

HIDING OR HELPING?

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“But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money.”
(Matthew 25:18)

What might lead a person to hide their talents in the ground? We might even feel some sympathy for the man in this story who hid his talents. Surely he could have done much worse with the money he received.

He could have run away and stolen it. He could have spent it enriching himself rather than returning it to the master. But no, he did not steal the master’s money, nor did he waste it.

So why does he hide his talent? For that is what concerns the master. He hides it out of fear. In verse 25 he says, “I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground.”

Imagine him digging a hole and hiding the talent there. The picture could hardly be more appropriate: just as the talent remained inert in the ground, so the fear in this man’s life led to his own withdrawal and inaction.

Elsewhere in Scripture, the Apostle John writes, “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). God gives each of us unique gifts, gifts unlike any other person. God invites us not to grip these gifts tightly, as if fearful that we may disappoint God.

Rather, God invites us to use our divinely given talents to take risks for the Kingdom of God. God gives us freedom so that we can take risks for the sake of love. Fear leads us away from this freedom, it leads us to hide our talents, but God’s love casts out our fear, so that we can use our talents to help build the Kingdom of God.

ILLUSTRATION:

In parts of the world where there are no banks or financial institutions, families often resort to surprising means to secure their money. In rural areas of South Sudan, for example, families often dig holes beneath their homes and bury their savings in the ground. In more than one case residents have complained to their community elders when their money had been eaten by ants!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Where in your life is fear leading you towards withdrawal—that is, towards the hiding of your talents—and away from the freedom that God has given you?

How is God inviting you to be creative and daring in utilising the gifts and resources He has given you?

How could your response to God help build His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven?

PRAYER:

Lord, forgive me for the times I have withdrawn from your service or failed to love others because of fear. Cast out my fears and strengthen my faith. Help me to be unashamed and courageous in using the gifts you have given me for good. Amen.

