

Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:15-30) –

“Are you a Good and Faithful Servant?”

The reason God kept the exact date of Christ’s return from us is because He knows that we are lazy. Not only are we lazy, we are also extremely self seeking. We seek pleasures to satisfy our own wants, regardless of what God thinks or whether we hurt others in the process. This self seeking lazy demeanour is prevalent and rampant in our time. Parents are carnal and self-centred. They gamble, smoke and drink as long as they do so within the walls of their homes, they reason it is fine. They care only for the “good” life. As long as they buy things for the children and the children study hard and get good results and possess the appearance of good behaviour all is well with their soul. Whether they stumble their children or not is secondary. They drink on! They gamble on! They smoke on! Their hypocritical witness can be easily covered up with a self righteous conscience, church attendance and regular tithing! It matters not what God thinks or what the Bible teaches. Practically every verse in the Bible has an alternate interpretation they can appeal to, to scratch their itching ears, to easily justify their life of self-indulgence. The conscience can easily be seared. The fact that God knows and will demand an account on the Day of Judgement eludes them.

Children have no godly examples to follow! They follow the idols of the world. They dress scantily like the world to attract lusty eyes and wanton affections. Places where sin is enjoyed and godliness is scorned are their favourite playground. Entertainment is of the world for there is much glee and laughter in such places. The churches they attend today are replete with a similar genre of entertainment to satisfy their worldly lust. The big difference is that they are promised, from these churches, heaven as their eternal home while they are being entertained. Is Christ not mentioned when we sing? Christ must be pleased! Promises of heaven are propounded in such churches with no mention of Hell and the fear of God. The heinous nature of sin is mocked. They laugh and scorn the teachings of God and this comes from modern day pastors in modern day churches.

Families are destroyed and homes become spawning grounds for carnal children where carnal parents lead them to Hell whilst telling them that they are going to heaven! What a world we are living in today! But this is what the world is like now. We argue! Alas, we are not describing the world out there but a world inside the church. This Parable of the Talents warns every professing Christian of the gravity of playing the fool with sin and giving excuses for sinning!

Elements of the Parable – Far Country refers to Heaven; The Lord refers to Christ who has ascended to heaven and one day will surely return; the Servants refer to professing Christians; the talents refer to this life as a witness for Christ; the “reckoning” refers to Christians having to give an account to the Lord; “enter into the joy of the lord” refers to

entering into the presence of God and be favourably received; “outer darkness” refers to Hell.

NOTE – The talent does not refer to the number of souls saved, for salvation is of the Lord. God is the only One who can save souls. The talent is not limited to service either. The talent has to refer to the believer’s total life of faith, obedience to God’s Word, trust, transformed life with a godly character and service.

Explanation of the Parable – A man travelling into a far country has the similarity of an annual pilgrimage made by the provincial kings who were subordinate rulers commissioned by the Roman emperor Caesar to assist him in ruling his vast Roman Empire. They were vassal kings like Herod who knew the culture of that region they were put in charge of. They had to make an annual report to Caesar together with a regular tribute. While they are away, they would put their loyal servants in charge. Each of his servants is given specific tasks according to their abilities. All the servants knew that an account would have to be made upon their lord’s sure return. Such is the case here in the parable of the talents (see verses 14 and 15).

In the lord’s absence, the actions of the servants are described. The one who was given the 5 talents traded and made 5 more talents. The one with 2 talents also traded and made 2 more talents. The one who was given 1 talent did not trade at all. He merely dug the earth and buried his lord’s money. The talents in this parable refer to real money.¹ It was not a small amount of money. From the perspective of the lord, all his servants were capable enough to do something with what belonged to their lord. The word for servant is the word for slave. The servants have no ownership to the talents given to them by their lord. They knew that very well. As slaves, they had absolutely no legitimate excuse not to trade with the talents entrusted to them (see verses 16-18).

After a long period of time, the lord returned and demanded accountability. One by one, they were called to account for what they had done with the lord’s talents. The five talent servant brought his 5 talents and the extra 5 talents which he had gained. His lord said to him, *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”* [25:21] The two talent servant brought his 2 talents and the extra 2 talents which he had gained. The lord said to him the same thing he had said to the five talent servant. Then the one who received one talent came and made his excuse to his lord. He said, *“Lord, I knew thee that thou art an*

¹A talent is “A weight composed of 60 manehs (English Versions of the Bible "pounds") equal to about 120 pounds troy and 96 pounds avoirdupois, or 672,500 grains, of the Phoenician standard. When used in the monetary sense the talent might be either of silver or gold, and the value varied according to the standard, but is probably to be taken on the Phoenician, which would give about 410 British pounds, or \$2,050 (in 1915), for the silver talent and 6,150 British pounds or \$30,750 (in 1915), for the gold.”[ISBE]

hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.” [25:24-25] This was a most lame excuse. What had been revealed so far about the lord suggests that he was a just and fair man. Using the lame reasoning of the lazy and faithless servant, the lord said, *“Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.”* [25:26-27] Even if what the lazy servant said about the lord was true, which was not, then at least he could have placed the money with the exchangers and obtained some interests for his lord. The rebuke was final and complete.

The judgement on the one talent, lazy and faithless servant was severe but most righteous. He was a slave. He was deliberate in his laziness. He did absolutely nothing for his lord who entrusted with the very basic amount of 1 talent. Whatever he had was taken from him and given to the 10 talent servant. Then he was cast into outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Application of the Parable – Faithlessness is a serious sin. Calling ourselves “Christian” does not make us Christians. Attending a fundamental church does not make us Christians. Listening to God’s Word preached, even on a daily basis, will not bring salvation. These are Christian activities which pertain only to the externals which results only in the appearance of godliness. Many deceivers and false believers have the same characteristics. They are called “tares” – they could look like wheat but are not wheat because they will never bear fruit. They are goats that bleat like sheep but are not sheep because goats are mean-spirited and cantankerous in their demeanour. These are pawns of Satan masquerading as believers to destroy the church. They could even be seminary and Bible College professors, pastors, elders and deacons. External traits mean nothing before God and He is not mocked by shows of hypocrisy. Sinners who repent of their sins with a broken and contrite heart now, before the Lord returns, can be saved to the uttermost.

True Christians will bear fruit in their lives. They will be transformed from inside out. They know it and more importantly the Lord knows it. They will serve the Lord faithfully at home, in church, and at their work places. They love spiritual activities, which they had deemed a waste of time before their conversion. They enjoy reading and studying God’s Word. They have the highest regard for God’s perfect Word. They love to pray and to pray for others. They look forward to the Lord’s Day worship week after week. They sing praises to God from their hearts and with all their souls. They feel miserable whenever they sin against God. They want to repent immediately and do not blame others for their sin.

They bear the marks of Christ in their hearts and lives. They learn to forgive, to love unconditionally and sacrificially, turning the other cheek. It is a way of life to be a doormat for Christ’s sake, for they know that the Lord was their doormat when He came from

Heaven's glory to die for them. They experience the peace of God in their hearts daily and they have the glorious hope of one day being in Heaven with God for all eternity. These are servants of Christ who are good and faithful on earth and for all eternity.