



CHALLENGE THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

This autumn, Christian development agency International Needs is challenging you and your congregation to apply the principles of the Parable of the Talents in a practical way. The aim: to raise money for our proposed new Leadership and Talent Centre in Nairobi, Kenya – seeking to **rescue** young people currently living precariously on the streets, to **rehabilitate** them from addictions and to **restore** them, providing tailored vocational training that will raise them up, unlock their talents and encourage entrepreneurship.



How does it work? First, read Matthew 25:14-30. This excerpt is taken from the English Standard Version.

Jesus said of the Kingdom of Heaven: 'it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.²⁰And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.'²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'²²And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.'²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'²⁴He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'

²⁶But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?'²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.²⁹For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.³⁰And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

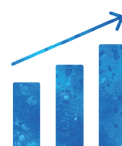
What can we learn from this Bible passage?

Jesus taught in parables because of their resonance with those he was speaking to. The concept of slave labour may not sit comfortably with 21st Century enlightenment, but it was a reality in AD30 and would have been a situation that those hearing Jesus speak could readily relate to.



A talent (from the Greek τάλαντον) was a unit of weight, equivalent to about 36kg. When used as a unit of currency, based on the same quantity of silver, it equated to about 6,000 denarii. One denarius was a typical day's wages for manual labour, so one talent equates to the usual reward for about 20 years' work – a very substantial amount, even in today's economy!

Jesus shared this parable as a precursor to his death, resurrection and ascension to Heaven. Taken as a whole, the parables give guidance on spreading the gospel, forgiveness, loving and caring for others – especially those on the fringes of society – in a Christlike manner, and thereby being a representative of God on Earth. The Parable of the Tenants addresses stewardship of resources, and how God expects us to work creatively with what he has given us – gifts of time, skills, aptitudes, finances, hospitality and connections – and not let this dwindle.



The workers in the parable are mindful that their master would be returning. Are we as conscious of Jesus' return, and how does that motivate us? Will we be able to report back on how we have invested time/ money/ resources with clear conscience and demonstrate our impact on building God's Kingdom? Or did we squander the divine opportunities provided, like the 'worthless' servant?

DID YOU KNOW? International Needs UK has team members across the country willing to lead Sunday morning services or midweek groups, sharing stories of our ministry in 30+ countries. Just drop us a line at: inuk@ineeds.org.uk and we can tailor to your requirements.

Kenya's got talent!

For nearly a decade, International Needs has been working with Grace Empowerment Organisation – a local NGO in Kenya – in support of its **Rescue, Rehabilitation and Restoration programme for young people living on the streets of Kenya.**

To date, Pastor Joshua Mamai has been able to rescue **more than 300 street boys and youth in Nairobi** – giving them food, counselling from the gospel and help with breaking addictions to drugs and other harmful substances. These are normal young people who have fallen on hard times through bereavement, ostracising by their parents or other social factors beyond their control. Like us, they have gifts and talents that they want to put to good use. They just don't have the opportunity.

Pastor Joshua has been renting a simple halfway house to keep a small number of boys off the streets, giving them a safe haven to begin the journey of rehabilitation under his guidance.

Our partnership now seeks to build a permanent rehabilitation centre, which will allow for a longer rehabilitation process for up to 25 boys at a time to be safely housed, and to provide spiritual and emotional trauma counselling, extra-curricular activities, sports, additional education, vocational training, entrepreneurship and business management skills training.

Our prayer is that these activities will help the boys to break addictions, heal from the trauma of life on the streets and motivate them to engage with their families and society. At the same time they will be empowered to craft sustainable livelihoods for themselves.



International Needs would like to challenge your congregation in the same way as the workers in **Matthew 25.** Either as a whole congregation or competitively as smaller groups within your church family, could you take on the challenge of **making money grow?** Could you unleash the creativity in your church by providing each group with, say, £10 and inviting them to double it (or more!) through wise and prudent investment? There's no set blueprint; how you do it is up to you and your creativity!

Let us know how you are rising to the challenge: share on social media using the hashtag **#challengeofthetalents** or email us at inuk@ineeds.org.uk Please send all donations - marked 'Kenya LTC appeal' to the address overleaf, or give securely online through our website at ineeds.org.uk.

£300

will rescue four young people from the streets and provide them with food and other basic relief materials for half a year

£1,000

will rehabilitate four young people helping them with Christian counselling

£3,000

will restore dignity by ensuring shelter at a halfway house, identity cards and support with literacy, numeracy and vocational training for half a year

Whatever you give, however you raise it, can help young people who have found themselves homeless and vulnerable



Money-making activities could include using the money to buy sponges and buckets, and setting up a car wash for the community on a Saturday/Sunday morning. A great opportunity for younger people to get actively involved in the mission!

Or why not embrace the return this autumn of *The Great British Bake-Off* by encouraging cookery enthusiasts to buy flour, eggs and sugar and sell their delectable wares to profit this International Needs project.



If you could release £100, it could be invested in venue hire so that musicians in your community could stage a ticketed fundraising concert in aid of the Leadership and Talent Centre.

And how about a ha-ha-harvest stand-up comedy night? All you need is a microphone, some drinks and snacks, and some groan-tastic dad jokes. Here's one for free: 'What do you call a haddock wearing a bow tie?' 'Sofishticated.' Shorry.



...and of course, there's a whole range of sponsored walks/runs/silences that needn't cost any money at all to stage. **Every pound raised will make a huge difference in Kenya, where every day for these street children can be a life-or-death struggle.**

