you have been delivered from an addiction, there are others who are needing to hear about your deliverance so they can believe for their own.
- d. Don't waste the good God has done for you by refusing to testify of what Jesus has done.

3. Generously develop your gifts and talents and use them.

- a. I believe everything this church needs to grow and be effective is already here, we just need to develop and use our gifts.

b. I look around and I see that there are many talented people here and I am thankful that so many of you are using your gifts to reach others for Jesus.

1. We have decorators, we have cake bakers, we have musicians, and those with gifts of administration, and those gifted with the ministry of helps.

2. As we continue to grow, we must continue to develop our gifts and use those gifts with a big, heaping, measure.

c. Because, if we don't use it, we will lose it.

d. But if we use it, even more will be given.

e. There is nothing greater or more valuable than the kingdom of God In you.

f. Don't waste it.

Let's pray today and ask how the Holy Spirit wants us to respond.