

# Invest in the Kingdom of God

→ Matt 25,14-30; Matt 6,33

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## Introduction: Greetings

At first thank you very much for your invitation. It's an honour for me to preach here in your church. I and my church pray for my time here in Myanmar. May God bless our communion for the next days.

We are brothers and sisters, because we have the same Lord and creator: Our father in heaven, his one and only son and the Holy Spirit, who lives in us. This is a great mystery.

His kingdom come and I'm very excited to see what God is doing in your country and in the Brethren Movement of Myanmar.

I'm going to teach about Christian leadership at your Bible School and today I want to preach about the Kingdom of God.

But now I have many greetings for you.

I bring you warm greetings from my home church and from our leadership team. Last Sunday my church sent me to Myanmar. My church is one of the largest Brethren Churches in Germany. We have 370 Members plus children and friends. But I have one request: Please pray for my country. The church is in decline. We can't see a revival at the moment. There's no hunger to find the living God. So please pray for my church and Germany.

Also I greet you from the Open Brethren Federation in Germany and his Chairman Reinhard Lorenz. Our Federation has about 8000 believers in 150 churches.

## I. A invitation to the Kingdom of God

Today I want to preach about the Kingdom of God, also known as the Kingdom of heaven. Both mean the same. But where is the Kingdom of God. Jesus says in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 17, verse 20 (ESV):

*Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."*

Or we can translate: The Kingdom is within you. The Kingdom started with Jesus. And it ends when he comes again. Then it breaks through. But it is also here today. This is a mystery. God's Kingdom is now here in Yangon. And in Germany, too. Do you recognize this fact? We represent the Kingdom. We live under the rule of God's kingdom. We live according the values of his Kingdom. And of course we know the King of the Kingdom: Jesus Christ, our Saviour. The Triune God. The Master of the universe.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God rules your live. Why? Because it lives in you. You are brother, sister, student, worker, teacher, wife, man, German, Myanmar, colleague and also citizen of the Kingdom of God. You breathe the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is God's dream of a world of healing. A world without sorrow, without illness, without war and without tears and even without dead. It's his dream about a new Eden (**Rev 20+21**).<sup>1</sup> Are you ready for this dream?

Every Kingdom of men is challenged by the Kingdom of God.

But are you a citizen of the Kingdom of God? This is a very important question for you this morning. You must make a decision for Jesus. Jesus told Nikodemus, a Pharisee in **John, Chapter 3, verse 3**: You must born again. Let's read the scripture. Nikodemus asked the Lord:

*"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

I asked you a important question this morning: Are you born again? Please check this yourself. Jesus loves you. He invites you in his Kingdom.

I want to pray before I start the sermon for today. → **Prayer**

## II. Sermon: Invest in the Kingdom of God

### I. Reading

Now we read the scripture form the Gospel of **Matthew, Chapter 25, verse 14-30**.

Jesus tells us a story. God will use us to build his kingdom. Even with our faults. And with our whole potential and gifts he has given us. He calls us to invest in his kingdom.

→ **Reading (NKJV)**

*14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

*15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.*

*16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.*

*17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*

*18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*

*19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*

*20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.*

*21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

*22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.*

*23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

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<sup>1</sup> Inspiriert von: <http://www.vineyard-region-stuttgart.de/?p=772> (05.04.2014)

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:  
 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.  
 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:  
 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.  
 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.  
 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.  
 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Before Jesus told this parable the disciples ask him a question 24,3f: *And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*

Afterwards he told them several parables. And also this one.

## 2. What the parable says

- ☞ Jesus uses an illustration of a business man. There is a chief, a CEO, who plans a long business trip. He doesn't know when he will be back. No one knows. But during his absence he wants to let run his business.
- ☞ Therefore he calls his workers and gives everyone a big sum. Talents. Everyone according to his own ability.
- ☞ To workers invest the silver. And it seems unbelievable. They double the sum.
- ☞ But the third servant buries the silver. This was not an unusually method in those days. It was a method to protect the silver from burglary.
- ☞ Then, after a long, long time, the Lord came back. He called his servants and want to cash up with them. What would they do with his money? How much had they earn while his trip?
- ☞ The first one doubles the sum. Great. The CEO is very happy. He praises his servant. The servant gets a promotion. Also he invites him to a celebration.
- ☞ The second one had doubled the silver, too. And the CEO is also excited. He praises the servant. He upgraded him. And he invites him to a big party.
- ☞ The third servant answered very strange. „You are a hard man. You harvest money where you didn't sow seed.“ How can he say this? This is stupid. He's the Manager. He's the steward. So he has to do his very own job. He was lazy. He was completely without creativity. The CEO is very upset. „Why didn't you bring the money to the bank where I can get interests?“ He scolds. He doesn't understand the behavior of his steward. So he took the silver from him. And he dismissed him. Very bad.

## 3. Lessons for our daily live

So what are the lessons for our daily live. Oh I love this parable. It encourages us so much and also it warns us. I have five items for us this morning:

### 1. First: Jesus commissioned us to invest

Jesus has gone away. After his resurrection he went to the father. He will come back. We live between his Ascension and his return, his Second Coming. We live now. And in this time we are witnesses of Jesus. We're salt and light. Jesus sends us in the world. He gave us his great commitment. He says: I sent you like my father sent me.

I think it's great, isn't it. This fact excited me. That's why I'm here.

I think we can say: Between his Ascension and his Second Coming we have to do the Job of Jesus Christ. He's the chief. He's the CEO. And he chooses us as his servants. That honors us. Jesus wants to use us for his kingdom. Me and you. And he allows us to work very hard for his kingdom.

We don't know when Jesus comes back. We hope soon. And as in the parable his journey takes very long. 2000 years now. And in the meantime we have his silver. We increase his silver. What a job. What a task. We work in the name of the Lord.

A few years ago this fact was very important for me. In every time of my life I work for Jesus. As a volunteer or as a fulltime worker. I love it. And I work very hard. I love to work very hard. Some people say this is typical German. Before I got a pastor I worked as a metalworker in a big factory. For my colleagues I was a little bit strange, because I worked very hard in my church. And some brothers and sisters were concerned. Veit is doing so much. Will he have a burn-out? Other thought I want to earn my salvation.

No, no, never. I love to work hard for Jesus. And maybe you love it too. This parable says: It's OK. Do it. Love it. Feel free! It isn't strange. It's very good.

Jesus is not only our saviour. He's also our Lord. He's the CEO. Work for Jesus is not like a hobby. It's a mission. And it's a lifestyle. Jesus says:

'Engage in business until I come.' (Lk 19,13)

But some Christians are more like the third servant. What? Jesus wants me to do his work? Oh know. I must watch the new film. I must do this and that. My God. I'm so tired. I don't know what to do. So I dig all my gifts and talents. I put them away. And then I live my own life.

Do we know that? This guy despises his CEO. He mocks him. Every Christian who digs his talents and gifts has the same problem. How we think about Jesus?

Is he just your CEO. Constantly he comes and wants that we work for him?

Or do we love Jesus? Is Jesus our saviour? Is Jesus the Lord who gifted us? And now he sends us. Know we can do our best for him. We can respond to his love. Can someone who loves Jesus dig his talents? I can't believe it (vgl. Rienecker: 332).

So brothers and sisters: Let's love Jesus. And then let's work for Jesus.

## 2. Secondly: Jesus talented us individually

Jesus gave us gifts. But we don't have all the same gifts. And we don't have all the same power.

We don't have all the same healthy. We don't have all the same money. We don't have all the same mental power. And we don't have all the same spiritual gifts. And this is OK. The Apostle Paul writes in **Romans 12,6-8**:

*Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;*

*if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching;*

*the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

God does not demand the same of each. We should not compare ourselves with each other. Not everybody get five talents. The point is not the number of the talents we got from Jesus. The point is how we work with our talents. Some of us are stronger than others. Some of us have a big family. Some of us are singles. God knows that. But we should not compare. We should to what we can with passion.

God doesn't ask everybody for the same. He works with weak people. He works with strong people. That calms me. If we're weak we could work for God in weakness. It's OK. If we're strong we could do it with power, do we?

Maybe this is only a German problem. But in German we compare everything. We want to do things better than the other. So everyone is stressed. So I said to Germans: Don't compare yourself. And don't do the best. Just do your best. What is this „the best“? Somewhere it is better. Do your best. With your talents and your possibilities. That honours Jesus.

The Apostle Peter wrote in **1Peter, 4,10**:

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

### **3. Thirdly: Loyalty is very important for Jesus - Be disciplined!**

If I search new employees for the kingdom of God I have one question: Did they do a good work before? This shows me the character of a person. This shows me the attitude. And for me aptitude is more important than expertise.

This is another point in this parable: Loyalty is very important for Jesus - Be disciplined!

Don't start with the big things. Be faithful in small things. Do things without praise.

Things that no one can see. Do things with discipline. Do these things well. The Lord said to the servants with the three and five talents: *Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

### **4. Fourthly: Jesus gives us free space - Be creative!**

The Lord has gone. Now we have the job. What does it mean? This means that the Lord trust us. And in our parable he don't give a big handbook to the servants with orders how to do the job. The Lord gives us free space. So we could be very creative. We can try many things. We can invest here and there.

Some Christians ask many years where God has called them. It's not necessary. The Kingdom of God is not so complex. Let's do it. And let's do something. Use your gifts and talents. Take a risk. Be creative!

### **5. I see one more thing in this context: Let's promote the young generation**

This is not in the text here. But we can find it in the scripture very often:

Invest in young people. Invest in the next generation. Invest in the future. Empower young people. The Kingdom needs workers. And the workers are in the young generation. So empower the young generation. In Germany we promote not enough. This is not good. Look for gifted young people. Discover them. Trust them. And help them to find their place in the kingdom.

## **4. Call for action**

Jesus calls us to invest in his kingdom. Don't invest first in your own career. Or in prosperity. This is not sustained. Jesus says in **Matthew 6,33**: *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*



Many Christians don't invest right. My wish is that we all here take investments in the right way. God will reward your investments in his kingdom. He promises that in his true word. And God rewards explicitly his faithful servants.

Brother and sisters in Yangon, Myanmar. His kingdom comes. Everywhere. Jesus uses us to invest in his kingdom. It's a personal thing. Jesus calls us to be salt and light for the world. A bright and clear light which shows the world his Redemption and justice.

This is important 24 hours a day and seven days a week. At the church, at the neighborhood, at work and in our families.

He will come again and his Kingdom will break through. Everyone will see him. His kingdom come. Come Lord Jesus, come!

## Amen

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