

SKYWRITER

From the Pastor's Desk

by Rev. John Freeland

Recently I was asked this question concerning ministry and the parable of the talents in Matthew 25: "In times of ministry when the Holy Spirit is really moving, we are not doing anything but letting Him work through us. When we are called before the Judgment Seat of God, how does He determine our reward in heaven?" The question continued with the parable of the talents where the master gave talents to the servants then left. When he returned he expected the servants to have turned a profit with the talents. So, if God is working *through* us, what work are *we* doing? Here is my response.

I like to compare our service to our King to that of a musical instrument. When a great pianist plays a concert the people present might admire the piano, but they most certainly recognize that the music came from the pianist himself. Without him, the piano can only sit there and look pretty. In the case of a Bosendorfer, the world's finest piano, everyone knows that it will sound beautiful only when it is played by an expert. My prayer is that God will play me, and that everyone will know that it is He who is the Maestro.

So, if we are the instrument what do *we* do? For what do we get credit concerning our eternal rewards? We get credit for two things: willingness and responsiveness. But before we get to these, what of judgment as we stand before the throne of God? You will not be judged for your bad deeds. Those have been removed by the blood. So all that can be asked is "Did you sin?" Yes, but you are justified by the blood. Therefore don't worry about your past bad deeds if you are saved by the grace of God and washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

The first is willingness. You must answer the question, "Are you willing to be played by the Maestro?" It may be that at times you are and at times you are not. This is true of all of us. If we are not willing, then we cannot be played. If we are not willing, the Holy Spirit will not work through us.

Consider a guitar that is autographed by Jimi Hendrix, Van Halen, Chet Atkins, or some other famous guitarist. It would look pretty in a display case. But in that display case its true value is lost.

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PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR INFORMATION FOR THE AUGUST SKYWRITER BY JULY 17

**Prayer Walk
Tuesday, July 5**

**Meet in front of the Chapel
at 6:00pm rain or shine**

Everyone is invited to come worship in the freedom and joy of the Holy Spirit at our next Friday Night Fire service on Friday, July 1 at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary. A light supper will be served at 6:15pm in the Dining Area.



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It is no longer valuable as a musical instrument. Its only value is as a collector's item. We must decide if we are going to be a collector's item or a spiritual instrument.

The second is responsiveness. It is one thing to be willing, but if you do not respond when the time comes to respond then there is no music. We must respond when the Spirit urges us.

Regarding the parable of the talents, those rewarded did something with what was given them. Consider spiritual gifts. Revelation gifts for example. To discern someone is one thing. We discern, then we ask God what to do with the information that discernment brought us. Responsiveness requires that when God says go pray right now, we go pray right then. I did this in Guatemala during the worship time and two sisters were delivered from demons. Had I not moved, then nothing would have happened and they would still be in bondage. Consider prophecy. If God gives you a word of prophesy but you don't deliver it He will choose another to give that word.

So, "God works through us" does not preclude action on our part. We do the work just like a guitar does the work. The guitarist strums and the strings vibrate, the body resonates, and the audience enjoys the sound.

So, the guitar has something to do with it, only it is not the main thing. Imagine the expert guitarist getting up on stage without a guitar and strumming and cording for all he is worth. There's no sound so no one knows if he is any good or not. I could do as well as he in that situation. But when we are willing and responsive and open our mouth, lay hands and pray, give a loaf of bread or a dollar bill, etc., then people can see the Maestro, and *that* is worthy of a heavenly reward.

In the parable, the ones who did something with the talents of their master were given more responsibility (and therefore more reward). In Luke 19, Jesus told a very similar parable in which the master gave cities as a reward. The ones who receive "cities" in heaven will be the ones who, on earth, were willing and responsive. It will not necessarily be the ones with the biggest churches or the ones who raised the most money. It just might be the UMC pastor with an intercity church. It just might be the person who talks about Jesus while he fixes appliances, or sells insurance, or mediates their legal case. It is the one who is willing and responsive and therefore seizes God-given opportunities.

I'm looking forward to my heavenly rewards. How about you?

Your servant,




Rick Bonfim Ministries will host their annual Rekindle the Flame Conference on **July 28-31** at the Classic Center in Athens, GA. Special Guest Speaker Bishop Ricardo Pereira, Bishop of the UMC, Cuba will bring the glory of the Lord. Please do not miss being with us this year. Register online at www.latterain.com or call (706) 353-1546. Adults \$25 (before July 1; \$30 after July 1); students are free.

Weekly Attendance

Date	Small Groups	10:00 Service	11:00 Service
5/22	74	51	68
5/29	55	52	68
6/5	66	62	73
6/12	71	61	80

Offerings

Date	Mile of Pennies	General Funds	Designated Funds
5/22	4.75	2,692.00	875.00
5/29	4.00	6,364.81	603.70
6/5	4.30	7,348.96	271.00
6/12	4.80	1,686.00	674.00

Designated Funds

SUMCEL	400.00
Good Samaritan Fund	772.00
Property Maintenance	3.70
Parsonage	350.00
Stage Renovation	135.00
Choir	10.00
Global Ministry - Malaria	50.00
Youth - Six Flags	105.00
Postage	3.00
Flowers	25.00
UM Children's Home	539.00
Children's Ministry (Father's Day)	31.00

Youth Flag Fundraiser

The Young Adults Group will sponsor a special 4th of July bulletin on July 3. If you would like to sponsor a flag in honor or in memory of a family member or friend, please donate \$2 per name. Please submit names to Kristen Wages by **June 29**. All donations will go to the Youth for summer camp. Please make your check payable to Skyland UMC and designate it for "Youth Flag Fundraiser". Thank you for your support!

CHOIR NOTES

Do you like to sing? Join the Skyland Choir and help us enhance the beautiful presence of music at Skyland Church! The choir's routine is very low-stress, fun and relaxing. We hold Wednesday night rehearsals from 7:30 - 8:30pm and perform at the 10:00am service on Sunday mornings. Our group is a very friendly bunch who love to share God's love with music. If you are interested in joining, please contact John Burke at (706) 768-3127 or send an email to johnburke77@gmail.com. We'd love to have you as a part of our ensemble! God bless!

Youth Summer Camp

Youth Camp is almost here! The Skyland Youth Group is going to Ignite Summer Camp **July 18-22** at the FFA campgrounds in Covington, GA. Please pray for us while we retreat for a week and reconnect with our true love and creator, Jesus Christ!

SkyCamp News

- ◆ Join us on **July 6 at 6:00pm** in the Dining Area for the SkyCamp Family Night International Potluck. Please bring a dish to share. Dinner will be free!
- ◆ SkyCamp will be making a brief presentation on what we have been learning during both worship services on **Sunday, July 10**
- ◆ SkyCamp is going to the Atlanta Children's Museum on **July 14**. Please talk to Andy Hammer if you're interested in chaperoning!
- ◆ SkyCamp will be taking over the 11am service on **July 24**. Join us for child led worship, teaching and prayer! Lunch will be served afterwards. Please plan to come and support the kids. If you would like to help with lunch, please call Sheila de la Cruz at (404) 354-4299 or send an email to fnx1@cdc.gov.

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Address Service Requested

**Making Disciples
of All Nations**

CHURCH STAFF

John Freeland, Pastor

Andy Hammer, Children & Youth Director

John Burke, Choir Director

Jose Garcia, Pianist

Kimberly Thomas, Church Secretary

Eleanor Flanagan, Comptroller

Ini Emmah, Fellowship Dinner Chef

Melissa Wise, Nursery Attendant



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|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 7/3 | J.C. & Nella Jones | 7/24 | Jim Pirkle |
| 7/6 | Ben Herrera | | Matt & Leslie Yates |
| | Will Morgan | 7/25 | Emma Tingley |
| 7/10 | Rhoda Hall | 7/27 | Iris Holmes |
| 7/14 | John & Linda Freeland | 7/28 | Polly Singleton |
| 7/15 | Chris Baumann | 7/30 | Ian Medford |
| 7/18 | Virginia Burrell | | Bruce Stamey |
| 7/21 | Melissa Freeman | | |



Carolyn Mull, Helen Buffington, Dave & Evelyn Smith, Margaret Barnwell, Velma Jackson, Pam Johnston, Jinnifer Hoyla, Shirley Bryant, Jan Boehn, Jeenece O'Donald, John & Mary Turner, Edna Williams, Maude O'Donald, Diane Smith, Doris Hester, Joan Iddins, Steve Bryson, Kay Hastings, Jo Mull, Sybil Turner, Jimmy Johnson, Sarah Olds, Leonard Baumann, Harold Barnette, Lois Anderson, Geraldine Freeman