

PARABLES OF JESUS

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS - MATTHEW 25:14-30

- A. This is a parable concerning a man, his servants and his property (14), ***For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.***
1. Notes
 - a. *For* links this parable to the previous parable in verses 1-13.
 - b. *It* is the kingdom of heaven, note verse 1.
 2. The two parables in Matthew 25 are closely linked.
 - a. The Ten Virgins emphasizes being spiritually prepared for the master's return.
 - b. The Talents emphasizes the importance of spiritual service.
 - c. Thomas Constable, *Both parables deal primarily with the judgment of Jews at the end of the Tribulation though both apply to Christians today as does the whole Olivet Discourse.*
- B. A man entrusted his property to his servants while he went on a journey (15-18)
1. The servants were given money in which they could share in the profits if they managed it well.
 2. He gave talents to each of his three servants based on ability (15a), ***To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability.***
 - a. A *talent* was a measure of weight (about 75 pounds) and a monetary unit (about 6 thousand denarii).
 - 1) A denarii was a day's wage so a talent would be worth about 16.5 years of work.
 - 2) The sums given the servants were immense.
 - b. The talents were given based on the man's evaluation of the ability of each servant.
 - 1) To one the master gave 5 talents.
 - 2) To another he gave 2 talents.
 - 3) To another he gave 1 talent.
 - c. The talents can be compared to all that God entrusts to us, health wealth, spiritual gifts.
 3. Each servant did something with his talent while the man was away (15b-18),
 - a. The man with 5 talents and the one with two talents traded with them and doubled their talents (15b-16), ***Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.***
 - 1) Each of them put their money to use by making wise trades.
 - 2) Their profits doubled the resources they had.
 - b. The man with 1 talent hid it in the ground (18), ***But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.***
 - 1) The man with 1 talent was unwilling to work and take a risk.
 - 2) He buried his resources with the expectation of giving back only what he received.
 - c. Notes on interpretation
 - 1) Jesus is speaking directly to Jewish people with a view to those who will be living during the Tribulation.
 - 2) Of course, this parable is applicable to believers during the Church Age.
 - 3) Thomas Constable, *The slaves of God who have a heart for God and His coming kingdom will sense their privilege, seize their opportunities, and serve God to the maximum extent of their ability in the Tribulation. Those who have no real concern about preparing people for the coming King will do nothing with their opportunities. Their own safety will be more important to them than working to prepare for the arrival of the King.*

- C. The man returned and settled accounts with his servants (19-23)
1. The man returned after a long while (19), ***Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.***
 - a. *after a long time*
 - 1) It would be looking to those servants living during the Tribulation.
 - 2) Also, the time in view suggests the time between Jesus' ascension and His second coming.
 - b. *settling of accounts*
 - 1) The settling of accounts does not give any indication that the servants would benefit from their efforts.
 - 2) Verse 28 does indicate that there would be payment for their efforts.
 2. The one who received 5 talents and the one who received 2 talents were commended (20-23), ***And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'***
 - a. Each man doubled what he had been given.
 - b. The master congratulated each servant with the same joyous welcome.
 - 1) Each man was congratulated for his efforts.
 - 2) He was promised more responsibilities in the future during the Millennial Kingdom and at the establishment of the new heaven and new earth, Revelation 21:1-4, *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*
 - 3) *Enter into the joy of your master*
 - a) Matthew 24:46, *Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.*
 - b) John 15:10-11, *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*
 3. The man who received 1 talent was condemned (24-30)
 - a. He gave the master 1 talent and explained that he feared the man and only wanted to give back what had been given to him (24-25), ***He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'***
 - 1) The servant's perspective of the man was that he was demanding, expected much but would punish him if he was not successful.
 - 2) D. A. Carson, *...he showed no love for his master whom he blamed attempting to cover up his own failure...Grace never condones irresponsibility; even those given less are obligated to use and develop what they have.*
 - 3) Religion is based on what can I do to gain favor with God. Christianity is what can I do to demonstrate my thankfulness for what God has given me.
 - b. The master rebuked the servant for his faulty thinking (26-27), ***But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.'***
 - 1) The master accused the servant of being wicked and lazy.
 - 2) Jews could not charge interest on loans to each other but they could charge interest on loans to Gentiles.
 - 3) Doing nothing with resources is unacceptable.

- c. The master punished the servant (28-30), *So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*'
- 1) His talent was taken away and given to the servant with ten talents.
 - a) Matthew 13:12, *For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*
 - b) Matthew 21:43, *Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.*
 - 2) He was not invited into the master's presence but banished into outer darkness.
 - a) The servant would no longer have opportunity to serve the maser.
 - b) He was rejected because his actions demonstrated his lack of commitment.
 - c) Stanley Toussaint, *The last three parables give practical instructions in the light of the King's coming to judge and to reign. The principle which underlies each is the same one which was given in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:16–21). The fruit of faithfulness and preparedness would indicate the character of those living in the days before His coming. In each parable, character is manifested by works.*
 - 3) The focus of this parable is on the nation of Israel but we can take note of the importance of taking seriously our spiritual service.

CONCLUSION

- A. The point of the parable is service.
- B. Faithful service is not based on possible reward but on thanksgiving for blessings received.
- C. Faithful service is an outward demonstration of an inward reality.