

# First Christian Church of Napa – “Trust” Series – week 1

## WARM IT UP

### Cultural Background

Wealthy landowners usually delegated the control and multiplication of their wealth to trained accountants, who could be free persons, or as this parable, servants. They also often went on long journeys.

Given the time period, the value of a talent was about 10,000 denarii. One denarius was a day's wage. If you do the math, one talent was therefore worth life's wages for an average worker. Five talents were worth what each of these servants would make in 5 lifetimes.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are some things in your life that you have been entrusted to take care of?
2. Do you sometimes feel that God asks much of you, but you feel a heavy burden to work it out on your own?

### Cultural Background (continued)

One of the safest and least profitable ways of protecting one's money was to bury it in the ground; such buried reserves are still occasionally found where someone never returned to retrieve his or her deposits.

Doubling one's investment was normal, and the servants should have been able to accomplish this. The principle that integrity in smaller matters qualified one to prove one's integrity in larger matters was often invoked in antiquity.

The third slave should have known better; he simply did not care what happened to his master's property. The smallest possible investment, providing interest on a savings deposit, could not have endangered the deposit.

### Discussion Questions

- 1) Given this opportunity to be free to invest in whatever he likes, he freezes and fails. What is an opportunity that was presented to you that you ended up burying?
- 2) Even though it's a taboo in the Church to talk about our success... what is a success in your life?

As you reflect on the parable, consider that Jesus told these stories about our everyday lives. He reveals Himself through common experiences and we should be able to find Him in the most unlikely places. Christ “shows up” while we're sitting in front of our computers at work, cooking dinner or driving in traffic. We always like to learn something during the big moments in our lives, but Christ clearly makes the point that learning about His love, His grace and His mercy can be experienced in the most ordinary circumstances of our everyday lives.

## STUDY UP

One of the obvious things you see in the Bible is that God has a plan. The amazing thing about that plan is that we are a part of it. Psalm 139 tells us that God knows us intimately and that He made us with a specific design for specific reasons. On a larger scale, God created His church with a specific plan in mind too...and, again, that includes all of us who follow Jesus.

Now stop and think about that for a moment. Are you able to let that sink in a bit? Take a one minute meditation break and ask God to focus you on the fact that he has a specific plan and you are personally a part of it.

I saw a quote not too long ago that read, "God doesn't do nothing." Okay, bad grammar but completely true. God is not passively going with the flow. He is active and going for something specific in the lives of every person on earth. And He is inviting every single one of us to have a part in that.

### *Getting Started*

In a moment, you will have a chance to talk about some of the specifics of God's plan. Before that though, let's look at our general response to the fact that God calls us to be partners with Him in what He's doing in the world.

1. What was it like for you to meditate for a minute on the fact that God has an organized, specific plan for the world and for you in particular?
2. What are some of the barriers people have when it comes to cooperating with God's plan in the world? What keeps His people from fully participating in His plan?
3. In *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren starts his book with the line, "It's not about you." What do you think that means in light of God's big picture plan for the world? Why is it important that we understand that it's not all about us?

### *Digging Deeper*

4. Look at the verses below and talk about the people who had assignments in God's plan. What was their response to being called to be a part of God's plan?
  - a. Jeremiah 1:4-9
  - b. Exodus 3:9-11
  - c. Judges 6:11-16
  - d. Acts 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:7
  - e. John 4:34; 17:4

5. When you think about being a part of God's plan which of these people do you feel most like? Why?

6. Take a look at following verses and talk about some of God's purposes. What are some of the ways that God specifically calls us to be a part of His plan? How do God's plans, revealed in these verses, translate into real-life behavior?

f. Ephesians 2:10

g. Matthew 28:18-20

h. Ephesians 4:11-13, 16

7. Have you ever felt God "nudging" you to do something or to be a part of a ministry in the church? Think back to that time for a moment. How did that feel? What did you do?

### ***Bringing it Home***

Let's go back to what we said earlier, "God doesn't do nothing." *Do you do nothing?* God does something every moment to move closer to accomplishing His plan.

8. What are some steps you could take personally to live out what God is asking you to do in those verses from question #4? How would your life change if you did those things?

9. What kind of next step do you think God is asking for from you? What one thing could you do to more fully align with God's plan in the world? What kind of spiritual gift(s) do you think God has given you (Romans 12)? What is holding you back from fully engaging in God's plan?