



Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus

The Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

Lesson 21

Blessing or curse. Which will it be? Well done good and faithful servant? Or you wicked and lazy servant? This parable reveals God's heart towards our use of His gifts to us. We have all been given a measure of gifts and responsibilities. May we be encouraged to richly use them for His purposes.

OBSERVATION: Read Matthew 25:14-30

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

Key Words: words that refer to the *man traveling to a far country, the servant given 5 talents, the servant given 2 talents, the servant given 1 talent*
references to all three *servants*
the phrase *kingdom of heaven*
3. The *lord* used the same words to praise the two *servants* who doubled their *talents*. Highlight or underline his praise as recorded in verses 21,23.
4. The contrasting word *but* is used three times. Mark each time this word is used. Choose one of the times this word is used. Record what is being contrasted and the significance of the contrast.
5. There are three terms of conclusion used in this parable (*so, therefore, and for*). They can be found in verses 20,27,28, and 29. Mark each of them. Choose one and record the conclusion stated.

CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. What are some typical, but inaccurate, perceptions people have of God?
2. What are your two best talents or attributes?
3. What would you do for God if you knew you could not fail at it?

THE DISTRIBUTION OF TALENTS: Read Matthew 25:14-19

1. *The kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. The man did not evenly distribute his goods. How did he distribute them?*
2. The word *talents*, as used in this parable, represents a form of money, the largest denomination of money at the time. God not only gives money, He gives believers gifts. Using the following verses, explain what God expects us to do with our *talents/gifts*:

Romans 12:6

1 Peter 4:10

- a. Jesus told a similar parable about using His gifts in Luke 19:11-27. In this parable, each servant was given the same amount. What instruction did he give them (verse 13)?

1.) Explain the instruction *do business until I come* as it relates to believers.

3. What did the *servant* given:

five talents do?

two talents do?

one talent do?

4. What are some resources God has placed in your care?

- a. How do you view your responsibility for them?

THE MULTIPLIED TALENTS: Read Matthew 25:20-23

1. The servants who had doubled their talents reported their *gains to the* master. Consider his response:
 - a. *Well done.* According to 2 Corinthians 5:9, what was Paul's aim?
 - 1.) How did the *servants* in this parable *aim* to hear *well done*?
 - a.) Why is it important to *aim* for God's rewards?
 - b. *Good and faithful servant.* Define the words:
good

faithful
 - c. *you were faithful over a few things.* What does this teach you about God as our Master as it relates to the responsibilities He gives you and the expectations He has upon you?
 - d. *I will make you ruler over many things.* What does this teach you about the way God rewards?
 - 1.) Reflect upon Jesus' promise in John 12:26 as you write it below.
 - e. *Enter into the joy of your lord.* What do you think that *joy* will be like?
2. The two men started out as *servants* and finished as *rulers*. How does this encourage you to use what your Master has given to you?

THE BURIED TALENT: Read Matthew 25:24-28

1. The third servant viewed his master differently than the first two. How do you think the first two *servants* perceived their master?
 - a. What three viewpoints did the third servant have of his master? verse 24
 - 1.) ... 'Sir, I know you are a hard man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate (Matthew 25:24 NLT). Reflect upon the parable of the master who left his vineyard in the care of others. This master represented God's provision and care of His vineyard. What does Matthew 21:33 remind us of His care?
 - 2.) How have you found inaccurately accusing God to be a poor excuse for misusing your resources?
2. Read Matthew 25:25. What emotion was the result of this *servant's* inaccurate perception of God?
 - a. Read Isaiah 51:12-13. Record God's lament towards a *fearful* people who chose wrongly as a result of *misplaced fear*.
3. What did the *fear* of the third servant cause him to do with his *talent*? Matthew 25:25
 - a. In what ways can *fear* paralyze us?
4. As the master responded to the *faithful servants*, he also responded to the statement of the *servant* who *hid his talent*. Consider his response:
 - a. *you wicked and lazy servant*. Define these words as they are used in this parable:
wicked

lazy

- b. *you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.* The master was not agreeing with this statement. We know it to be untrue. However, the master is confronting the servant with his own claim. He was challenging the *servant*. Since the *servant* believed the master to be unfair, what did the master say the *servant* should have done in light of his viewpoint of the master? verse 27

- 1.) How does the *servant's* failure to invest the master's *talents* reveal the *servant's* laziness?

5. What did the master do with the third *servant's* *talent*?

- a. Notice, the master did not keep the *talent* for himself. What does this say to you about what God could do with *talents* he has given you and you have not used?

THE CONCLUSION: Read Matthew 25:29-30

1. Consider Jesus' conclusion to the parable in Matthew 25:29. What is the blessing promised?

- a. Record some synonyms for the word *abundance*.

- 1.) When you reflect upon God bestowing *abundance* upon you, what are your thoughts?

- b. Both Matthew 25:29 and 30 contains curses. What are they?

- 1.) For the parable to make sense as a story, all those given *talents* were called *servants*. The servant who hid his talent did not understand God's gracious, giving character, and thus, was probably not saved. If his punishment of outer darkness and weeping and gnashing of teeth was hell, as it is referred to in other scriptures, we know he could not have been saved. However, although a servant of God, who is a believer, will not be banished to hell for misusing God's gifts, in what way is this parable a warning to believers?

- a.) What sorrows does a believer experience for "playing it safe" with God's gifts:

in this life

regarding rewards

REVIEW: Read Matthew 25:14-30

1. This parable contains both a promise of blessing and a warning of punishment. In what ways have you been encouraged by Jesus' promise of blessing?
 - a. In what ways have you been confronted by His warning of punishment?
2. How have you been specifically challenged to use a particular resource in your life?
3. Do you view yourself as a naturally industrious or a lazy person? How can either be detrimental?
4. What do you think was Jesus' intention for teaching this parable?

*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty,
nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God,
who gives us richly all things to enjoy.
Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,
storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come,
that they may lay hold on eternal life.
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19*

Observation Worksheet

Matthew 25:14-30

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. ¹⁶Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. ¹⁸But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. ¹⁹After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' ²¹His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' ²²He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' ²³His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' ²⁴Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'