

LESSONS FROM HEAVEN FOR LIFE ON EARTH- The Parables - Pt 2
Sunday, July 4th, 2021, 6:30 p.m. - Teaching # 2118
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**HOW TO MAKE EACH DAY SPIRITUALLY PRODUCTIVE - Matthew
25:14-30**

Matthew 25:14-30 - “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. [15] To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. [16] He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. [17] So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. [18] But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. [19] Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. [20] And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' [21] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' [22] And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' [23] His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' [24] He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, [25] so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' [26]

“But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I scattered no seed? [27] Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. [28] So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. [29] For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. [30] And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Verse 14 begins with that little word **“for”** - **“For it will be like a man going on a journey...”** This is Jesus’ deliberate attempt to link this parable to the previous one about the wise and foolish virgins. That whole parable dealt with the ***need for readiness when the bridegroom came***. It’s not enough that your lamp was bright and burning ***at one time***. Wise Christians will live life ***constantly expectant, and prepared for the coming of Jesus***.

This next parable picks up the same theme of ***readiness for the Lord’s Coming***. The master is going away on a long trip. Before he leaves, he ***comes to recruit his servants and entrust them with responsibility***. He wants to make sure his interests will be properly looked after in his absence. Jobs and responsibilities are assigned.

And so the Lord has come to each of us. He has made us His own. We have been purchased by redemption and called into discipleship. This parable teaches we have not only been ***forgiven***, we have been ***assigned tasks and equipped for those tasks***. The same master who came once to ***recruit and entrust***, will come again to ***assess and account*** with each servant very personally and carefully.

So, like the parable of the ten bridesmaids, this parable too is a lesson on ***readiness***. But that readiness is further ***explained and defined***. Readiness involves more than just ***waiting***. It involves energetic, disciplined investment of time, effort and resources. That's what the master will be looking for when he comes ***back*** to his servants.

1) **SALVATION IS NOT ONLY THE RECEIVING OF GRACE - IT IS THE GIVING UP OF RIGHTS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW OWNERSHIP**

Matthew 25:14 - "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property."

The important words in that verse are, "who called ***his servants...***" He's not ***asking***, he's ***assigning***. There is nothing ***optional*** in the tasks he's giving out. The slaves can't ignore the master's commission without threat of great penalty.

So the issue of **Lordship** is taken out of mere religious tokenism and placed in a realm that would have been clearly understood in an age where masters owned and controlled many slaves.

And, without any question, we, as followers of Jesus Christ, are **meant** to understand Lordship in the way Jesus framed in this parable. Jesus is saying it is **pointless** to take His Name on our lips and **claim** His Lordship if we don't, on a daily basis, **submit** our wills to His:

Luke 6:46 - "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"

That's a very good question. What is the point in calling Jesus Lord, if His will isn't supreme. What kind of Lordship is that? I can't proclaim His **Lordship** without acknowledging my **servanthood**. And I'm meant to see that right at the beginning of this parable. This is not a story of a friend dealing with another friend. It's not a parable about a neighbor dealing with another neighbor. It's all about a **master** dealing with a **slave**.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

The first and greatest lesson in the school of discipleship is that ***you are not your own once you proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord.***

Nothing about your life can be lived on your own terms anymore.

2) **EVERY BLESSING FROM THE LORD IS MORE THAN A GIFT TO BE RECEIVED. IT IS A TEST OF STEWARDSHIP**

Matthew 25:15-18 - “To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. [16] He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. [17] So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. [18] But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.”

There are several big ideas in these four verses:

- a) ***Every person received freely from the masters hand.*** It's important to note that no one was left out. Even one talent was more money than most people would ever see. We know from the parable of the laborers in the vineyard that **one denarius** was considered a fair day's wage. And one talent was the equivalent to **ten thousand** denarii. In other words, one talent would equal a lifetime of wages for most people.

We're meant to see in this parable that even the least endowed was gifted far beyond belief or expectation. ***There is great grace right from the first moment of this story.*** What trust the master puts in his servants. What involvement they all have in the master's estate.

Jesus wants you to know that you have much to work with in His kingdom. You have not been left out of His plans. You have much to offer - much to develop - much to invest in His kingdom. ***People who don't realize this will live lazy Christian lives.*** There is such a tendency to hide the light under a bushel. Jesus warns against this.

There is absolutely no question about your ability to put much into God's kingdom. The only question is your willingness and your obedience.

- b) ***We are not all equally gifted.*** Life is different for each of us. Opportunities vary. One received five talents. One received two talents. And another received only one.

But I'll tell you what you never see in this story. You never see the master comparing what the five talent person did with what the two talent person did. ***Jesus doesn't compare us this way and we shouldn't either.*** It's so easy to dream about what you would do if you had been given someone else's chances, or someone else's resources.

Or it's easy to ***allow silent bitterness to grow in your heart*** because someone else can do something better than you can. They get asked to sing more than you do. Or they play an instrument better than you. Nothing will rob your life of joyful fruitfulness in Jesus more than this sin of measuring your life by the talents given to another. I'm not my brother's master. Jesus is his master.

I've often wondered if part of this reason this one talent servant buried his talent in the ground was the ***fear that he wouldn't make much of a showing compared to the one given five talents.***

Listen to me. There is something you can do in God's kingdom very well. You are urgently needed in Christ's church. You have been saved and placed in this body by design. Don't join the scores of Christians who never find the joy of doing what they were saved and gifted to do.

This parable teaches a huge, neglected truth - ***you were not only saved from sin. You were saved to service.*** If you're going to claim salvation at all, you must be a servant - literally a ***slave*** (“***doulos***”) of the Master.

- c) ***Unless you explain away the plain wording of Jesus' story, the use of time and the use of money are the areas Jesus singled out as the test of our servanthood.***

The servants were entrusted with ***talents*** (money), and they were left to work with an unspecified amount of ***time***. How well they did with those two ***entrusted gifts*** determined how they would be assessed when the master returned.

Nothing establishes your identity in this world like those two ingredients. ***Money*** is the measurement of what you are able to do. ***Time*** is how long you can do it. And the message of this parable from our Lord is you can't serve Him in a way that will be ***ready for His coming*** without a radical, sizeable investment of both your time and your wealth in His Kingdom.

There are only **two ways of viewing life**. Either you view life from the principle of **ownership**, or you view it from the principle of **stewardship**. Stewards don't **own** wealth. They **manage** it for the master. Stewards don't **schedule** their own time. They serve the agenda of the master. Jesus doesn't have **owners**. He only has **stewards**.

3) **ALL WHO PROFESS CHRIST WILL BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF THEIR STEWARDSHIP**

Matthew 25:19 - "Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them."

At the master's first meeting he **bestows** (see his grace!) freely upon all his servants. At his second meeting he **reckons** with them on the basis of what they had earlier received. It's a mistake to think that judgement will be based on what we have **received** from the Lord. The Bible (Jesus, Himself) teaches that we will be judged, not by what we have **received** from Jesus, but by what we have **done with what we received**.

Notice, the one talent servant didn't **lose** what the master had given him. He had, in fact, all that he had been given. What he didn't have to show was a **life of service with what he had been given**. He had not **done anything with it**. He had not **produced and multiplied** for his master.

He never understood the assignment. That was his problem. He never understood what he was being called to. Perhaps he thought it was enough to have **received something** from his master and hold on to it.

This is a big problem in today's church. Watch the religious stuff on television. Isn't the emphasis, for the most part, on **what we receive** from the Lord? Miracles. Healing. Prosperity. Gold fillings. Deliverance from oppression. You name it. And there is certainly nothing wrong with receiving anything from the gracious hand of God. He loves to give good gifts to His children.

What I am more concerned about is a **misplaced focus**. I'm more concerned about what **isn't** being said than what **is**. The **emphasis is all on getting what we need and want out of our relationship with Jesus** - "I don't go to **that** church anymore. I didn't get much out of it. I **get so much more** out of this one."

And then, all of the sudden, we hear this word of Jesus Himself - the One who will be coming back. And He says we will be **assessed** - **reckoned with** - and **eternally judged** - on the basis of **what we have invested for the Master, rather than on what we have received**.

True, we **start** with what is freely given. We all begin by grace. But we are **assessed**, not by what we have been given, but by **what we have done** with what we have been freely given.

We're going to look at the anger of the master with this servant who hid his talent in the ground more in the next message. But it's enough to note that the reason the master's anger is justified is this. The servant, knowing he **was** a servant, should have been living differently than he did. The master calls this servant **wicked**, and the master calls this servant **lazy**.

I don't ever want to hear those words from Jesus.

Do you want to make each day spiritually productive? Remember that you're a **steward** and not an **owner**. Remember that **you have been given enough by the Lord to accomplish His purpose**. And finally, **live each day thinking about the Master's return**. Do today what you will be proud of then.