

The Parables of Jesus

- The Parable of the Talents

-Matthew 25:14-30

This parable is found only in the Gospel of Matthew. We must take note that this is not the same parable given in Luke 19:12-27. The principles and even the wording may appear to be similar, however, it is not the same and they have two very different purposes and themes.

Jesus gives this parable in the same context as the previous parable, "The Parable of the Five Wise Virgins and the Five Foolish Virgins." He was alone with His disciples on the Mount of Olives a day or two before His Passion. He was responding to their query concerning the end times. Jesus was in the midst of a series of parables that were given just to the twelve.

The last three of His parables that He would say to His disciples are parables used by Jesus to emphasize the importance of being a true believer and a true disciple of His. As His disciples they were not only to be watchful of His return but they are to be "occupying" and doing the works of the Kingdom.

By "works" He did not just mean healing, and other signs and wonders. He meant that they were truly to be His ambassadors in their character and lifestyle of love, grace and mercy. It is the character of the Spirit of God that is within the true disciple of Jesus as described in Galatians 5:22,23 - "...fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance..." These were the "works" that Jesus was more concerned about. These are the true "fruit" which would expose and reveal who is a true disciple of His and who is not. Jesus continues this train of thought with this "Parable of the Talents."

The Parable of the Talents - Matthew 25:14-30 (KJV) - *"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. 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. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 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: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 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. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

In this parable, Jesus is telling His disciples that God the Father, in His infinite wisdom, grace, mercy and love, gives everyone at least one last opportunity to repent prior to Jesus' second coming. In this parable the "man" (representative of Jesus) who was going to "leave for a while" gave these three servants a measure of "**his goods**." (Matthew 25:14)

Notice the "man" gave his servants of "his goods." This is showing us that anything we do or have has absolutely nothing to do with what we can or cannot do within our own ability. It is Jesus who gives to His servants (His disciples) His "goods" (the "talents") to use for His purposes.

What are these "talents?" The "traditional view" in thinking of these "talents," is in the natural sense in terms of such things as music, singing, evangelizing, preaching, being gifted in business or administration, etc. Yes, these are "God given talents" but **they are not** what Jesus is referring to within this parable?

We see that all three "servants" were given the same "kind" of "talent," although in differing quantities. However, remember, the "talents" were from the "man's goods." Jesus was referring to "**His goods**," which meant those things that He possessed and owned within Himself. He was referring to those "goods" that are found within **His lifestyle**, such as love, mercy, gentleness, goodness, kindness, peace, faithfulness, longsuffering, self control, etc.

When Man was created, God had given His highest form of creation, everything that He was. Man was created in God's image and likeness. He was created with God's character and nature. Unfortunately, with the "fall" and now with a sinful nature, this God given character with all of its Godlike characteristics, has been perverted and tainted.

God in His infinite love, chose to reveal and express a "way" of restoring this "character and nature" to Mankind through a people known as the Jewish nation. The "way" of restoration that He gave them was through His commandments and precepts that were meant to help guide them back onto the right path again. We know that they could not fulfill these commandments and precepts because of that sinful nature.

The main purpose of these commandments and precepts, known as the "Law," were to point to the "day" when full restoration would become available through His Son, Jesus, the Messiah. However, that did not give them an excuse to not put their minds to obey these commandments and precepts. This was what Jesus was getting at. As we mentioned in the previous parable, these last parables were to emphasize the importance of true repentance and the actions that follow true repentance.

True repentance is expressed when one recognizes their wicked ways and recognizes their need for God. The individual becomes "poor in spirit" and "turns towards" God and cries out for mercy. Mercy is then given because of God's grace. God's grace and mercy is then received by the individual in and through Jesus - the final, acceptable sacrifice.

From that moment on, if there was a true heart of repentance, there would be true "fruits of repentance" expressed in the actions and lifestyle of that individual. That individual has chosen to change their lifestyle to that of the One they are choosing to follow.

This lifestyle can now be lived out because of the "oil" of the Holy Spirit that has now come and "revived" the "dead spirit" of that individual. He or she was once dead to God because of sin. Now, they have been changed into a born again child of God - a new species of being. (2Corinthians 5:17) That person was once "dead to God" because of sin. Now they are "alive to God in and through Christ." (Romans 6:11)

In this parable, Jesus was expressing that even though He may be leaving them, there will come a time that He will return. In the mean time, until that time of His return, anyone who "professes" that they are His disciples will be given "His goods." These "goods" were to be given so that His true believers could have the ability to represent Jesus.

They would represent Him through expressing the lifestyle of His character and personality. It was to be expressed to others upon the earth. It would happen by "birthing" new disciples while He is "away." The "talents" of this parable can be looked upon as "moments of opportunity" that are given to each of His "servants" to express the true character that is within them as disciples of Jesus.

In this parable, we see that Jesus understands that everyone is different. He gives each one the opportunity to reveal what is truly in their heart concerning being a disciple of Jesus as He gives them **His goods**, "...to every man **according to his several ability...**" (Matthew 25:15) Jesus gives to those who **"say"** they are His "servants" the ability to express what is truly the attitude of their heart towards Him and who He really is within their heart - Is He their Lord (their absolute, supreme and final authority in their life) or is He not?

We know that from the previous parable of the "Ten Virgins," Jesus is "drawing" upon the concept of the "Ten Days of Awe" that fall between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, in which the Jews would do acts of kindness (mitzvahs) and express true acts of repentance. Could the "talents" in this parable represent "God given opportunities" to express His love and character through His true disciples and thereby bringing a "last ditch" opportunity to those in this world who are "lost in their sin" to come to salvation through Christ?

Could they be actions, or "fruits" of true repentance in the lives of Jesus' true disciples during those "end time days," in bringing the Good News and expressing the lifestyle of love to others as representatives of Jesus? Could it be a "God given opportunity" to extend God's grace and mercy as a "last ditch effort" to truly give the Jewish people, as well as anyone else who would "hear," a way to be given one last final plea to repent and enter the Kingdom?

In this parable, the three servants were given the opportunity to express their lifestyle in Christ through a lifestyle of mercy and love towards others. It is also a lifestyle of true holiness through repentance whenever they would "miss the mark." It is not a "legalistic" concept, but rather it is an attitude of the heart that simply desires to "delight the heart of my King."

Two of the "servants" did express this lifestyle and both received their "reward." However, the most telling aspect of their reward and what really expresses Jesus' main thought in this parable is found in Matthew 25: 21, 23, "... *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.***" Remember, the term, "**thy lord,**" as we discuss now the third "servant."

This third servant came and gave account. Instead of giving an account and taking full responsibility for his actions, he blamed his master. He expressed his true attitude of heart concerning his master. In Matthew 25:24, 25, the third servant told the "master" exactly what was in his heart. We can say that out of the abundance his heart, his mouth spoke. The "man" (Jesus) in the parable repeated the "servant's" words in a "sarcastic way, - *Oh so you knew that I was...*"

The truth of the matter was that this "servant" **did not really know his master** nor did he know his master's heart. This man who lived in the midst of true servants, those who knew and loved their master, thought he could get away with just being with the other servants and "kind of just blend in" without being a true faithful servant. Jesus was saying that it doesn't work that way. Every heart will be exposed. Wow!!!

As Jesus is "away," He gives those who **call themselves** His "servants" the opportunity to repent and turn towards Him, themselves. If they are truly His disciples, they will use those "opportunities," given by the Master, to express His character to the lost of this earth as His "ambassadors." Those that truly know their Lord Jesus will be faithful to Him and use those "God given opportunities" to glorify Jesus and the Father simply because Jesus is truly, **"thy lord."**

The third "servant," who we now know was **never ever truly** a "servant," just a pretend servant, never really "knew" his Lord. He did not know Jesus. In Matthew 5:27, Jesus expresses this same thought when he said of those that "boast" of the wonderful things they did "in His name." However, He told them *"depart from me for I never knew you"* which also meant that they never knew Him.

Jesus was never this third man's Lord. The result was that he was thrown into, *"outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* Just as with the ten virgins - there were five present that "seemed" as though they belonged and were ready to enter into the "wedding feast." However, we found out that they were not. They may have looked just like the other five virgins and even though they were with the ones that had their lamps filled, they could not go into the wedding feast on the rewards of the other five virgins whose "lamps" were filled with "oil." We are all on our own when it comes to that "Day."

Just as with the parable concerning the "guest with the improper wedding garment," we found out that he was "found out" to be an imposter, trying to enter the Kingdom on his own terms and in his own self-righteous ways. We saw that for the five virgins and for this guest - that didn't work out to well for them.

Just as in those previous parables, this one pretending to be a "servant" in the midst of true servants had his wickedness "found out" and exposed. So will it be when Jesus returns. Each person's true heart and motives will be revealed. Everyone will be given the opportunity to see the "signs of the end times." They will have the opportunity to "hear the trumpet," which means that the end times are near.

It is a call to enter into a time of true repentance and make sure you are truly ready. Everyone will have one last opportunity to have their "lamps (their lives) filled with oil (the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit making them a Born Again child of God)." The question is, "where is each of our heart." Which servant are we? Jesus makes it very clear that one day it all be known. Each of us needs to check our own heart and our own idea of where we. Are we (each of us) being a true man or woman of God? We may blend in today as we are living our life. However, one day it will all be seen for all to see if we are truly His.

After this "last chance opportunity" to repent, the "Gates of Heaven" will be shut. However, just prior to the "Gates of Heaven being shut," there will be one last event. It will not be a last chance but rather it will be a last event that will take place. Jesus expresses that very thought in His very last parable, "The Parable of the Separating of the Sheep from the Goats."