

WHEN SPIRITUAL IS NOT ENOUGH

#3 CHRISTIANITY'S 'WEIRD SUCCESS'

Introduction: Greg Sheridan, foreign editor for the “Australian”, wrote an article titled “Christianity’s Weird Success”.

QUOTE: *Christianity will revive in the West in coming decades. For the west is entering a phase of paganism, and history shows paganism is inherently ripe for conversation.*¹

- He noted that the gods of paganism are wealth, power and sex/gender issues
- His thesis is that if the Gospel can change Corinth, it can change any city.
- The challenge is for the church to not only proclaim the gospel, but also to LIVE differently.
- Kingdom Culture always looks weird to non-believers.

Matthew 25:14-21 *Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his prosperity to them. To one, he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.*

The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work, and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s money.

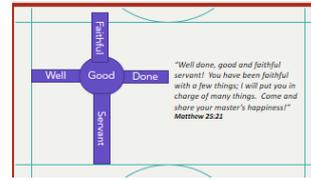
After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought another five. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gathered five more.”

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. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

¹ Greg Sheridan “Weekend Australian” 24-25 Dec 2022 - feature article “Christianity’s Weird Success (P32)

1. START WITH WHAT YOU RECEIVED

- Kingdom Culture starts with what we have received.
- When Jesus sent out the disciples, he said, *“As you have freely received, freely give.”* (Matthew 10:8)
- Starts with the cross
 - Key words from Matthew 25:21



2. WELL

- A common statement about Jesus is *“He does all things well”* (Mark 7:37)
- Well = excellence by choice
 - Not perfection
 - Not legalism
 - Not comparing with others
- A choice to excel
- Excellence = generous spirit
 - *“I will do the best I can with faith...”*

3. DONE

Mark 14:3-9 *While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages, and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.*

“Leave her alone,” said Jesus, “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them at any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

- She did what she could (v8)

- Whatever it takes to serve Jesus
- We are not called to maintain, but to have dominion.

4. GOOD

- Guard your heart (Proverbs 4:23)
 - Guard your affections
- Humility before honour

James 4:10 *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.*”

- Work at building relationships
 - Keep your attitude right.

5. FAITHFUL

Acts 20:18-24 *When they (church elders) arrived, he (Paul) said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you, but have taught you publicly from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.*

“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace...”

- Ministered with humility and tears
 - Paul had every right to feel superior
- Not moved by trials
- Not moved by fear
- Committed to continue in acts of faith

Acts 20:26-27 *“Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.”*

6. SERVANT

- We are called to serve.

Mark 10:45 *For even the son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

- Jesus displays Kingdom Culture.

1 Peter 4:7-11 *the end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled, so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.*

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with all the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever, Amen.

- Serve with all your strength and energy
- THEN we will see Christianity’s weird success story.