**GROWING FORWARD**

In the parable of the talent in the book of Matthew 25:14-30, we see how Jesus explains two types of response or approaches to the situation of when something of worth is committed to people.

Pastor Bank committed a worthy venture into our care, and we are going to respond in either of the two ways depicted in the parable. We are either going to grow it (*acceptable*) or maintain the status-quo (*unacceptable*). If we do not respond in an unacceptable manner, then decline most definitely would not be the case.

Why does Jesus tell this parable? It is to help us understand that change, growth and progress are constant and non-negotiable in the kingdom. Paul calls it “**pressing to the high calling”**

Philippians 3:14

The weight/burden does not get lighter, your back just grows stronger. The challenges are not going to be reduced, you just acquire more tools in your wisdom box. The reach is not going to be shorter; you just have to reach deeper.

To grow forward and become fruitful like the two servants in the first category of the parable, we must be a healthy church. **A healthy church is one that is strong, wise and deep.** In other words, growing forward means we must grow stronger, wiser and deeper.

**Characteristics of a healthy church**

1. Devotion to Christ.
2. Sound in doctrine and steep in discipleship.
3. Clear vision and direction.
4. A healthy culture supported by genuine spirituality.
5. A commitment to growth.