

Jesus Gave the Parable of the Talents

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to clearly explain the fact that people need to be prepared for Christ's return. No one can get ready after Christ comes at the Rapture or later when He returns to rule for one thousand years. In our topic today, we will learn how to explain the parable of the talents to our children.

In Matthew 25:14-19, we read, “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. 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. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.” Jesus was answering the questions of His disciples about the future as He gave this parable. As a result, Jesus compared Himself to a man traveling to a far country. The servants would include His disciples who were alive at that time, as well as all who would profess to become His followers in the future.

A talent was a measurement of weight that varied from fifty pounds to as high as two hundred pounds, depending on the country and the time period. These weights were used to measure metals like silver or gold. A gold talent would have a much greater value than a silver talent because the value of gold is much greater than silver. In this parable, Jesus pictures Himself as a man traveling to a far country. The disciples did not yet understand that He would return to heaven soon after His resurrection. Christ gives each person different backgrounds, different skills, different personalities, different mental capacities, different teachers and many other differences so that no two people on the earth are exactly alike. In this parable, we see that the different amounts of talents that are given are based on the different abilities each person has been given because of all of these differences. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” A steward is someone who manages what belongs to another. The key to this parable is understanding what each person did with what they were given because Christ is looking for faithfulness.

The first servant received five talents and used them to gain five more talents. The second servant received two and used them to gain two additional talents. Here, we see that each servant was equally faithful in using what he had been given to serve the Lord and do the things God had for him to do in this life. These two servants both showed an equal amount of faithfulness, in using the combination of things that Christ had given to them, to do things that had eternal value. Hebrews 11:8-10 says, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder

and maker *is* God.” Here, we see that Abraham was faithful in doing what God called him to do because his focus was on things that would have eternal value. In contrast, the third servant took what he had received, went and dug a hole in the ground and buried what he had received. He just lived for the moment and was not faithful. We see at the end of verse 21 that this parable is talking about the time when Jesus will return to this earth to settle accounts.

Matthew 25:20-23 says, “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.” 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.” 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.” 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.”” Here, we see that Jesus will reward the faithful servants after He returns.

We see that Jesus will give each servant the opportunity to tell what he or she has done to gain things of eternal value with all of the things Jesus has given him to use. The first two servants had been given different amounts of talents but each had doubled what he had been given. They had both been equally faithful in using the particular set of abilities God had given them. As a result, Christ made it clear that He would reward both equally because they were equally faithful in using what God had given them to accomplish things that have eternal value. In this parable, Jesus spoke the same words of praise to each of these servants. To both servants, Jesus said, “Well *done*, good and faithful servant.” The word translated “well done” can mean you acted well or did well. The word translated “good” means *excellent or honorable*. The word translated “faithful” means *that one has acted in a way that is worthy of trust*.

Second, Jesus said, “You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.” Here, we see that whatever has been done in the past is compared to a few things. However, in the future, the Lord promises that He will make those who have been faithful over a few things rulers over many things. Jesus makes it clear in this passage that rewards will be based on faithfulness rather than the size of the ministry of each person. The Lord also tells all those who have been faithful to enter into His joy. This entrance into the joy of the Lord speaks of the fact that our faithful service brings great joy to the Lord. We can look forward to being a part of His joy throughout all eternity because of the fact that we have been His faithful children.

In contrast, we go on to read about those who will not enter into the joy of the Lord. Matthew 25:24-30 says, “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. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.” 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. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. ‘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. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”” Here, we see that the unfaithful servant had a wrong view of Christ. Those who have a wrong view of Christ never come to Him for forgiveness because of their lack of repentance and faith.

First, we see that those who never come to Christ in repentance and faith view Christ as a hard man. The word translated “hard” means *harsh, stern or violent*. Jude 14-15 says, “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’” Here, we see that ungodly sinners often speak many harsh things against Christ. Instead of understanding that the love of Christ for them caused Him to go to the cross to pay the penalty for their sins, they accuse Christ falsely because of the evil in their own hearts. Proverbs 23:7a says, “For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.” Those who are evil have their hearts controlled by fear and they have buried the things Christ has given them.

We see that Christ goes on to describe the heart and character of all those who reject Him and fail to come to Him in repentance and faith. First, Jesus said that all individuals who reject Him are wicked. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Then, Romans 3:10-12 adds, “As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.’” Second, we see that Jesus said that such servants are lazy or slothful. They try to blame Christ for their own failure to repent. Jesus said the least the servant could have done was deposit the money with bankers so that it could have earned interest. However, he just buried the talent and did nothing with it.

Jesus said to take the talent from the unfaithful servant and give it to the servant who had ten talents. Jesus said that those who have been faithful will be rewarded with even more. 1 Corinthians 3:14 says, “If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.” Here, we see that the works do not produce salvation. However, Jesus promises that there will be rewards for all believers who have works that have eternal value.

In contrast, we see that the unfaithful servants will be judged. We see that the eternal judgment of unbelievers is described as outer darkness. We also see that in this eternal judgment, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” We see that this parable shows both the reward for the faithful and the judgment of those who reject the free gift of eternal life. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain both so that they can be effective in both warning the unbeliever and encouraging those who are faithful servants of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this parable.