

## The Parable of the Talents

**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. <sup>15</sup> And 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. <sup>16</sup> Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. <sup>17</sup> And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. <sup>18</sup> But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> "So 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.'<sup>21</sup> His 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.'<sup>22</sup> He 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.'<sup>23</sup> His 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.'<sup>24</sup> "Then 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. <sup>25</sup> And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.'<sup>26</sup> "But 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. <sup>27</sup> So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. <sup>29</sup> "For 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. <sup>30</sup> And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

### What is this a parable about?

First, what is this parable NOT about?

- Money (although a talent is a unit of money)
- Talents. Abilities
- Spiritual Gifts

**To see what this parable is about**, it is useful to see the context in which Jesus gave the parable.

- Located in Matthew 25, it is part of Jesus' teachings on the end times.
- Just after the parable of the 10 virgins.
- Just before the parable of the separation of the sheep and goats.
- Sandwiched between two stories of the separation of the righteous into heaven and the sinners cast into hell.

The context of the parable would highly suggest that it has something to do with salvation, and the judgment of the world.

- So probably nothing to do with capitalism.

**To see what this parable is about, we also need to look at the components of the parable itself.**

- A landowner, or master of the house
- Servants
- Talents
- Rewards/Punishments
- **Landowner** – Jesus. He gives something and will come again to see how that went.
- **Servants** – that's us. We are the servants. Not just His children. All people are servants. Everyone has been given something.
- **Rewards/Punishment** – To understand what the talents are, it is helpful to look at the rewards and punishments
  - **Matthew 25:20-21** "So 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.' <sup>21</sup> His 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.'

- Note the wording. Well done good and faithful servant.
- Also "I will make you ruler over many things"
- And "Enter into the joy of the Lord."
- All of these are suggestive of a judgement that leads to life in heaven
- Punishment - **Matthew 25:28-30** So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. <sup>29</sup> "For 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. <sup>30</sup> And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
  - This is definitely speaking of a judgement that leads to being cast into hell.
- So the punishment/rewards line up with the context of the parable.

**Therefore, the talents must be related to something we are given that makes the difference between heaven and hell in our lives.**

**The talents represent our faith.**

**Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,

- God's grace gives forgiveness to all. God offers it freely to all. That's why it is grace.
- Believing that is faith. Faith is what saves us. We are saved by faith.
  - We believe Jesus is God, capable of forgiving.
  - We believe He came to the earth and lived as a man.
  - We believe He died on a cross, taking our punishment upon Himself.
  - And we believe He rose again.
  - And that is sufficient to cleanse us from all sin.

If faith is us believing, and the talents are given, how can they be faith?

- **Romans 12:3** For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

**Let's look at the parable again, this time at each of the servants to see the faith they have.**

- **Matthew 25:15** And 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.

**The last servant:**

- **Matthew 25:24-30** "Then 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.<sup>25</sup> And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is yours*.'<sup>26</sup> "But 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.<sup>27</sup> So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.<sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.<sup>29</sup> "For 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.<sup>30</sup> And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
- He had a talent of faith – but this is not faith that was ever put into Jesus. He could have put his faith in Jesus, but instead he did not.
- How do we know this? Look at the story:
  - His perception of Jesus is completely wrong.
  - Law based mindset = believe God demands more of you than you can give. Final servant.

- Lost people have all kinds of perceptions of Jesus that are not right.
- Loving heart and warm heart towards God is not what saves us. Generally people that only love God have a misconception of who God is.
- He is cast into outer darkness. This is where lost people go.
- What he has is stripped from him and given to the one that has the most.
- When we are not faithful with what God has given us, that will be taken away from us and given to those with great faith. Opportunities, blessings, etc...
- **Luke 16:10** He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much.
- God is not interested in being seen as fair. See the workers of the vineyard for that lesson.
- The more we use our faith, the more faith we gain. If we do not use any faith – we are not saved.
- If you do not have faith in Jesus, then everything you have is taken away from you.

### **The Servant with 2 Talents:**

**Matthew 25:22-23** He 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." <sup>23</sup> His 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."

- If the first talent is not enough for saving faith, then 2 talents must be someone with faith for salvation
- But they got saved and then what? They used that faith. They believed God for more than just salvation.
- They wanted to see and do greater things.
- Me at 19 asking for the Holy Spirit.
- You must spend faith to get faith.

- You will see that this person and the next get the same reward (almost). Again, God is not interested in fairness. But He is interested in our sanctification and maturing.

### **The Servant with 5 Talents:**

**Matthew 25:20-21** "So 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.'<sup>21</sup> His 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.'

- Basically the same as the 2 talent.
- But why 5 talents? History of faithfulness.
- But even greater faith. Someone practiced in living and moving by faith.
- Understands **2 Corinthians 5:7** "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
- Is rewarded with the extra talent from the last servant.

God has granted to each and everyone of you a measure of faith. When we use our faith, we grow in faith. And we are rewarded with more ways to use that faith.

I have heard people referred to as a 10-talent Christian, or a 2-talent Christian. There is no category you fall into. There is not a cap God has created you to be in. It is all in how practiced we are in using our faith.

### **3 attitudes towards faith (for the believer):**

#### 1. I can't do anything

- You can be a 2-talent believer and get to heaven and that's it. You can choose to at least have faith for salvation, and never step out of the boat. This is a sad way to live the Christian life.
- You have the resources of heaven available to you, and yet you depend on yourself.

- The counsel of the Holy Spirit, yet you listen to yourself.

## 2. If I had more, I could do more.

- This person believes that if they had more they would give more. Whether of time, money, availability, giftings, opportunities...
- Again, **Luke 16:10** He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.
- They look at things that are much bigger than they are and dream about sometime when they will be able to do something like that.
- They may accomplish small things, but probably things that could be accomplished without God.
- When there are victories, they are few and far between.

## 3. I will do what I can with what I have.

- This is the attitude of the 5 talent believer that got 5 more.
- He looks at what God has given him, and then is faithful to steward that as best as possible.
- He may look at greater things, but instead of wishing he could be there, he knows that one day God will take him there.
- He is willing to follow Jesus anywhere. Do anything He says.
- He does not waste his life wishing or dreaming, because he is too busy obeying.
- And when God calls him to things that are much bigger than he has seen before, there is confidence that God is only calling him because they way will be made possible.

I have fallen into the trap of looking at what I don't have and thinking of what I could do if God would just give me...

God told me to look at what He has given me. It is ok to dream bigger. But if I want to know what God is asking me to do right now, look at what he has given me right now. Am I stewarding what I have, or just wishing to steward what I have not been given?

We decide how we will spend the faith God has given us.