

## The Talents and Rewards

Matthew 13:34 *“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.”*

### **The Talents and Rewards**

*Matthew 25:14-30 “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, 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. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, 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. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.*

*29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

This parable addresses a grave subject- what are you as a Christian doing with the talent God has given you? One day soon, God is returning from a far journey to heaven, and every Christian will face him to give account. May God use this parable to shake our awareness that God has an expectation of every one of His children to work for Him. The day will come when God will perform a check of every servant to see how faithful or faithless they have been. On that day, excuses will not work.

The first character we meet is a mighty man. He is so mighty he has a kingdom, verse 14. He has servants for he is rich. He decides to take a journey to a far country. This man is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He too is rich. Christ has a kingdom. Christ has servants, that is, you and I. Christ, too, took a journey 2000 years ago when He returned to heaven after dying on the cross. He will return.

We next meet the rich man's three servants in verse 15. The rich man is planning a trip. In the custom of the day, when a wealthy man left for a journey, he had to decide how his assets would be managed while he was gone. One option was to place his assets in the hands of his trusted servants. They were to manage the assets as if they were their own while the boss was absent. They could invest the assets and increase the kingdom. This was the expectation.

The day of departure for the long journey finally came for the rich man. He called the servants in. In verse 15 he gave one servant 5 talents, another 2 talents, and another 1 talent. A talent is not *ability* as we use the word in today's English language. A talent is a measure of weight. In Bible times, gold and silver were measured in talents. The talents in this parable point to the wealth of this rich man.

Why were the servants given differing amounts? Verse 15 says they possessed differing abilities, *“to every man according to his several*

*ability.*” The servants were given the rich man’s assets according to the ability of each servant. Do you know even two people with identical ability? I don’t. This man had three servants, and all three differed in ability.

In the work of the Lord, men and women have differing ability. That is not a disgrace, but reality. God’s gifts accomplish more through some than through others. *We do not receive more from Him than we can understand and use. God does not attempt to put a lake in a bucket.* The man with a larger appetite for God is given more of God’s assets. A man with a larger capacity for knowledge of the Word is given more of God’s assets. I Corinthians 12:11 *“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”* I am glad God knows His servants abilities. He will and does make distribution as He sees fit.

It is all-important to note that, among the three servants, no one received nothing. Neither were you left out when God saved you. You have at least *one* talent from God. While some have more than one, I suspect the vast majority of God’s children are in the category of having *one*. They comprise the “rank and file” in God’s kingdom. But, none has *zero*! Those that have two or five are perhaps preachers, missionaries, evangelists and expositors of the Word. Aaron wasn’t Moses. Appollos wasn’t Apostle Paul. There is no negative reflection on the servant who received only *one*. The talents of God are so valuable, even *one* makes a man rich! One was all this servant could handle. There can be no jealousy toward those that have more than one talent. Likewise, we cannot belittle those that have only one. Christian, while you are sitting idle believing God has no plan for you, the clock is ticking. The master is returning soon, and you will be embarrassed.

What are the talents Jesus left us? When Christ left 2000 years ago on His journey to a far country called heaven, He left behind some precious talent. It is not natural talent but super-natural things of God. Jesus left a book called the *Bible*. He sent another called the *Holy Ghost* to replace Himself. He left redeeming *blood* and amazing *grace* for every need. He left *faith* for the saints such that an amount equal to a grain of mustard seed can move a mountain. These talents left by our Lord are precious and super-natural. These

talents are without price and paid for by the life of the Son of God on Calvary. They cost an enormous amount... and YOU have them.

At the ending of verse 15, the master departed on his trip. In verse 16, the servant with five talents went to work. Soon his five became ten. Wow! He made a 100% profit. In verse 17 the servant with two talents went to work. Soon he had four. Wow! He made a 100% profit. So, the servant with five and the servant with two made the same gain! They both doubled. I learn from this scripture that the goal of each Christian should be to work to double that which God has given them. Do you love him double? Pray double? Bear double fruit? Perform double in your service for Him?

Verse 18 reveals tragedy. The servant with one talent dug a hole and placed the talent in the ground in hiding. Note that he knew it was *the Lord's money*. What a good time to be reminded that if you are a Christian, you own nothing, for all you have is on loan to you from God. Was this servant afraid of losing his lord's money? Was he discouraged at getting only one talent? Was he perhaps ashamed? He committed two sins. One, he committed the sin of *slothfulness*. Second, he committed the sin of *disobedience*, failing to heed his master's instructions.

In verse 19, the lord returns. It is judgment day. Jesus Christ is soon coming. I do not know the day or the hour. These servants did not know when the lord would return. The servant with five talents appeared before the lord first. His five was now ten. He was given his reward in verse 21 and the master spoke to him "*well done.*" Next, the servant with two talents appeared before the lord. He now has four. He is rewarded in verse 23. Note the striking similarity of verse 21 and 23. These two servants were rewarded identically. Why? They both doubled what their lord gave them! You see, it is not who has the most talent, but what one does with the talent given by God! It is not fame that will win His praise, but faithfulness.

Verse 24 is sad. The servant with one talent speaks falsely about his lord. He says of his lord that "*he reaps where he has not sown and gathers where he did not straw.*" The servant says the master's actions caused him to be afraid of his lord, and thus he just buried the talent out of *fear*. He portrays his lord as an evil tyrant. *Fear* will

never be an excuse when standing before God in judgment. If you are afraid to sing, testify, witness, preach, get over it!

The third servant received no reward. His lord rebuked him in verses 26 and 27. In verse 28, the talent given him was removed and given to the servant who had ten. In other words, concerning God's gift, it can be said "use it or lose it." King Saul lost his crown to King David.

Beware Christian friend. What will you do with the valuable talent God has given you? We say again, it is not how much, large or small, you receive from God, but how much you gain with what you have received.