



Links Players

Craft In The Kingdom

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. (Matthew 25:14–15)

Bubba Watson's hooked wedge from the trees on the 10th hole during the playoff for the 2012 Masters. Tiger Woods' holed chip shot from behind the 16th green during the 2005 Masters. Tom Watson's chip in from the deep rough beside Pebble Beach's 17th green during the 1982 U.S. Open.

Most professional golfers can consistently hit a 7-iron within 25 feet of the hole. Most will hole at least 80% of their 5-foot putts. And most will get up-and-down 60% of the time. But only the best in the world could have pulled off the shots above. They demonstrated craft at the highest level in their sport.

Craft is ability that is developed through knowledge, practice, and experience. Craft is treasured because, while everyone is born with some aptitude, absent knowledge, practice, and experience, no one develops true craft.

Jesus had something to say about craft, and He said it in the form of a story.

In the story, a man was leaving on a journey and entrusted his possessions to his servants. To one he gave five "talents," to another two talents, and to another one talent. In the story, the man represents Jesus, and the servants represent Jesus' disciples—and by extension, you and me.

The master's possessions represent what God owns, which He then entrusts to us. He entrusts us with families, jobs, ministries, and material possessions.

For those of us who work for a living, a large part of what Jesus has entrusted to us is our work. After all, work is what we do most of our waking hours during most of our adult lives.

And a talent? It was a measure of gold in weight. We don't know the exact value, but a rough estimate is that one talent is equal to one million dollars. The point is that what God has entrusted to us, whether it is more or less, is valuable. It is important.

But the master did not distribute his possessions equally. Instead, he distributed them according to his servants' ability.

This tells us two things. First, this is not a parable about salvation. How good a father, husband, or employee we are does not determine our salvation. Salvation is by grace through faith.

But it does tell us something else: that how good we are at what we do does matter to God. And if ability matters to God, developed ability matters to God. And developed ability is what we call craft.

You know the rest of the story. The master returns to settle accounts with his servants. He rewards the two servants who doubled his money, calling them “good and faithful.” He puts them in charge of more things and invites them to share in his joy over their performance.

But the servant who had done nothing with what he was entrusted is judged “wicked and lazy.” The master then took his one talent and gave it to the servant who had ten talents.

This final transfer was not the first time responsibility had been distributed according to ability in this story—it was the sixth. Throughout the parable, responsibility consistently flows toward demonstrated ability.

That means pursuing craft isn't vanity. It isn't perfectionism. It is good stewardship.

That is true in golf. It is true in our work. And it is true in life.

Prayer: Lord, help me become skillful at managing what You have entrusted to me. Amen.

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