

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 4/7. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On talents.](#)
2. [On minas.](#)
3. [On opening the floodgates of heaven.](#)
4. [On bringing "...all of your tithes to the storehouse..." The concept of tithing.](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

Just to begin with, do you have a testimony from kids' camp or youth camp?

- **How to live in abundance.**

Pastor Mark began by asking what you would do if you were suddenly handed \$1.7 million? Answer him.

He points out that this is what the average worker would make in a lifetime on just \$50,000 a year. How close is he to your own experience? Do you have bragging rights?

He says the world's equation is EARN + SAVE a little = JUST ENOUGH.

1. Is that close to your story?
2. Is there anything wrong with this picture.
3. Pastor says God's way is for us to have "...more than enough." Why? How? What do you know of God's idea of prosperity?
4. Is this a difficult, sensitive topic for you?
5. Define "abundance?"

- **Why Jesus wants us to be managers and not owners.**

Mark says, “God’s way is this: You are entrusted with capital. You invest it in the right places, and then you reap a reward.”

1. What thoughts does this evoke?
2. Do you have scripture that points to, highlights and buttresses this idea?

When Mark points us to Matthew 25, he says, “I want you to realize today that you are a money manager. You are not a money owner. When you realize this, you come to understand that there is abundance waiting for you, and you are not just getting by.”

1. If you are the certified “money manager,” Who is the actual money owner?
2. How interested is he in your management? Why? Who benefits from skilled management?
3. Read the parable in Matthew 25: [14](#)For it is just like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted them with his possessions. [15](#)To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent—each according to his own ability. And he went on his journey. [16](#)The servant who had received the five talents went at once and put them to work and gained five more. [17](#)Likewise, the one with the two talents gained two more. [18](#)But the servant who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s money. [19](#)After a long time the master of those servants returned to settle accounts with them. [20](#)The servant who had received the five talents came and presented five more. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’ [21](#)His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master!’ [22](#)The servant who had received the two talents also came and said, ‘Master, you entrusted me with two talents. See, I have gained two more.’ [23](#)His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master!’ [24](#)Finally, the servant who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Master, I knew that you are a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. [25](#)So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what belongs to you.’ [26](#)‘You wicked, lazy servant!’ replied his master. ‘You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. [27](#)Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received it back with interest. [28](#)Therefore take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. [29](#)For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. [30](#)And throw that worthless servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
4. How is the capital distributed? Is this fair? Why is this wisdom? Does the money Owner know the capabilities of each?

5. See [the footnote below](#). Is Jesus talking about “talent” or money, as in liquid capital?
6. If a talent of silver is 6000 days’ wages (that is, almost 16 and a half years’ wages), how much money was distributed in US dollars? Was the one who received least deprived in any way, with *only* the wages of sixteen and one-half years? Could you invest that wisely? Or would you be inclined to bury it?
7. Does this question even matter in terms of what God has given us?
8. How much money is being managed?
9. Pastor repeated the statistic that we make \$1.7 million in our lifetime, but we spend over \$3 million. How is that possible?
10. Jesus said the Owner’s wealth was “entrusted” to the servants. Was there any further instruction given? How did the two wise and faithful servants know what to do with those considerable riches? (What google search do you suppose they performed?)
11. In the above parable, who gains from the profit? Who else? What is the return/reward for the capable money manager?
12. Look at verse 29 above. **29**For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Explain.
13. Look up Luke 16:**9** I tell you, use worldly wealth to make friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings. **10**Whoever is faithful with very little will also be faithful with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. **11**So if you have not been faithful with worldly wealth, who will entrust you with true riches? How does this fit?

- **How money can be a taskmaster driving us to serve it.**

Take a minute to read Luke’s parallel parable in Luke 19: **11**While the people were listening to this, Jesus proceeded to tell them a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought the kingdom of God would appear imminently. **12**So He said, “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to lay claim to his kingship and then return. **13**Beforehand, he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Conduct business with this until I return,’ he said. **14**But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We do not want this man to rule over us.’ **15**When he returned from procuring his kingship, he summoned the servants to whom he had given the money, to find out what each one had earned. **16**The first servant came forward and said, ‘Master, your mina has produced ten more minas.’ **17**His master replied, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very small matter, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ **18**The second servant came and said, ‘Master, your mina has made five minas.’

19And to this one he said, ‘You shall have authority over five cities.’ **20**Then another servant came and said, ‘Master, here is your mina which I have laid away in a piece of cloth. **21**For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You withdraw what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow.’ **22**His master replied, ‘You wicked servant, I will judge you by your own words. So you knew that I am a harsh man, withdrawing what I did not deposit

and reaping what I did not sow? [23](#)Why then did you not deposit my money in the bank, and upon my return I could have collected it with interest?' [24](#)Then he told those standing by, 'Take the mina from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.' [25](#)'Master,' they said, 'he already has ten!' [26](#)He replied, 'I tell you that everyone who has will be given more; but the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. [27](#)And these enemies of mine who were unwilling for me to rule over them, bring them here and slay them in front of me.'"

1. What do you notice? How has the third servant become a slave to his master's gift?
 2. Look up 1 Chronicles 29:[12](#)*Both riches and honor come from You, and You are the ruler over all. In Your hands are power and might to exalt and give strength to all. [13](#)Now therefore, our God, we give You thanks, and we praise Your glorious name. [14](#)But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? For everything comes from You, and from Your own hand we have given to You.* What do you see? Ultimately, Who paid for the temple?
 3. How did David avoid that same fear?
 4. Discuss Pastor's concept of open palms vs. closed fists. Where are you on the scale?
 5. In Luke's parable, what are the instructions the master gives?
 6. What comes with greater riches?
 7. Think of the city to be ruled over as a field to be harvested. When Jesus said, "The field is ripe for the harvest and the laborers are few,..." explain why the laborers are so few? What are the qualifications to rule over cities or to labor in the harvest?
 8. Look at verse 25. Discuss the implications? Why does this go contrary to what many call "fair?"
 9. Look at Luke 16: [12](#)And if you have not been faithful with the belongings of another, who will give you belongings of your own? [13](#)No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. How does this fit?
- **Learn how to break from the grip of money.**
 1. Look at Luke 6: [38](#)Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. How often have you read this verse? Have you been taught to take it literally or you add limits to the reward promised in giving?
 2. If you give, and receive great abundance in return, what is required of you with that new abundance? Do you bury that in the garden?
 3. Who will soon benefit from your abundant wealth? Are you already praying for their prosperity?
 4. Discuss this concept: You give, so that you have more to give the next time. How does that change your perception of the purpose of abundance?

5. Review what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9: *6Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not out of regret or compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver. 8And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9As it is written: "He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." 10Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your store of seed and will increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11You will be enriched in every way to be generous on every occasion, so that through us your giving will produce thanksgiving to God. 12For this ministry of service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God.* Describe the prosperity Paul speaks of here. What does it mean to sow sparingly?
6. What does it mean to sow abundantly? How does that fit into what Jesus is saying?
7. Why is this a "...different economic system from the world system," as Pastor Mark points out?
8. Look up Malachi 3: *2"...Yet from the days of your fathers, you have turned away from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of Hosts. But you ask, 'How can we return?' 8Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you ask, 'How do we rob You?' In tithes and offerings. 9You are cursed with a curse, yet you—the whole nation—are still robbing Me. 10Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this," says the LORD of Hosts. "See if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out for you blessing without measure. 11I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your land, and the vine in your field will not fail to produce fruit," says the LORD of Hosts. 12"Then all the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight," says the LORD of Hosts.* List the benefits of tithing listed in these six verses.
9. Carefully consider this: Deuteronomy says in chapter 6 *15For the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God. Otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. 16Do not test the LORD your God as you tested Him at Massah.* If the Lord says there, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test," and here He calls on us to test Him, what is different?
10. Is there a difference between testing God's patience as they did in the wilderness, and testing His Promises that He instructs us to believe?
11. How is trusting God the same as testing God? How is trusting God the opposite of trying His patience?
12. Look back at what Paul says of a "cheerful giver," in 2 Corinthians above. Using Paul's vocabulary, what does it look like when the "floodgates of heaven" open? ([See footnote 3 below.](#))
13. Do you have a testimony where a seemingly rash gift you gave returned to you in surprising abundance?

14. Look at Deuteronomy 8: **17**You might say in your heart, “The power and strength of my hands have made this wealth for me.” **18***But remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant that He swore to your fathers even to this day.* **19***If you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods to worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish.* Explain what you see here. What are the dangers of forgetting the source of your abundance?
15. How does tithing help us remember the Source?
16. What changes when we change from being a storehouse to becoming a conduit? What benefits do you see in the above scripture?
17. Have you ever heard the testimony of anyone who “gave it all away?”
18. What did God give for your sake? What did He withhold?
19. Look up Psalm 37: **23***The steps of a man are ordered by the LORD who takes delight in his journey.* **24***Though he falls, he will not be overwhelmed, for the LORD is holding his hand.* **25***I once was young and now am old, yet never have I seen the righteous abandoned or their children begging for bread.* **26***They are ever generous and quick to lend, and their children are a blessing.* What do you see? Can the righteous fall? Can they fail?
20. What characteristics of the righteous does David describe?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Adopt an effective ministry that has known high integrity. Make a plan to give where you have not been giving, and begin to note any return.
3. Read Psalm 37 more than once this week. Think about “open palm/closed fist,” and write down what you perceive.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On talents**—The talent was not a coin, but a balanced weight of silver or gold that equaled around 3000 shekels. Strong's explains it like this: **5007** *tálan-ton* – a silver talent, worth about 6,000 denarii, that is 6000 days' wages (gold talents were worth about 30 times as much). A talent was not a coin but rather a weight (about 75 lbs., NIVSB) used as the basis of monetary exchange. [“A talent refers to a talent-weight of silver (the weight and the value being different in different countries and at different times). A common value of a talent was 6000 denarii” (Souter).] It is important here to notice two things. First, if you have read through the book of proverbs, you will remember how many times God warned of falsifying the weights in a balance. It's difficult to shave fractions of an ounce and not have it noticed. But think how easy it would be when you're weighing out 75 pounds of gold, to shave off an ounce here and an ounce there. God calls this action an abomination. Secondly, notice, when someone was ten

talents, he was given 750 pounds of gold or silver. When he invested it, he wasn't risking pocket change, he needed wisdom. When he buried it, he buried with it the opportunity of a lifetime.

2. **On minas**—The mina is another measure of weight. Minas and shekels were used in ancient Babylon in Daniel's day, and understood throughout the known world. The mina is an ancient [Near Eastern](#) unit of weight for silver or gold, equivalent to approximately 1.25 pounds (0.57 kg), which was divided into 60 [shekels](#). The mina, like the shekel, eventually also became a unit of [currency](#).
3. **On opening the floodgates of heaven**—A personal note: The concept of God opening the "windows of heaven", or the floodgates of heaven always evoked an image of me with an umbrella standing in a torrential downpour of pennies. I thought it meant no end to an almost frivolous abundance...until one day I was sitting enjoying a picnic lunch at one of the locks of the canals in Paris, France. What is translated in English "windows" or "floodgates" depending on the translator, is always translated *écluses*/floodgates in French. As I watched the floodgates open to allow a passing boat to proceed north, I heard Wisdom in my spirit say, "This is what happens when I open floodgates. You don't pass to greater wealth, but to the next level and through the lock." Sowing sparingly, as Paul points out, can be as great a hindrance to our growth as any obsessive temptation. God will always have more to give, but He has designed His giving to flow through the obedient vessels of His love, as the pass upwards from lock to lock...and faith to faith.
4. **On bringing "...all of your tithes into the storehouse"**—A beginner's look at the biblical view of tithing. Without competing with the differing and often contentious views of tithing that exist, it's good to take a look at where the tithe fits into the historic narrative of our relationship with God Himself. The first biblical account of any offering is found in Genesis 4, where Cain and Abel first bring their gifts to present to God. These are the only details we have: "*Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, while Cain was a tiller of the soil. ³So in the course of time, Cain brought some of the fruit of the soil as an offering to the LORD, ⁴while Abel brought the best portions of the firstborn of his flock.*" No description is given as to how their gifts were presented. And, do you notice the distinction in offerings? Cain brought some fruit. Abel brought "**the best portions of the firstborn of his flock.**" Here it's clear that it's not the ingredients of the offering, but the nature of that offering. A fruit bowl on the table is not the same as a bowl with only the best and the first of the fruits at harvest. Abel brought the latter from his flock. The first time a tithe, or a tenth, is mentioned is when Melchizedek meets Abraham upon the latter's return from rescuing Lot and the king of Sodom. Without any prompting or known precedent, Abraham gives Melchizedek a tenth of the spoil. Then, Jacob, Abraham's grandson, declares the practice of tithing of which most of us are aware. On his way to his mother's country to escape the murderous intent of his brother Esau, Jacob makes a vow. We find this in Genesis 28:²⁰*Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and watch over me on this journey, and if He will provide me with food to eat and clothes to wear, ²¹so that I may return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God. ²²And this stone I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give You a tenth.*" Again, this vow preceded

any Law, and this vow was purely volitional. No mention is ever made as to who benefitted from this promised tithe. Later on, the tithe became a part of the commandments of Moses, and it became the “portion of the Levites” who were not given land as an inheritance. Eleven tribes fed and provided for those who had been selected to serve the Lord in the tabernacle and in all priestly duties. Where the tithe comes in, then, to Christianity is by virtue of precedent: Jacob vowed the tithe of his own free will, and promise: In no other way at no other time are we likewise invited to test God, and there are few promises of God that bear such overwhelming abundance in return. When you read through these notes, note carefully the fruit of generous giving. That is the point. The thread proceeds clearly throughout the Old Testament, and it is brought to brilliant clarity by all that Jesus says, buttressed by what Paul tells the Corinthians. The tithe, then, becomes, not a law, but a challenge to imitate Jacob...and in so doing, to imitate God. There is no better way to imitate God Most Faithful than to make a vow and to keep it. Your tithe, a financial challenge in times that are charged with challenges, becomes a test of your faith and your faithfulness. When I’m asked, “Why a tenth, though...” my answer has always been, “I know, right? I chafe at that claim of a ‘tenth’. One day it will be ninety percent.” The challenge has always been to try to outgive God. He always seems to win.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Matthew 25:14-23
Tuesday: Matthew 25:24-30
Wednesday: Luke 19:11-26
Thursday: 1 Chronicles 29:12-14
Friday: 1 Chronicles 29:15-17
Saturday: Deuteronomy 8:17-19
Sunday: Luke 16:9-13

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.