

**Get the Paint Out of the Bucket**  
**April 28, 2019**

**VIDEO -- Parable of the Three Servants –Matthew 25:14-30**

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.

“The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master’s money.

“After a long time, their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’

“The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

“The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.’

“The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

“Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.’

“But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’

“Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

**That was the Parable of the Talents in the King James (Matthew 25:14-30.)**

**Now let me read to you the same parable from the newly revised, unauthorized version Entitled: Get the Paint Out of the Bucket**

The great painter was about to take a leave of absence from work.

He called three friends and entrusted them with his buckets of paint. To one friend he gave five buckets, to another two, and to the last friend, he gave one bucket of paint, dividing the buckets up based on his keen judgement their ability to use the paint effectively.

The friend with five buckets got to work immediately and painted every wall in his house. He was so exhilarated by the work he’d done, he offered to paint the walls in his friend’s house too. His great skill and enthusiasm went viral. He attracted such a following that he decided to go into business and launched the Good News Paint Company.

The second friend took his work very seriously. He googled the best painting techniques and bought the best brushes. He set out to paint the walls in his living room and realize he was really quite good at painting. In fact, he decided to go and apply for a job at the Good News Painting Company.

The last friend wasn’t quite sure what to do with his bucket of paint. He thought about painting the living room wall but was sure he’d screw it up and his wife would never let him hear the end of it. He decided it was safest to put the paint in the basement. Maybe one of these days he’d get inspired, but not today.

The time came for the Great Painter returned from his leave of absence. He was thrilled to see that his first friend had started his own painting company. “Well done my friend,” he said, “I will hire the Good News Paint Company for all of my jobs from now on.”

He visited his second friend and was pleased again to see what an expert painter he had become, now making a living at painting. “Well done,” he said. “You’ll always have a painting job with me.”

But he was surprised when he went to his third friend’s house and didn’t see any sign of freshly painted walls anywhere. “Well,” said the third friend, “I was just sure I would make a mess of things, so I put the bucket of paint in the basement. Here, you can have it back. Maybe you can still use it.”

“Well, I certainly know who I can give it to who *will* be sure will put it to good use,” and he gave the it to the Good News Painting Company.

The Great Painter and the entire Good News Painting Company went out to celebrate, but the last painter found himself sitting home disgruntled, and his wife never let him hear the end of it!

OK, so what do we have in the parable?

We have the great painter, the paint, the buckets, the friends, and the walls.

Who is the **Great Painter?** = **Jesus**

**The paint?** = what is the most valuable commodity that Jesus has entrusted to us?

**The gospel.** The good news that in Jesus we have found the way the truth and the life!

**The bucket? = the church**

The friends? Those in the church who are in charge of getting the paint out of the bucket.

**Wall? = the world**

What we need to do is . . .

**Get the paint out of the bucket and onto the wall!**

We are called to get the gospel out of the church and into the world.

I’m not talking about getting people *into* the church.(although that’s good too)

How many of you came to NB because someone invited you?

And have come to know Jesus better *because* you are here?

But today isn't about just inviting people to church.  
Today's about getting the good news that's in *here*, out *there*!

Jesus said to his disciples . . . *GO* into all the world.

So, *how* do we do that?

Jesus tells us that too!

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works,  
And glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

What do they see? Good works.

What that doesn't say is even more important.

It doesn't say, "Let them hear all your words of wisdom about what they should believe  
and what they should do,"

so when they see you, they say,

**"Oh no, here she comes again!"**

It doesn't say, "Let them read all your posts scolding people for getting it all wrong,  
so they quietly or not so quietly unfriend you.

It says, let them see your good works and say,

**"Oh boy, here she comes again!"**

And then, you can point them in the right direction,

So they will glorify God – not you.

The inspiration this creative version of the parable comes from my brother-in-law, David.

And the story I now share, is his story that shows us *how*

this can play out in real life.

**David saw an older man across the road shoveling snow.**

(Ironically, David is 74, but I guess considered himself the young kid on the block)

So David gets out his snow shovel and goes to help the man shovel out his driveway.

When they got done, the man said,

**"Thank you so much!"**

to which David replied,

**"You don't have to thank me.**

**You have to thank my boss.**

**He's the one who sent me out here to help you."**

“Oh! Who’s your boss? Who do you work for?”

David says, “**I work for Jesus!**

**He told me to come and help you, and I said yes.”**

“**In that case,**” said the man in jest,

**“See if he would mind if you helped me shovel out my truck too.”**

“**Sure,**” and they headed for the truck.

**“I was just kidding; you don’t have to do that.”**

But David said, **“I’m sure that would make my boss happy.”**

That’s when the man looked at David and his eyes teared up,

and began to open up about his wife had died a few months ago

and about his own failing health,

and about how extremely difficult it was to manage life these days.

So out there in the snow,

David had a chance to pray for the man and Jesus was glorified.

What started this chain of events?

The man saw David’s good works.

That’s what got his attention.

Which in turn gave David the opportunity to say, **“Jesus sent me.”**

and point the glory away from himself and onto Jesus.

I’m sure that man told that story to his family for weeks to come.

**That’s getting the paint out of the bucket!**

David is a master at creatively working Jesus into the conversation.

**Here’s another great story.**

So David and his wife Reba are on a crowded subway, holding onto the center pole.

David notices a young woman who keeps sneaking a peak in their direction.

He didn’t think much of it, but then a seat opened up right beside her.

He encouraged Reba to take the seat.

He then moved to hold the pole next to her.

**“There I was,” he shared, “standing right in front of this young woman,  
so I figured I’d strike up the conversation.**

**‘This is my bride of 50 years. She’s taken care of me for all these years,  
now it’s my turn to take care of her.**

**She has osteoporosis and I don’t want her to risk falling.’”**

The young woman smiled, “I was noticing how much you loved each other.”

And here’s where David’s creativity kicks in.

David had noticed that she was dressed in Muslim clothes

and had an accent that suggested she had not grown up in America, so he says,

“Yes, well we had an arranged marriage.”

(He figured this would catch her attention, which it did!)

“Really,” she replied. “We have arranged marriages in my country too.

I’m from Pakistan. I didn’t think they had arranged marriages in America.

You can guess where this is going.

David began to explain.

“Well when I was in college,

I knew that I needed a good wife to make it through this journey of life,

and I happened to know the best match maker.

His name is Jesus. He arranged our marriage.”

And David proceeded to share with her his story.

Before getting off the train,

she took down his name and number so she could speak to him again in the future.

**That’s getting the paint out of the bucket!**

NOW, I wouldn’t want you to expect that all the stories

will come out quite so serendipitously.

**So let me share one last story from the coal mines.**

During college, David worked in the coal mines during the summer.

He had a boss who was tough, had a Napoleon complex,

and was always yelling and cursing up a storm.

Jesus Christ! being on the top of his list.

So one day David, after hearing this curse for the umpteenth time, says,

“Do you know him?”

“Who?”

“Jesus Christ. You use his name a lot.

I actually do know him and love him very much!”

The boss failed to see the human in this young upstart,  
and the cursing exploded even more.

For the next 3 summers, this boss made David's life hell.  
Finally, David had graduated and was finishing his last day in the mines.  
Suddenly he heard the voice of his boss behind him.  
"Hey, Bowen."

David turned around and the boss was standing there with tears in his eyes.  
"Listen, when you become a priest, or whatever it is you're becoming,  
would you pray for me?"

David replied, "I've been praying for you for 3 years.  
It was the only way I got through my job each day,  
and yes, I will continue to pray for you whenever I think about you,  
that you will come to know Jesus and to love him."

**That, my friends, is getting the paint out of the bucket!**

So what have we learned about getting the paint out of the bucket?

- Take the initiative

Do something that captures the person's attention

- Shovel snow
- Treat your wife differently
- Bear patiently with abusive behavior

Then start a conversation –

Be observant.

Listen to the other person.

Ask, "Hmm. What's the point of connection?"

David: She is dressed in Muslim clothes and has an accent –  
probably from a country with arranged marriages –  
and the conversation is launched.

Jesus: A woman at the well in the heat of the day?

She must be avoiding the other women? Why?

She must be a social outcast. Why?

Let's try this . . . Go get your husband – and the conversation is launched.

- To share Christ

Now you get to move the attention from yourself to Jesus.

- In the power of the spirit

It's the Holy Spirit's job to convince, convict and convert.  
You can't argue anyone to Jesus.  
You can just make him look good.

- Leaving the results to God

Your job is to get the paint out of the bucket.  
Jesus is the one who'll turn our brush strokes into a masterpiece.

So are you ready?

**Let's get the Paint Out of the Bucket!**

Next Sunday *you* are going to tell *us* how we got the paint out of the bucket.