

THE COMING JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL

Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

Scripture tells us of the importance of being prepared for the imminent return of Jesus. But Scripture is also filled with admonitions to not sit around being idle until He returns. We are to serve Him and take advantage of every opportunity He gives us to be ***His hands...His feet...His voice***. Jesus repeatedly called on men to make the most of every spiritual opportunity. *Saving faith* is *serving faith* (**James 2:17**).

I. RESPONSIBILITY GIVEN: (vs. 14-15)

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 (**vs. 14-15**)...

It...Refers to the *kingdom of heaven* (**vs. 1**)...i.e. For it is just like could be rendered...*The kingdom of heaven will be comparable to...*

It's important to understand that in the New Testament...*the kingdom of heaven* and *the kingdom of God*...are synonymous with *God's dominion in Christ*.

Just like a man about to go on a journey...describes the time between Jesus' *first advent* and His *second advent*.

Who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them...A picture of the *Church* and the *Church Age*...and our *mission*...our *commission*.

Slaves...Gk. *doulos*, a general term describing *bondservants*...those who *voluntarily* and with *complete submission*...*functioned as overseers* of their master's household and *managers* of their businesses.

Talents...Gk. *argyria*, specifically refers to *silver*...but is also used to refer to *money* in general...i.e. *silver money*. A *talent* weighed between *58 and 80 pounds*. Thus the master was entrusting his servants with a considerable amount of money. Each amount was in keeping with *each man's ability*.

Current value of silver: Approximately **\$16.00 per ounce...**
\$256.00 per pound. 58 Pounds = \$14,848.00. 80 Pounds = \$20,480.00. Five talents = \$74,000.00 - \$102,500.00.

The owner knew his slaves intimately, and he entrusted each one with only the responsibility he could reasonably be expected to handle.

The picture here is of the Church. Those who are true believers have a wide range of *individual abilities...natural talents...intellect* ...and *other capabilities*. But all believers are given *spiritual gifts* that vary from person to person (**Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12**). God knows intimately the *gifts* and *abilities* of every believer... and He graciously *calls* and *assigns* responsibilities accordingly.

II. RESPONSE GENERATED: (vs. 16-18)

Two of the servants were faithful in caring for the master's money.

Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more (vs. 16-17)...These slaves immediately set out to *serve* their master. They represent the *genuine believer* whose utmost desire is to serve God...fulfilling what Jesus declared to be the first and greatest commandment...

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

~Deuteronomy 6:5 (Matthew 22:37)

Traded...Carries the broad connotation of *doing business over a period of time*. These two slaves didn't simply make one good investment and then sit back...they **traded** and **retraded** as long as their master was away.

Both men demonstrated absolute commitment to their master by making the most of what they had...by maximizing their opportunities.

The behavior of the third slave was radically different.

But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money (vs. 18)...

Hiding valuables in the ground was a common practice in the ancient world. It was a simple and sensible way to protect valuables

(**Matthew 13:44**). But hiding working resources in the ground wasn't sensible...it was no way of doing business or earning a profit.

Even though he had only been given **one talent**...he had the same obligation to use it to his maximum ability.

III. **RECKONING GARNERED:** (**vs. 19-27**)

Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them (**vs. 19**)...The length of time the master was gone isn't mentioned and is irrelevant...only that it was a **long time**.

In the context of the **Olivet Discourse**...Jesus repeatedly states that His second coming will be at a time when He isn't expected. But He continually and profoundly stated that He is coming back...just like **the master of those slaves came back...unexpectedly**.

The first order of business upon his return was to determine what the slaves had done with his assets. Therefore he sat down and **settled accounts with them**.

The two servants that were faithful in caring for their master's money were rewarded for their faithfulness with **additional responsibilities**...and with **their master's joy** (**vs 20-23**).

The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, "Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents." (**vs. 20**)...The man was not boasting...he was simply relating the truth. There's no hint of pride in his response...he simply did what he should have done.

At the end of his life...**Paul** wrote to **Timothy**...

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

~II Timothy 4:6-8

His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." (**vs. 21**)...In

response, notice that the master is commending the slave's **character** more than just his **accomplishment**. He commends the slave's **integrity** and **faithfulness**...which then expressed itself in his **service**. He then **rewards** him.

Imagine...in addition to sharing the Lord's divine **sinlessness** and **righteousness** and **holiness**...those in heaven will share His divine joy.

Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, "Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents." (**vs. 22**)...The second slave made the same report as the first...the only difference being that he had doubled **two talents** instead of **five**.

His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." (**vs. 23**)...The master's response to the second slave was also identical.

It's significant that each slave **didn't produce equal profits** but **equal percentages of profit**...doubling what they had been given. In the same way, Christians with different capabilities and opportunities **may produce differing results**...all the while...working with **equal faithfulness** and **devotion**. That's why the Lord assures His servants that...

"...Each will receive his own reward according to his own labor."
~I Corinthians 3:8

The third slave didn't present the master with the results of his earnings...but with an **accusatory** and **self-serving excuse**. He basically charged his master with being **unmerciful** and **dishonest**.

And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed" (**vs. 24**)...

Having **received the one talent**, this servant reasoned that his **master** might not be coming back at all. On the one hand, if he did return someday, the servant could simply return the **talent** to his master without loss from any poor investment (**vs. 25**). But if he failed to return, the servant wanted to be able to keep the **talent** for himself. He didn't want to deposit the **talent** in a bank where it

would be recorded that the **talent** belonged to the master (**vs. 27**). His reasoning indicated he *lacked faith* in his master...he proved to be a *worthless servant*. As a results, he *lost* what he had (**vs. 29**), and *faced judgment*.

And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours (vs. 25)...

This slave represents a person who *professes to be a Christian*...but whose life *bears no fruit*...whose *heart is unredeemed*. This is a person who has limited knowledge of God and concludes that God is *unloving...distant...unjust ...uncaring...and undependable*...a God who *doesn't live up to their expectations*. This is the type of person who...instead of judging themselves in light of God's inerrant Word...they judge God according to their own perverted philosophy...they view God through the lens of their own depraved world view.

But his master answered and said to him, "You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed (vs. 26)..."The slave was wicked in that he unjustly *degraded the character* of his master. He was lazy in that he *did nothing* with the **talent** entrusted to him.

Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest (vs. 27)...

The ancient **Roman Empire** had a banking system that was very similar to what we have today. At that point in history, the maximum *loan rate* was *12 percent simple interest*...and the interest earned on *deposits* was about *half that rate*. So, the slave with the **one talent**, therefore, could have reaped at least *6 percent return* by making virtually no effort at all. The fact that he didn't attempt to earn simple **interest** on the money confirmed his *total irresponsibility* and his *indifference* to his master.

IV. **REWARDS GAINED:** (**vs. 28-30**)

The distinguishing mark of the first two servants was that they used their opportunity to serve their master before he returned...of which they eagerly awaited. As a result, proved their faithfulness. We are to do the same...serve the Lord while eagerly waiting His return, by which, we show our genuine salvation and our faithfulness.

Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents (vs. 28)...Those who demonstrate their spiritual faithfulness by bearing fruit will be given even greater opportunity to bear *more fruit...much fruit (John 15)*...but those who bear no fruit will lose everything as they face judgment (**Matthew 7:13-23**).

For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away (vs. 29)...

"For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."

~Matthew 13:12

Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (vs. 30)...

Outer darkness...a common New Testament description of *hell*.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth... describes the unrelenting and unrelieved agony of *eternal torment*.

LESSONS WE NEED TO LEARN:

- **There is a duality in the Christian life.** On the one hand we should be *anxiously looking for the Lord's return* and be spiritually prepared for His return at any time. On the other hand, we *aren't to sit back in idleness* and *do nothing*. The **Parable of the 10 Virgins** stressed the need to be *prepared*...The **Parable of the Talents** stresses that we must be faithful in *serving* the Lord until He returns.
- **Every believer will stand before God and His Bema Seat Judgment...**the **Judgment Seat of Christ**. The issue of this parable pertains to what each person does with the responsibility that has been given to him. How we respond to the responsibility that has been given us...determines our rewards.