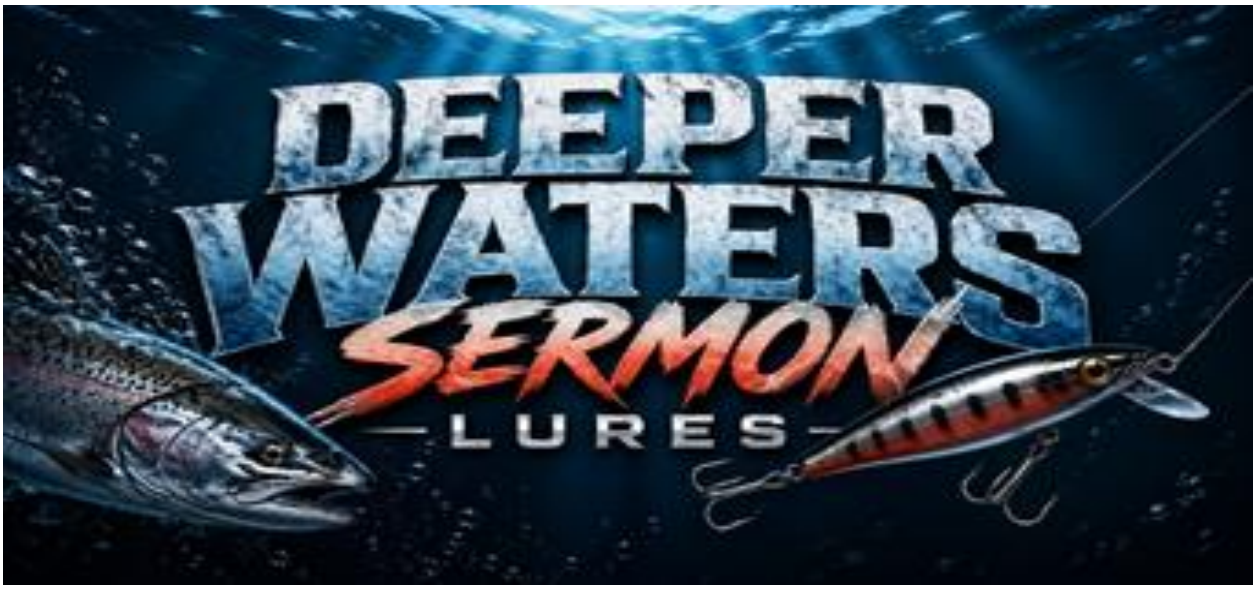


KNOW IT!

In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus reminds us that God has entrusted each of us with valuable gifts, abilities, opportunities, and resources to use for the good of others. While we haven't all been given the same gifts or circumstances, each of us has something meaningful to contribute. Faithful stewardship isn't about being the best or achieving perfection; it's about recognizing our God-given potential, focusing on what matters most, and refusing to let fear or excuses hold us back. God's grace and love come first, freeing us to use our gifts with purpose, generosity, and courage. Rather than looking back with regret over what we would've, could've, or should've done, Jesus invites us to ask: **What will we do with what God has entrusted to us—starting today?**

READ IT!

- **1 Peter 4:8–11** Peter encourages believers to use whatever gifts they have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace. This beautifully reinforces the sermon's message that everyone has something meaningful to contribute, regardless of their abilities or circumstances.
- **Romans 12:3–**8 Paul reminds us that we are members of one body, each possessing different gifts according to God's grace. No gift is insignificant, and no one needs to compare their contribution to another person's.
- **2 Timothy 1:6–7** Paul encourages Timothy to rekindle the gift of God within him, reminding him that God has not given us a spirit of cowardice but of power, love, and self-discipline.
- **The Little Prince — Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943)** Through his travels, the Little Prince encounters adults preoccupied with wealth, power, status, and endless busyness. His friendship with a fox teaches him about love, relationships, and the responsibility that

comes from caring for others. The story reminds us that a meaningful life isn't measured simply by productivity or possessions, but by the love and attention we invest in others.

- **The Alchemist — Paulo Coelho (1988)** Santiago, a young shepherd, leaves the familiar comforts of home to pursue a dream of finding treasure near the Egyptian pyramids. Along the way, he encounters setbacks, uncertainty, and opportunities to abandon his journey. Ultimately, he discovers that the journey itself has transformed him. Unlike the servant who buries his talent out of fear, Santiago takes risks, learns from failures, and grows through experience.

WATCH IT!

- **The Pursuit of Happyness** (2006): Chris Gardner perseveres through homelessness, financial hardship, and repeated setbacks while caring for his son. His story illustrates courage, persistence, and making the most of difficult circumstances. It also provides an opportunity to acknowledge, as the sermon does, that people do not begin with equal resources or opportunities.
- **Every Good Gift — Ann Voskamp (2019)** This six-session study available through RightNow Media explores generosity with our spiritual gifts, time, hospitality, finances, and empathy. It closely reflects the sermon's conviction that every person has something valuable to contribute and that our gifts are meant to bless others.
- **The Art of Neighboring — Dave Runyon and Jay Pathak (2020)** Also available through RightNow Media, this practical study challenges Christians to move beyond good intentions and invest in meaningful relationships with their neighbors. It addresses two obstacles the sermon identifies: being too busy to focus on what matters and allowing fear to prevent us from acting.

LIVE IT!

- **Take One Courageous Step of Faith Each Week** Identify something meaningful you've been putting off because of fear, uncertainty, or the feeling that you're not ready. Perhaps it's volunteering for a ministry, learning something new, repairing a relationship, sharing your faith, helping someone in need, or pursuing an opportunity to serve. Rather than waiting for perfect circumstances, commit to taking one small, realistic step forward each week.
- **Begin Each Day with a Stewardship Prayer** Before beginning your day, take a minute to acknowledge the gifts, relationships, opportunities, and resources God has placed in your care. Pray something like: "Gracious God, thank you for the gifts you've entrusted to me. Help me recognize opportunities to use them today to encourage, serve, and bless others. Amen."