

# USE IT OR LOOSE IT

**(THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS STILL SPEAKS TODAY)**

**MATTHEW 25:14-30**



## **"I WAS AFRAID AND HID"**

- ◆ Receiving of the Talents
- ◆ Responding to the Talents
- ◆ Reckoning of the Talents
- ◆ Rewarding of the Talents

**"Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."  
(Matthew 25:21)**

**Bill Kirk**

# THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

## Matthew 25: 14-30

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord.” (V. 21)

### INTRODUCTION

**Fact:** Whereas the preceding parable of the virgins represented waiting for the Lord. (V.1-13)

**Fact:** The parable before us of the talents represents working for the Lord. (V. 14-30)

**Fact:** Whereas the ten virgins teach us about spiritual neglect in our walk,

**Fact:** The profitable and unprofitable servants teach us about spiritual neglect in our work.

### QUESTIONS BEFORE US

1. What is the meaning and purpose of the five talents, two talents and one talent in V. 15?
2. What is the meaning of Christ “reckoning” (V. 19) with us at the end of the road?
3. Why did the one man hide his talent in the earth? (V. 25)
4. Why did Jesus call this man wicked and slothful? (V. 26)
5. What happens if we do not use what God has given us to use? (V. 29)
6. How does this parable provoke us to live now with eternity in view?
7. How does this parable encourage every saint to remain faithful?

### I. Receiving of the Talents (V. 14, 15)

“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one.” (V. 14, 15)

#### The setting before us

- ◆ Slaves were often allowed to engage in business for their masters.
- ◆ These slaves would pay a fixed yearly sum or, as in our text, be given money to trade on their master’s account.
- ◆ The master in our text had distributed his talents (one talent equaling 20 years’ wages) and then departed on a long journey.

#### The application is clear

- ◆ Jesus has traveled to a country far away.
- ◆ Jesus has furnished all of us in His absence.
- ◆ Jesus has distributed gifts to us all, gifts to be used and invested to bring a greater spiritual return:

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."  
(Ephesians 4:7)

"Dividing to every man severally as He will." (I Corinthians 12:11)

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us." (Romans 12:6)

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (I Peter 4:10)

**Fact:** Every believer has been entrusted with one or more spiritual gifts to be used:

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part." (Ephesians 4:16)

### **What is a spiritual gift?**

1. The basic idea regarding the word 'charisma' is that a free gift, undeserved, unearned, unmerited which comes from God's grace and could never be achieved or attained or possessed by our own effort.
2. A spiritual gift is something freely bestowed by God, not because we earned it, but because He chooses to give it.
3. "A spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the body of Christ according to God's grace for use within the context of the body." (Peter Wagner, Pg. 42, "Your Spiritual Gifts")

## **II. Responding To The Talents (V. 16-18)**

"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents." (V. 16)

**Fact:** The talents represent opportunities to use the abilities God has given us.

**Fact:** The talents are given in the wisdom of God (so be grateful and refuse to envy).

- ◆ If five talents were given to someone with minimum ability, they would be destroyed by the heavy responsibility.
- ◆ If one talent was given to someone of great ability, they would be frustrated and unfulfilled.

**Fact:** So we discover here in this parable; that God assigns work and opportunity according to ability that He gives us to carry out this work. (Repeat)

### **TWO CATEGORIES OF SERVANTS ARE REVEALED**

1. "Faithful" Servants (or)
2. "Unfaithful" Servants

**Fact:** The faithful servants took their talents and used them to benefit their master.

**Fact:** The unfaithful servant hid his talent in the earth (he buried it).

**Question:** What is a servant? "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant."  
(Matthew 23:11)

**Answer:** The word "servant" means; "One who **advances others at the expense of them self.**"

**Question:** Why did the unfaithful servant fail to use what God had given him?

1. He was afraid he might fail so he never tried to succeed.
2. He was paralyzed with anxiety so he buried his talent to "protect it".
3. He was self-centered and unwilling to risk being blessed, broken and given away!

**"I was afraid and went and hid." (V. 25)**

(What does it reveal?)

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and dies, it abides alone, but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." (John 12:24)

"He that loves his life shall lose. It." (V. 25)

**Question:** What keeps a servant from "falling into the ground and dying" and just sitting alone on the shelf?

**Question:** Why do those who "love their own life" end up losing it?

**Question:** What causes people to "bury their gift" and thus steal the joy of faithfulness and fruitfulness?

### **SOME "ABSOLUTE ESSENTIALS" TO BE USED OF GOD**

1. AVAILABILITY; you are sensitive and obedient when God opens the door.
2. TEACHABILITY; you possess a willingness to learn; you haven't arrived yet.
3. FLEXIBILITY; when untimely needs arise, you are willing to be inconvenienced.
4. VULNERABILITY; open and transparent, you are willing to be hurt.
5. DEPENDABILITY; God can say, I can count on \_\_\_\_\_."  
(Your name)

### **DISCOVERING YOUR GIFTS (TALENTS)**

1. **Explore the possibilities**
2. **Experiment and meet a need**
3. **Examine your feelings after serving**
4. **Evaluate your effectiveness and results**

## 5. Stay open to counsel and instruction

### III. Reckoning Of The Talents (V. 19)

"And after a long time the Lord of those servants comes, and reckons with them."

**Question:** Will Jesus return and screen all that we have (and have not) done?

**Question:** How will Jesus weigh our works we did upon earth?

**Question:** Why must there be a "judgment seat of Christ"? (I Cor. 3:1-11-15; 4:1-5)

**Question:** How does "reckoning day" encourage us to be patient, faithful, grateful and giving, in the meantime?

#### Remember the unfaithful servant:

1. He lost his opportunity for further service.
2. He lost his praise from his lord and master.
3. He lost his reward on earth and for eternity.

#### And He teaches me:

That what I do not use for the Lord, I am in danger of losing from the Lord. (Repeat)

### IV. Rewarding of the Talents (V. 20-30)

"Well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (V. 21)

**Fact:** The faithful were trusted with more.

**Fact:** The faithful labored, toiled and were rewarded.

**Fact:** The faithfulness of the two servants gave them a capacity for greater responsibility.

- ◆ **THERE WAS AFFIRMATION;** "Well done thou good and faithful servant."
- ◆ **THERE WAS EXALTATION;** "I will make thee ruler over many things."
- ◆ **THERE WAS JUBILATION;** "Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

**But concerning the unfaithful;** "Cast away the unprofitable servant." (V. 30)

**Question:** What makes an "unprofitable servant"?

1. Forgetting that the King is coming to reckon with all who claimed to be saved. (V. 19)
2. Forgetting that it is "God's gifts" (V. 25) that we have been entrusted with.
3. Failing to "die to ourselves" and be planted in the ground (selfishness)
4. Somehow believing that our one talent is not really that important to God.
5. Failing to serve with Biblical motives (for approval of man instead of approval from God).
6. Losing sight of the fact that our one talent used will increase to two and bring glory to God.

## **REMEMBER THE PARABLE**

The Faithful Servants Represent...

- ◆ Those who are diligent in their ministry.
- ◆ Those who are responsible with what God has given them.
- ◆ Those who see Jesus coming although He is now absent.
- ◆ Those who use their energies and resources for the life to come.
- ◆ Those who consider it an honor to die and be planted in the ground and live for another.

Amen!  
Bill Kirk