

# The Bulletin

## Meeks St. Church of Christ

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### ***“I Was Afraid...” A Study of Fear Pt. 1***

By Brian Meade

In the parable of the “one talent man” found in Matthew 25:14-18, Jesus teaches us, *“For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. “To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.*

*“Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. “In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. “But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.”*



It is the one talent man who fails to do his master's will by burying it, and thus keeping it safe. But in so doing, he did not accomplish any gain for his master and was regarded by the master as a *“wicked, lazy slave.”* (verse 26)

The slave's whole motivation for not doing anything with the one talent placed in his charge was simple: fear! He tells his master in verses 24-25, *‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ‘And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’* He feared that if he tried and failed, the master would punish him for his failure. But his fear of failure led him to be punished nonetheless!

Matthew 25:30 tells us of his punishment, *“Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

#### **I. Why do we fear?**

**(1) Doubts and Insecurities.** Much like the “one talent man” we doubt our own abilities and don't really believe we can do what God asks of us. That's why, when Jesus was training the twelve disciples, He emphasized faith in God and not just in their own abilities (Matthew 8:26; Matthew 14:31; Mark 11:23; Luke 12:28).

In the Old Testament, when God called Moses from the burning bush to go to Pharaoh and free the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, it was his own doubts and insecurities that brought about all the excuses not to go (Exodus 3:11; 3:13; 4:1; 4:10; 4:13). God took away each fear by providing His own strength to Moses' fears (Exodus 3:12; 3:14-15; 4:2-9; 4:14-17).

And when the children of Israel were at the very edge of the promised land and looking to go in and take it, they sent twelve spies to survey the land (Numbers 13:1-29). It was the ten spies (not Joshua and Caleb) who gave a faithless and report that, *“we are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.”* (Numbers 13:31) *“And we are like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”* (Numbers 13:33)

The result of this evil report was seen in their fear, *“So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them...”* (Numbers 14:1-2)

It was their fear (Numbers 14:9), and not faith that kept them from going into the land of promise (Hebrews 3:19).

**(2) Lack of Preparation.** This is one type of fear is typical of those who fail to study for tests in school and then are called to give answers to questions that they have no clue how to answer! It's that "being put on the spot" feeling that makes someone say (at least to themselves) "I should have prepared!"

It might even be an interview for a job that you really want, a driver's test to get your license, or having to give a public speech before a crowd that gives you this fear. We learn in these experiences of life that the more prepared you are—the less fear you have in those situations.

When it comes to spiritual duties, this fear can have some dire and terrible consequences for us. Take for instance the man in Jesus' parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14), "*who did not have on a wedding garment.*" (Matthew 22:11) And because of his lack of preparation for such a formal occasion, when questioned directly by the king for this, "*he was speechless.*" (verse 12)

It was also the motivation for governor Felix's fear in Acts 24:25, "*Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."* As Paul preached, Felix saw himself as he truly was—unprepared and not ready to face God in the Day of Judgment! Just as the Hebrew writer tells us, "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*" (Hebrews 10:31)

**(3) Fear of Failure.** This fear can overpower our ability to effectively do whatever we are trying to accomplish in life. Whether it is the young man who can never get the courage to ask the young lady to go on a date, and thus never gets that first date. He will never know if she would have said yes, because of the fear of failure. Or whether it is the fear to ever drive a car for fear we might wreck. In reality, this fear can hinder us from experiencing many things in life. But the major problem of fear is the paralyzing effect that it has on those given charge to do God's will today (Matthew 7:21). Fear can defeat us before we even begin or keep us completing what we start (Luke 14:26-33).

And thus, it causes some to never to know what it is like to step out in true faith and trust in God (2 Corinthians 5:7). If we never try, we are guaranteed failure for that reason alone.

**(4) Fear of the Unknown.** This is a fear brought about because we just don't know what might happen to us. It is the unpredictable nature of future events that drives this kind of fear.

When someone or something asks us to leave the familiar, the known, and the comfortable part of our existence to go to places we've never been before or to do things we've never done before—it can be very frightening!

In the case of the call of Abraham to leave his family and lands that he was familiar with all his life to follow God into new areas and new experiences could have been frightening for him and his family (Genesis 12:1-5). But it wasn't!

Hebrews 11:8-9 tells us, "*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;*"

But this is one of the many reasons why Abraham is referred to as "*faithful Abraham*" in Galatians 3:9 (ASV, KJB), because he showed his faith in going where God said to go and doing what God said to do (Hebrews 11:17-19).

We as Christians today, should never let the "what might happen" fear stand in the way of what we can accomplish in Christ (Philippians 4:13).

**(5) Fear of Persecution or Death.** These are the greatest fears that men can have today or in any age. The fear that men may treat us differently and even harm us for our faith in Jesus Christ. This pressure caused the believing Jews to not be willing to confess Jesus in John 12:42, *lest they should be put out of the synagogue.*"

Jesus told His disciples, "*And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" (Matthew 10:28)

And in the last book of the New Testament, Jesus told the church of Smyrna, "*Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*" (Revelation 2:10)



**GOSPEL  
MEETING**

Our Fall Meeting is right around the corner  
with brother Jarrod Jacobs. Begins  
September 30th-October 4th.

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Gaddy Hall, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Harris, Katie Ward Coburn, Kathryn's grandmother, Hazel Corner, Clay Ford, & Allison (12 year old girl that received burns from a house fire/ 80% of her body was burned), Karey Trimble, Clois Wright, Marsha Briggs (Russell's mother), and Dan & Linda Hunt.

Our Gospel Meeting begins September 30th and goes through October 4th.  
Jarrod Jacobs from Caneyville, Ky. will be our speaker for the week.  
Service times are 7:00 PM Monday through Friday.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Doug George  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** "Dealing With Our Enemies"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

Fred Johnson  
The Book of Acts (Jason Longstreth)  
*Page 70 Question #1*

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Paul Johnson  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Paul Busby  
*Isaiah 53:3-6*  
**Song Leader:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Lord's Supper:** Sam Johnson  
**Assisting:** Russell Briggs & Chris Callahan  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #2:** "The Paradoxes of the Cross"  
**Closing Prayer:** Dan Cottrell

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**August 21st:**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Paul Busby  
The Book of Job (Mike Willis)  
*Page 32, Question #1*  
**Invitation:** Doug George  
**Song Leader:** Paul Busby  
**Closing Prayer:** Tim Harris Jr.