

ARTICLE FOR THE BONIFACIAN 2017: GROWTH MINDSET: GEOFF CHADWICK:

ALSO SERMON AT GELORUP 17/11/2017

It's amazing when you read the Gospels how often Jesus talks about growth. There's the Parable of the Sower, the Parable of the Mustard Seed, The Parable of the Weeds and the Parable of the Ten Talents.

With all these examples, maybe Jesus knew something about "Growth Mindsets"! So let's look at the Parable of the Ten Talents as an example. (See Mtt 25:14-30).

In this story, a wealthy land owner goes on a journey and entrusts his slaves to look after the property. He gives money to them in the form of silver coins called *talents* and then tells them to put the money to good use. One slave gets five *talents* another two *talents* and another one. The slave with five invests the money and makes five more. The one with two also makes two more. But the slave with one talent hides it in a hole in the ground. He doesn't want to lose it but doesn't make any extra money either. When the landowner returns he rewards the first two slaves with extra money, but the one who hid the money in the ground is reprimanded for wasting his opportunity. The one talent he did have is then taken off him and given to the slave who made the most money.

These words are then spoken by the landowner: *"For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away."* (Mtt 25:29 NRSV)

At first these words might sound a little mean until you think of them in terms of “growth mindsets”. I think it’s saying that God has given all of us particular gifts and skills to invest into the wellbeing of our community. Some of us are artistic, some are practical, some are compassionate and some are intellectual. When we use these gifts we become enriched and so do those around us. But when we fail to use them, or hide them away – especially if we are afraid of using them – then they wither away and become useless. For example, 20 years ago I could read Hebrew, now, because I haven’t practiced it, I can’t even remember the alphabet! On the other hand, the more I have played my clarinet in the school band the better I have become – and even better- the community who hears me play get even better music!

So I wonder what your gifts and skills are? I wonder which ones you are growing and I wonder which ones you have hidden away?

In the meantime Jesus’ parable says something important about the way God has created us. We are made to invest our talents, to grow the skills God has given us and to bring joy to the community in the process.

It seems that God is in the “Growth Mindset” business and that should be out business too!

See *The Backwards Bicycle* video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFzDaBzBLO>