

The Parable of the Talents is one in a set of parables focused on the return of Jesus. Jesus was preparing his followers for his departure and the formation of the Church.

This parable is about the Kingdom of Heaven. What does the king expect of his people? Or more directly, what does Jesus expect from us?

The Talent

The Greek word translated as “talent” is the word “*talanton*”, which was an ancient weight of currency. The master entrusts each of his servants with differing weights of currency. Some scholars say that one talent was worth about twenty years of wages.

In the same way, when Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave the Holy Spirit to the church and entrusted the church with the task of preaching the Gospel to every people group on the earth. (see Acts 1:8).

In verse 15 we read that the master entrusted the talents according to the ability of the servant. The master knew the individual and their ability. If five talents were given to a person who has little ability, it would be a load too heavy to bear. It would end in discouragement and pain.

God knows how He has designed and created us; He knows our abilities. We are all assigned talents and responsibilities from the Lord. God has given each of us a ministry, and it is our privilege to serve the Lord and multiply what He has given us for the Kingdom.

The Reckoning

The master comes back and calls the three servants to give an account of his entrusted treasure. Notice that he never told the servants to go and trade or make a profit. But they knew him and what he would have desired for them to do. All three servants responded in proportion to the relationship they had with the master.

The Faithful Servants

The first two servants were incredibly successful, doubling their Talents. The first servant didn't seem to worry about the potential for loss. He boldly traded because he knew his master, and he knew his master was more interested in faithfulness than profit margins.

When it comes to the kingdom of heaven, our Lord desires faithfulness and obedience far above what we accomplish in human understanding (see Micah 6:8).

Our lives should be lived with eternity in mind so that when Jesus comes again, we will be expectant and fearless because we know we have done what he asked us to do (see 1 John 4:17).

The master was pleased; he rewarded both diligent servants with an incredible promise (see Matthew 25:21). Their faithfulness gave each of them a capacity for greater service and responsibility. We simply have no idea how incredible heaven will be and how great are the rewards that God has in store for his faithful children (see 1 Corinthians 2:9).

Are you living for eternity? Are you being faithful with the talents that the Lord has entrusted to you?

The Unfaithful Servant

When the third servant comes to the master, his response is very different (see Matthew 25:24-25).

This servant didn't seem to do anything wrong, but the problem was that he didn't do anything at all. He hid his talent under the ground. From his response, it is clear that he did not know his master; he was afraid.

We may ask the question: does he represent a Christian or a non-Christian? At that time when Jesus told the parable, that term did not exist. But we know that Jesus was speaking to the future church, knowing that there would be people who attend churches, claiming to be followers of Jesus, yet do not have a relationship with him (see Matthew 7:21-23).

Jesus ends the parable with a terrifying warning, *"And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,"* (Matthew 25:30).

"Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." C. S. Lewis.

The "Offense"

In the parable, the master instructs the servants to remove the one talent from the unfaithful servant and give it to the one who has ten. It's a classic example of the rich getting richer, and it offends us.

Thinking about the purpose of our existence according to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, *"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever."*

The purpose of the gifts that God gives to His children is to bring glory to His name.

God is the creator and sustainer over all creation, which He created to glorify Him. Thus, if He gives us a gift with the purpose of bringing Him glory, and we don't use it for His glory, He is perfectly just to take it away and give it to someone who will use it.

We must be careful not to read more than Jesus intended into the parables, but it would seem that the warning is this: if you don't use what the Lord has given you, you will lose it.

The Requirement

The main point of the parable is being ready for Christ's return. Too many people are drawn to Jesus merely to get to Heaven and avoid the alternative. They play it safe and try to stay out of trouble. However, membership in the Kingdom of heaven is based on a relationship with Jesus, and authentic relationship with Jesus inevitably leads to the kind of faithful service that produces results (see Acts 1:8).

The Practice

What does this look like in practice?

In our parenting, it is to be the very best parents we can be, to steward the brief moments that we have to raise up our children in the ways of the Lord.

In our profession, it is to be the best student, businessman, firefighter, medical professional or neighbor we can be, using the gifts that the Lord has given for His glory.

It may mean being a pastor, evangelist, missionary, or teacher as the Lord calls.

Are you investing the Talents that the Lord has given you today?