

# SHAPEd to serve

## discussion guide

(Linked to sermon from 9/10/22 which can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/2c3ypSUnG2I>)

*As always, adapt these questions for your group*

Intro: Which is your favourite parable Jesus told? [my guess is not many people would choose this one!]

Read Matthew 25.14-30. Let people read it through again quietly by themselves.

Ask people to share what questions they have having read this parable. Write them all down on a sheet of paper.

The master entrusts his servants with huge amounts of money (look at the NIV footnote). What are some of the things God has entrusted us with?

The master entrusts the servants with differing amounts 'according to their ability'. At first sight that seems unfair. But in what ways could it also be seen as liberating?

What exactly does the master commend servants 1 and 2 for?

The master says that servants 1 and 2 have been faithful with a 'few things' – even though they were worth millions of pounds! Assuming the master isn't being ironic, what should we learn from this?

Look at servant 3 – his actions and his excuses.

The Bible sometimes calls us to 'fear the Lord' – in the sense of being filled with obedient awe. But this seems to be an example of someone with an *unhealthy* fear of God – assuming that God is essentially vindictive. How might such a warped view of God impact on someone's relationship with God?

If someone is inclined to see God as essentially vindictive (or has grown up thinking something along those lines for years), what are some truths from Scripture that that person needs to repeat to themselves to counter such a distorted view? Are there any false views of God you hold for which you need to repent?

Dan said "Servant 3's heart is stone cold towards God because they feel God's heart is stone cold towards them. He's not punished for being lazy. His laziness is a symptom of his cold heart. He's sent away from God because his actions have made it clear he doesn't want to be close to God." Do you agree / disagree? Why?

If this were a secular business, we wouldn't have a problem with a master firing a lazy employee and handing his responsibilities on to a trusted employee. Why do we then balk at v28?

The parable is designed to get us asking the question: what are we doing with what God has entrusted to us? Think of all God has entrusted to you. Which bits of that fortune are you putting to work? Which bits are you in danger of burying in the ground?

How could you support each other in digging up those riches and putting them to work?

How can we avoid thinking that the parable is really just encouraging us to work harder?

Look back at the sheet of questions from the beginning. Which ones haven't you addressed yet? If you have time, have a go now. If you haven't got time, agree when to address them – and what might be helpful preparation for addressing them.

If you can't resolve them, hold them prayerfully before God.

Spend some time praying for each other and our church – that more and more people would step into their God-given calling in life, experiencing their master's joy.