

God's Talents

Jed N. Snyder Matthew 25:14-30

To teach Christ's parable concerning faithfulness to use whatever ability He gives us, to show the dispensational aspect of this parable and to show the need for self-examination concerning both salvation and sanctification.

Introduction:

Harry A. Ironside has a significant introductory paragraph which will, I hope, help us to make appropriate applications of this passage...

"Throughout this entire section (chapters 22 to 25), which gives us our Lord's controversy with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and other leaders in Israel, and His great prophecies as to His second advent and the judgment of the nations, one thing stands out crystal-clear: That which counts with God is not slavish adherence to legalistic forms, rites, or ceremonies, but a life controlled by divine love. This is the paramount evidence of the new birth (1 John 3:14), and in the present dispensation is the specific proof that one is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). It is important that we have a proper understanding of this section of the Gospel of Matthew, viewing it in connection with God's dealings with His earthly people, the Jewish nation, and with the Gentiles in connection with God's dealings with their attitude toward Israel. On the other hand, we shall lose a great deal for our own souls if we limit it to this dispensational aspect. We need to remember that moral and spiritual realities are the same in all ages, and the love that is here declared to be the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets will be manifested in the lives of all "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4).

"Love is, therefore, in the truest sense, the law or controlling principle of the new life. It is that perfect law of liberty of which the Epistle of James speaks (1:25). It is so designated because the renewed soul delights to do that which glorifies God and blesses his fellow-men, whether brethren in the faith or belonging to the world that lies in the wicked one (1 John 5:19, R. V.). The Christian will love the sinner even while he hates his sin. And in this he but manifests the divine nature, for this, too, is God's attitude toward the world."

"We show our love for Christ by our concern for His own. This is true in all dispensations, for in every age the new nature which believers receive is the same. Its very first characteristic is love. After the Church has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air a new witness will be raised up on earth. The wise in Israel, enlightened by the Word and sealed as the servants of God, will go to the nations, proclaiming the everlasting gospel. The attitude of the nations toward them will determine their destiny when the Kind returns and sets up His throne of judgment.¹

I. The Master's Talents

¹ Ironside, H. A., Loizeaux Brothers, 1948, p. 335-36.

First note that these talents belong to the Master. The Master here clearly refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. The talents were something He possessed and loaned to His servants for a time to be used.

These talents undoubtedly, both now and in the tribulation when the Jewish evangelists will encircle the globe, are the revelation of Himself that God has given in the Bible, the Gospel of redeeming love and grace, the spiritual gifts given to the church as described by Paul, the faith committed to the saints, the gift and grace of the indwelling Holy Spirit, Himself.

The distribution of the talents was according to the Master's knowledge of each servant's ability. G. H. Lang says that "God does not attempt to put a lake in a bucket. The man with larger capacity for knowledge has a larger privilege of service, heavier responsibility to be faithful, with richer reward if he wins."²

Some are privileged to have 5 talents; some two; some only one. But each is required to be faithful in the use and multiplication of his talents. We should trust the sovereignty of the Master in His allocations. We should not envy the 5 talent man if we are a one talent man. Most of us are one talent people. If we cannot be a Paul, we can be an unknown saint who ministers to the Pauls of our age. Faithfulness in what is given is the critical issue.

II. The Master's Expectations

Two went out at once and began using the talents to increase their Master's property. One hid his talent and did nothing else to increase His Master's possessions.

The two were 100% successful probably as a result of their affection and loyalty to their Master. The one was fearful and did not meet his Master's expectations. He did no actual evil against his Master. He simply did nothing.

III. The Master's Rewards

The Master returned after a long time. The time of Christ's return is never precisely predicted. The long time probably means that there is sufficient time to do what the Master expects and therefore He will justly reward those who are successful.

He rewarded the two successful, faithful servants. They each received in proportion to their abilities and in proportion to their faithfulness. They received commendation and further useful service opportunities. They could enter the joy of the Lord. Faithfulness was rewarded in each case.

The other servant was judged for his wickedness and laziness. He had a wrong conception of his Master, but even with this wrong conception of his Master he was wrong in not

2 . Lockyer, Herbert, Zondervan Publishing House, 1968, p. 244.

seeking to use the talents that his Master had entrusted to him. He was still a servant, but we do not need to think that as a servant he necessarily was saved. All people are called to serve God, but only those who are saved will be successful. We don't know what the outside darkness means. It probably means eternal death, Punishment of some sort is obvious. G. Campbell Morgan is quoted as saying it is "the darkness that is outside the Kingdom of responsibility".³

The lesson here seems to be use it or lose it.

Conclusion: Whereas this parable is likely a prediction that may most directly relate to the Tribulation period, its truth can be applied to us individually and perhaps to local churches corporately. It can be applied to the whole dispensation, and to individual lives, whether short, or long in duration.

May we be found busy and faithful to our Master.

Remember the Psalmist who said he would rather be a door keeper in the house of God than enjoy the luxuries of sin.

3 . Ibid. p. 246.