

A Journey with Christ the Messiah

The Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing a series that I have entitled *A Journey with Christ the Messiah*. In the last several weeks we have embarked on a journey through both the Old and the New Testaments with the purpose of discovering Christ the Messiah that is written there. We have looked at Old Testament prophecies and saw Jesus fulfilling all of the Messianic prophecies concerning Him. We have looked at His birth, His miracles, and His seven "I AM" proclamations. We have examined His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead and the significance of those events.

This morning we are going to look at the Parable of the Talents.

Matthew 25:14-30 (NASB)

¹⁴“For *it is* just like a man *about* to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.

¹⁶Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. ¹⁷In the same manner the one who *had received* the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸But he who received the one *talent* went away, and dug *a hole* in the ground and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹“Now after a long time the master of those slaves **came and *settled accounts with them.* ²⁰The 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.’

²¹His 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.’

²²“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.’ ²³His 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.’

²⁴“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.* ²⁵And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’

²⁶“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.* ²⁷Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my *money* back with interest. ²⁸Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’

²⁹ “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. ³⁰ Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

As we prepare to continue this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

Let's continue the journey!

If we were to make an equation of this parable, it would probably go like this:

Talents + Labor + Time = Profit.

BODY:

I. TALENTS: IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS.

Matthew 25:1-2, 14-15 (NASB)

²⁵ “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.

...¹⁴ “For *it is* just like a man *about* to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. ¹⁵ 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.

Here, the Kingdom of Heaven is like...You see many parables introduced by that statement. The kingdom is God's rule in the universe ruled by the reign of Christ.

In Verse 25:14, the word “it” refers to the kingdom of heaven.

There are two ways to think about this kingdom. In one sense when the kingdom is mentioned, it is mentioned as an **invisible** kingdom. All of those who are in the body of Christ by a true saving faith in Him. They are the true church. They are the believers who have oil in their lamps, they have the Holy Spirit in their lives.

In another sense, there is the **visible** kingdom. This kingdom is made up of all of the invisible as well as the people who proclaim to be believers but are not They are 'visible' to us because we cannot distinguish, as a TV show puts it, "The Fakers from the Bakers". When you walk into a church full of people, there will be some who go through the motions of a true Christian, but inwardly, like the servant with one talent or the five foolish virgins, they do not know, love, or serve God.

The talents were apportioned to them on the basis of their abilities. There is no agreement among Biblical scholars as to the worth of a talent, but we know that it was a lot of money. Although the people who heard Jesus may have know exactly how much money He was referring to, the exact amount of money was not as important as realizing that the master had let each of the servants a large responsibility to take care of his extate while he was gone.

Of course, the master is a picture of Christ and the long journey was Him returning to Heaven. He return is a picture Christ's second coming.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹ And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

We have all been chosen to do specific work for God. Each of us are given our own unique tasks based upon our talents that God has gifted us with before the foundations of the world.

Ephesians 2:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

II. LABOR: WORK FOR THE MASTER.

Both the first and second servants immediately set to work with the master's money. It is not the money that goes to work, as such, but the worker. When the third servant's excuses are set aside, it becomes evident that this man is lazy – he didn't do any work.

There are professing Christians all over the place who continue to live for themselves giving not consideration to the work of the Lord. As Christians, if you claim the name of Christ, then you are to give much consideration to the work of the Lord. That is what our lives are to be composed of.

When you come to Christ, you are coming to Christ as a disciple; as a learning follower; as an apprentice of the King to do His work. That which He has ordained for you to do from before the foundation of the world. (Scripture)? We are to work fervently in that.

When you profess to be a believer, but in the end you are a fruitless branch, that branch is worthless and will be cast into the fire and be burned.

Let me suggest to you that we are in harvest. You are a laborer placed into a harvest field. We pray that right? Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers to His harvest field. He who sleeps in the harvest is a servant that causes shame to his master.

Galatians 6:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰ So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

We are not to become weary in doing good. We are to be about the work of the Lord doing good.

God has given us great opportunity. We are free to talk to nearly anyone we choose around here about Christ and His Gospel message without threat of prison or death. We are to seize the opportunity that has been given to us. God has entrusted us with a stewardship.

Thomas Edison said, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

That is true! This parable is relating to us wasted opportunity. A neglected opportunity. That is what this parable is about. Sometimes we miss the joy of entering into the work of the Lord because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work. Listen! It is work. We are to labor. That is a dirty word in Christian circles today.

III. TIME: REMAIN FAITHFUL.

Time has been a significant factor in Jesus' teaching concerning His return at the end of the age, beginning in Matthew chapter 24. Jesus made it clear that His return would not be immediate, but would be only after much trouble and the passing of a considerable period of time. While there would be signs to discern the general "season" of His return, neither the day nor the hour would be known.

Beyond this, His return would come at a time when it was not expected.

This parable tells us that both believers and unbelievers are entrusted with certain things, and that they must give account for their stewardship. Basically all men are accountable to God for how they use (or do not use) those resources which God has entrusted to them.

It is not how much talent one has, but how one uses it that is important to God. Notice how the master responded to the servants who increased the talents given to them.

Matthew 25:23 (NASB)

²³ 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.'

They were judged on their faithfulness. The servant with two talents received the same praise as the servant with five because each **faithfully** worked with the talents that had been given them.

It is not how many gifts that God gives to a person, it is what one does with them.

Our salvation is not a salvation by works, but a salvation that works. It is only through Christ that we receive our salvation when we follow his commands. The work that we do as Christians is in response to our love for the Lord and for what He has done for us. When you call Christ your Lord, you are claiming to be His servant. So serve Him!

Your call to salvation is a call to follow Him. You got a great opportunity. That is work to do. So do it!

Think about this. If you have given yourself over to leisure, if you have given yourself over to your own pleasure, you are in effect burying your talents that God has given you.

Don't misunderstand me. God knows that we need rest. He gave us one day in seven to rest. We need that time to recharge ourselves. The other six days should be spent living for the Lord. That should be the desire of our heart. Our heart should be that we want to please Him. I want to **wear out** my life for Him; not **rust out!**

What is standing in your way to prevent you from doing this? We are wipe out any encumbrances to our service. What do you need to wipe out to fully devote yourself to His service?

You are to be fruitful for the Lord.

John 15:1-8 (NASB)

15 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

You may think of yourself. "Well I don't have it. I don't have the personality. I don't have the talents. I don't have the skills. I don't have the knowledge or understanding. I don't have the discipline. I don't have, I don't have, I don't have!

Here John 15 says Abide in Him and you will! It is not a matter of YOU. It is a matter of abiding in Him. Abide in Him and He will produce fruit in you. And by that the Father is glorified. We just need to get to work. Trust in His Word!

In the parable of the five foolish virgins and the five wise virgins, the emphasis was on watchfulness and preparedness. We are to be watching for the Lord's return by being prepared for His second coming. The oil that the wise carried with them represented the Holy Spirit in their lives. It represented a true and saving faith.

Here in the parable of the talents, the emphasis here is also on awareness and preparedness but that **preparedness** is demonstrated by **working**. In the parable of the virgins that **preparedness** was demonstrated by the acquisition of oil in their lamps through **genuine saving faith**. Here, in the parable of the talents, the servants preparedness for the return of the Lord was demonstrated by fruits of that genuine saving faith by their working. Are you prepared for the Lord's return? When He returns, let Him find you working!

It's emphasis here is on the fruits of faith. Again this is not a salvation **by** works, but a salvation **that** works!

We have been given a stewardship. The call to salvation is a call to discipleship. To follow Him. To obey Him. To trust His promises.

Romans 12:4-8 (NASB)

⁴ For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷ if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his

exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Here the servants were entrusted to work for their master. These represent people who are professing Christians.

IV. PROFIT: REAP YOUR REWARD.

God rejoices in his servants making a profit.

If we were to make an equation of this parable, it would probably go as my outline this morning:

Talents + Labor + Time = Profit.

Just as a businessman expects to make a profit, and is happy when his employees increase his wealth, so God expects a profit and rejoices in it. He has granted the time and the resources for men to make a profit for the kingdom of heaven, until He returns.

God asks us to “walk in his ways” and “obey his commands.” When Jesus was asked what command(ment) was the most important, he actually named two:

Matthew 22:37-40 (NASB)

³⁷ And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

Most importantly, bringing glory to God is profitable. When we please God by our love and works for Him, we are glorifying God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NASB)

³¹ Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

The master says three things to reward each of the first two servants. They are:

- 1) They receive their master’s commendation, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
- 2) Since they have proven themselves to be faithful the master says "You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things."
- 3) Third, they are invited to “enter into the joy of your master,” which would seem to be the salvation of lost sinners.

The main characteristic of the third servant that differentiates him from the first two was, in a word, **lazy**, and thus useless. Instead of being diligent and hardworking, he does not “go to work” with his master’s money, over a lengthy period of time, and thus make a profit. He does **no** work for a lengthy period of time and thus is useless.

The third servant’s excuse for not investing his talent proved unacceptable. He was harshly chastised, the talent was taken from him, and he was thrown out “into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” a phrase meant to describe the horrible suffering experience of hell.

CONCLUSION:

This parable insists that watchfulness must not lead to laziness, but to doing one's God-given duties. Everyone has received gifts according to their ability and what they make of these gifts is what counts in the end. We must be learning, growing, carrying out our responsibilities, and developing the resources that God entrusts to us until He returns and settles accounts.

He is Lord!