



Campbell Chapel

Sermon by Bob Bradley



Opportunities

Wednesday, October 31, 2018

Bob Bradley

Do you know what the Lord did? He took eleven men and turned the world upside down with eleven people. Didn't He? He really did. He took eleven, actually. Not only that, but we know that He preached, taught, healed, and fed people. We know that He went to the cross and died. We also know that those eleven men were discouraged. Weren't they? They were scared. They were afraid. The Bible says they were. They were hiding for the fear of the Jews and so forth. However, something happened 50 days after Jesus died. Do you know what it was? They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. When they were filled with the Holy Ghost, do you know what else happened? Things changed. People that were afraid, were no longer afraid. People that were scared, were no longer scared. Do you know what they started doing? They started preaching. Peter preached one day and they said, "Hey, come along...these guys are drunk on new wine." Do you remember that story? "We are not drunk. We are not drunk at all, but this is what has been fulfilled by what the prophet spoke." This is being fulfilled. We are hearing about 3,000 and 5,000. We can read about some people that were not afraid to die. We know that James was killed. They were intending after Easter to kill Peter. You know the story there.

The thought is all of this. Do you know what changes everything? When we allow the Spirit of God to have control of our lives. That changes everything. That changes everything in my life and in your life when we will allow Him to control our lives and direct our path, every day. We are not talking about once every other month. But every day, He will do some absolutely awesome things with us that we never dreamed we could do and see some things done that we would ever imagine that we could see God do. He does that when we allow Him through His Holy Spirit to control our lives then He will do some great things. If we do not do that then we will not see much happen.

Luke 19.

A story that is not talked about a whole lot; probably. It is a story that I have talked about here a time or two, in the 20 years that I have been here; maybe, I don't know. However, it is a very good thought in this story, in this parable that I want to talk about this evening.

Luke 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Luke 19:12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Luke 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

Luke 19:15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Luke 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Luke 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Luke 19:18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

Luke 19:19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

Luke 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

Luke 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

Luke 19:22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

Luke 19:23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

Luke 19:24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds.

Luke 19:25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Luke 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

Luke 19:28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

These events are taking place as Jesus has just left Jericho. He has just had the encounter with Zacchaeus. Do you remember that story? That is a very familiar story. Zacchaeus gets saved, and his life is changed around. Now he is going to Jerusalem. If I understand things correctly, as I read the scriptures; He has left Jericho for the last time. He will never walk in Jericho again here on this earth. He is going to Jerusalem—if I understand things correctly—this is Passover season. Just in a short time, Jesus is going to die. It is not going to be long that is going to happen—if I understand things correctly.

He gets here and as He is going, the crowd that is following Him—I know sometimes we think that it was just a handful and sometimes it was just a handful. However, sometimes there were actually thousands of people where Jesus was at, sometimes tens of thousands. Sometimes maybe even twenty-thousand, or maybe even more than that; people around where He was at.

However, they had something in their mind that was wrong. The Bible says here that they thought the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. They thought Jesus was going to go to Jerusalem. He was going to go into Jerusalem and that He was going to overthrow Rome and set up His kingdom. He was going to rule and reign. The kingdom was going to be there. All these guys were going to have a great time. Everything was going to be fine. They were going to be free from all the things that Rome was doing to them. However, they were wrong. They were absolutely wrong.

I thought today, the season that we are living in we call it “Trick or Treat” season. The enemy, do you know what he is doing? He is tricking a lot of people today. The enemy is tricking people today to believe some things that are absolutely not true.

I was talking to a fellow today. He called. I am not going to tell you what all he had to say because he may be listening tonight but he had a lot of things to say. He had convinced himself that you could go to heaven and live in sin. You could go to heaven just because you had a Bible and it laid on your desk. It was there. You went to church every now and then. The enemy had convinced him into believing that those things were true.

However, do you know what friend? That is not true. Sin is not going to go to heaven. You can't live in open rebellion against God and go to heaven. The enemy is tricking a lot of people to believe a lot of different things today that is not true.

These guys thought the kingdom of God was going to immediately appear. Jesus is going to set them straight on their thinking.

Have you ever thought God was going to do something and God did not do it? Have you ever prayed about something and you thought God was going to do this or that? Sometimes we allow the enemy to convince us that God is going to do something when—in a lot of sense—God had nothing to do with.

Do you know what happens? I have seen that in a lot of people's lives over the years. They were convinced that God was going to do this.

A fellow that lives very close to here, many years ago; he was convinced that God was going to do a great big thing for him. He was worth millions and millions of dollars. He goes around telling everybody that this is what God is going to do for him. Well, do you know what? It didn't work out that way. When it didn't work out that way, do you know what he does? He quit. Listen. If God would have been in it, God would have done what God said He was going to do. amen!

If God is in it, whatever it is, if God is in it then God is going to do what God says He is going to do. amen! We may not always get it and we may not always understand it; but what happens is that we allow the enemy, too many times, to trick us. People like that just throw up their hands and quit.

Here is what is going to happen here. Jesus is going to tell these guys a parable, a story. A story here that they can relate to, a story here about some very familiar stuff. He mentions here, the first thing I read to you; about a nobleman.

Luke 19:12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

When you read this story, Jesus is the nobleman. He is going to tell them that He is going to go into a far country. The Bible tells us here that He is going to "receive for himself a kingdom, and He is going to return." Do you know what Jesus did? We know that Jesus died on the cross. Don't we? We know that He died. We know that He went to the tomb. We know that He ascended back to heaven. We also know one day, He is going to come back planet earth. We know that. This is the story that Jesus is telling these guys. This is the story; He wants them to understand that the kingdom of God was not going to be set up now. There was going to be a time between His death and the time that the kingdom would appear; there is going to be a time space here. He wants to get them to understand that.

Luke 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

So here is what happens. The nobleman here is getting ready to take a trip to a far country. He is going to go to a far country. He is going to return. However, he calls 10 servants in. He calls them in and He gives them a pound a piece. He calls them in and he gives them a pound. A pound of money here during this time was worth a lot of money. It was probably two or three months wages. It would have been a lot of money during that time. If you think about two or three months wages, it is a lot of money. That is what he gave these guys. He gave it to these servants. He gave it to these ten servants. He says I want you to occupy this until I come.

The word *occupy* means to trade, or to do business with, or to get after it and use what I give you so that when I come back then I am going to be able to have what I gave you plus usury, or plus interest. That is what he is saying unto these ten men.

Listen. The story He wants to teach us today is this. He has given unto you and me something to use. He has given unto you and me a talent, or maybe more than one talent. He is giving unto us something we can use for His glory. He has gone away. We know He is going to come back. Amen! We are His children. We are His servants. If you have been born again, you are a servant of Almighty God. Amen! He has given you something to work with. He has given you something to work with. He has given you something that you can take and use for His glory. Everyone of us has got that. Some of us, this is a little bit different than the parable that has to do with talents. However, it is really the same story. It is about being faithful and to be able to us what God has given us to use. Every one of us, I know sometimes we don't think that God has given us anything to do anything with, or we can't do this or that. However, God has given everyone of us, if we are saved, if we are His servants; do you know what God will do? God will give us opportunities that we can use what He has given us to trade with.

What that means is this—we can take what God has blessed us with and God has entrusted us with; and that is His holy presence. Do you know what we can do with it? He will give us opportunities to use His presence and His power to make a difference in people's lives. God will do that.

Here is the thing. He gives us all that. If you are saved tonight, He gives us all that opportunity. Some people can talk. Some people can sing. Some people can do different things. Some people can fix this and do that. We all can do different things in the kingdom of God. God has given us all something to trade with. God has given us all something that we can use for His glory, so that when He comes back; we have more than what He left. Amen! That should be in all of our lives.

We should think about what are we doing in life? What are we doing in life?

I know we come to church. I'm not talking about that. That is great that we come to church. I think that is something that we need to do, if we are going to grow in our relationship with God. We need to come to His house and praise Him. What are doing outside of this building? What are we doing when we are not here?

That is why they were given something to use. In their everyday life, they were given something for them to use and to occupy and to trade with. Something they could use for God's glory. Something they could use for the nobleman's glory. They had something here they could use, something that was real, something that was tangible, something that was worth something that they could use.

What are you doing when you are not here? What is your ministry outside of sitting in these pews? What is your ministry? What do you do? That should make us think. Shouldn't it?

Everyone of us has something that we should be doing. Everyone of us has a talent. We have the ability to take what God has given us and to use. That is never the question. I know we talk to people that say God did not give me this or that.

Listen. If you are saved, you have something to trade with. You have something to use for His glory. Amen! The question is what are you doing with it? What are you doing with what God has given you? What are you doing with it? When you are not here, what are you doing with it? When you are home, on your job, or wherever you are at; what are you doing with what God has given you? The pound that God has given you to trade with; what are you doing with it? Are you telling people what Jesus has done for you?

I thought about this through this week. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Because of Lazarus being raised from the dead and the testimony, no doubt, that Lazarus had; a lot of people believed on Jesus because of that. Because of that some people hated Lazarus and they intended to kill him.

However, here is the thing that I thought about this week. How much difference we would make in this world if we would just tell people what Jesus Christ had done for us. If we would just tell people, hey I used to be a sinner. I was lost. I was damned. I was doomed. I was on my way to a lake of fire, but one day, one night I met a man called Jesus that forgave me of my sins and wrote my name in His book and I have eternal life tonight. I wonder how many people whose lives we would change. Amen!

We can talk about riding horses. We can talk about working on cars. We can talk about fishing and camping and everything in the world; but why can't we take what God has given us and trade with it? Why can't we take what God has given us and use it? Why can't we do that? Do you know why? We don't want to. We really don't want to.

I want to tell you something. Get this. You might say it does not matter. Well, it does matter. Not only does it matter to those people around you, and the opportunities that we let slip through our hands; but it is going to matter to you one day if you are saved. If you are genuinely born again, it is going to matter to you one day. Okay? You are in this story. You are one of these people here that came back. You are one of these people.

He gave these pounds to these people to use, to trade, to occupy with until He comes back. He goes and He receives his kingdom. He comes back. He calls his servants. Do you know what he is going to do? He is going to say, "Hey, let's see what you guys have done since I have been gone. If you could write it down on a piece of paper what you have done for Jesus Christ since you have been saved; how much paper would you need? How much have you done for Jesus Christ since you have been saved? What

have you done for Him? We do all kinds of things for ourselves. We do whatever we want to do for ourselves, but when it comes to doing things for Him it is a different story sometimes.

The first guy they call in; he said, Lord, the pound you have given me, I have gained 10 pounds. This guy went to work on what God had given him. This guy went to work. Do you know what he did? He took the opportunity that God gave him to work and he went to work.

Get this. One reason that we don't want to use the talent that God has given us, or use the pound that God has given us—one big reason, do you know why? This guy had gained 10 pounds with 1 pound. Now look at his reward. Now look at what he says.

Luke 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Amen! He is just not making that up. He is not making that up at all. Get this. Faithfulness to God, using the opportunities that God has given us will take more of our time because there will be more opportunities for us to serve Him. When we are faithful to serve Him, God will open up doors, and more doors and more doors, and more opportunities for us to be able to use and to trade what He has given us to trade with. There will be more of them.

Get this. One day, soon and very soon Jesus is going to come in the clouds. Appear! Bam! The rapture takes place in a movement, the twinkling of an eye, and the saints are gone, people are gone. We are going to leave here. We are going to go to heaven. We are going to have the judgment seat of Christ. We are going to have a good ole time for a long time. Then at the end of tribulation, we are, the saints of God, born-again people are coming back to planet earth, with Jesus Christ. Read Revelation chapter 19 and 20...it will tell you some things over there.

We are coming back to the earth. Jesus Christ is going to set up His kingdom, here on earth. If I know anything at all, I know one thing. What you and I do today, what you and I do today; our faithfulness today is going to have everything to do with our responsibilities during the kingdom age. We are going to live on this earth for 1,000 years. Amen! That is in the book also. We are going to live here on this earth for 1,000 years. Our responsibilities that we are going to have during the kingdom age, is going to be a direct result of our faithfulness that we have had to God here on earth while we have been here.

This guy, he says, "I've took your pound, and I gave you ten pounds." He said, "You have been faithful over a few things; I am going to make you a ruler over ten cities." That is a great responsibility. Opportunities brings more opportunities. Faithfulness requires more work. That is why we don't like it. When we get faithful to God, and get where God can use us and bless us and we really use what God has given us; that

requires our time, and our energy, and our efforts, and many times, our money. Amen! We don't want to do that.

Here is what happens. Again, this guy comes in, "You gave me a pound, and I gained you five pounds." He says, "That is great. You have been faithful over a little thing here, be thou over five cities."

I know you might not think too much about that. Do you know what we think about going to heaven? We leave here and go to heaven and we are all just going to have a high oh time. Listen. Going to heaven is great and I am looking forward to going there. However, we are going to have a lot of work to do here on earth before we ever get to heaven. After we leave here in the rapture, and we go to the marriage supper of the Lamb and we come back at the end of tribulation period, before we get to our eternal home; we are going to have a lot of stuff to do.

Your responsibilities and your authority and what you are going to do for the 1,000 that we are going to live here on earth is going to depend upon what you are doing with what God has given you today. That is what that is teaching us. That is what that is telling you. You might say, I don't believe that. Well, I don't care whether you believe it or not. It is true. It is true.

Do you know what we don't like? We don't like to believe things that points our error. We don't like to believe things that points out that we are not doing what we need to be doing. We don't like to believe that. We will believe everything else. However, we do not believe those things. Here is what happens.

Luke 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

Luke 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

Get this. The next guy comes along and says, "Here is your pound that you gave me. Here is what you gave me, Lord. I took it. I put it in a napkin. I wrapped it all up. Here it is. What you brought, and what you gave me; I am giving it back to you. I know you are an austere man, or a hard man. I knew that you were a harsh man and you reap what you didn't sow. You did not want any expenditures with what we were working with. You wanted all your money back plus...I knew all of that Lord." Do you know what this guy had? He had all the wrong attitude and all the wrong opinion about Jesus Christ.

Do you know what he said here?

Luke 19:22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

Luke 19:23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

“Out of your own your mouth, I am going to judge you.” You knew better than that. If you really thought that I was that kind of a person then you should have taken my money down to the bank and gave it to the bank so that at least when I come, I could have my own money back plus usury. He said, Na. I don’t buy that. I am going to judge...your own words are going to judge you. You are wicked servant. You knew better than that. You are just making up excuses.

Do you know what he was trying to do? He was trying to blame the nobleman for his laziness. We do that sometimes. We do that sometimes. We want to blame God. We want to blame God for why we don’t do. We want to blame people. Let’s don’t do that. Let’s don’t do that friend. If we don’t want to do it then let’s don’t do it, but don’t try to blame it on somebody else. Look at ourselves in the mirror and say that is us. It is us the reason we don’t do. It is not God’s fault. It is not any body else’s fault. It is our own fault. Do you know what Jesus said? Get this. I only have just a few minutes. Jesus said...

Luke 19:24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds.

Luke 19:25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Do you know what that means? If we don’t use what God has given us to use and the opportunities that are there for us to use that—those opportunities are going to go away for us. Now they will open up for somebody else. But the opportunities that God will give us to be able to be used by Him to bring glory to His name will leave us.

Do you know why? Because we are not using what God has given us. Think about this in your own life. Think about this in your own life. Don’t raise your hand. Don’t do anything. If you have been saved 5 or 10 years, look back over the last year at how many opportunities you have had to witness for Jesus Christ and think about 10 years ago, when you first got saved, or 5 years ago about how many opportunities you had that year. How many opportunities did you take advantage of that year and how many you slip through your fingers the past year.

Listen. Opportunities and timing are everything folks. In Christian work, opportunities are everything. Timing is everything. Do you know what I have seen people do? They want to try to twist things and make things work and they want to try to make God hurry up. You can’t do that. I want to tell you this much. When the door opens you had better walk through it. When God says this and when God gives us opportunities to witness for Him, that opportunity is today. If He opens the door today, then it is today

that we should be going through that door. Don't make excuses. Don't make excuses like this guy did.

The pound that he had—the nobleman said “take it away from him and give it to him that has ten.” As I read to you...

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

If you use what I have given to you to use then I am going to give you some more. I am going to give you more opportunities day after day, week after week, and month after month. I am going to give you all kinds of opportunities but if you don't use what I have given you to use then those opportunities are going to be given to somebody else.

Remember this folks. Your responsibility and your job during the millennium are going to depend on your faithfulness here in this life while you are here. It does not have anything to do with rewards in heaven, but it does have to do with what you are going to be doing and the responsibility that you will have during the kingdom age. It does that. You get to choose that. You get to choose that. I want you to think about that a little bit. Roll that around in your mind a little bit. You may get a job that you don't want.

Do you know why? It may be because you have not been faithful with what God gave you to work with. Amen! Quiet— isn't it? It is good for us to think about things like that. Do you know why it is good? It is good because everybody in here is one day closer to the grave than we were yesterday. The opportunities that God gave us today will never be back. Those opportunities and that time is gone and we will never have those opportunities again. Today, you will never see this day again because it is forever gone. Amen!

Let's take what God has given us, His Holy Spirit, His Holy Word and His Holy Presence and let's use that. Let's use that as He gives us opportunities, as He opens doors for us. Let's spend more time reading, praying, and searching His face and direct us to give us discernment, and lead us in the right direction and not in the wrong direction, and we will make the right steps and not the wrong steps.

Do you know what God will do? God will open doors for us in our ministry, in our daily lives, on your job that you have never dreamed that you could do.

If you are unsaved, He wants you to come to Him.

Come and pray—