



THE PARABLES OF JESUS

SESSION 6

Parable of the Talents: *Leaders Guide*

ICE BREAKER

Start off with an ice breaker to get everyone warmed up.

WELCOME

The parable we are studying this week is the Parable of the Talents. The parable Jesus tells first – the Parable of the Ten Virgins – we will discuss next week. Both of these parables are meant to teach us to live out our lives with a sense of **urgency** at His imminent return.

Both parables [this week's and next week] instruct Christian's to have an internal preparedness. Based on this we should ask ourselves two questions:

- Is our **heart/ soul** ready to see Jesus?
- And, is there any **urgency** and **joy** in the way we live our lives for God?

QUOTE

Whatever abilities and advantages we have, they are not our own; we are but stewards of them, and must give account to our Lord, whose goods they are. - Matthew Henry

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 25:14-15**

Remember the context Jesus is about to leave this world and He is teaching His disciples – in **verse 14**, He states there's a "man going on a journey," and this man, "called his servants and entrusted to them his property." Then Jesus provides a breakdown of how the master divided his property out among three servants. To the first, he gave five talents. To the second, he gave two talents. And to the last servant, he gave one talent. And, Jesus states that each of these servants were given the stated amounts "according to his **ability**." We don't see that there was an argument that one servant received more/ less than the other. It's almost assumed that each received what they **deserved**.

This section ends simply with the master "went away."

QUESTIONS

How does this parable represent the kingdom of heaven?

Why do you think the master left the talents with his servants?

Why did the master in this parable give out different talent "amounts" to his servants? [verse 15]

- What's the significance in every servant received something?

If you have ever struggled with what you have been gifted with compared to others, how can this parable help you gain a better perspective on this issue?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Matthew 25:15-18](#)

Now that he has gone, Jesus tells us what each servant did with what they have been given. And with each servant, we see that each man did with the talents as they saw fit.

- **The first servant** “went at once and traded” his talents and he doubled his money. By going “at once,” the actions of the first servant show no delay. He knows exactly what he should be doing. He felt the weight of the responsibility given to him and obviously knew where to go. He went and “traded with them.” For this servant, knowing where to go is almost as important as the urgency he left with. By taking this action, he was able to be faithful in what he was given.
- **With the second servant**, Jesus tells us that he “made two talents more.” He doesn’t say how he did it or where he went, only that he was able to double what was given to him. But maybe He didn’t have to provide the details. When Jesus starts [verse 17](#), with “So also,” what the Greek reveals is that He can also be saying, “in like manner.” Meaning, the second servant, in like manner to the first, made two talents more.

We can say many good things about the work of the first two servants:

- They did their work **promptly**.
- They did their work with **success**.
- They were ready to give an **account** to their master.

The third servant also showed action. He took what he was given – “went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money.” He did not lose his master’s money and he did not make profit on his master’s money. He did almost nothing with his master’s money. Instead of going to “them,” and possibly making more – he simply “went” away from everyone and hid the talent. In fact, there’s a good chance, his talent never left the estate. His talent just stayed on site – buried in darkness – and never saw the light of day.

QUESTIONS

What characteristics are revealed about the first 2 servants?

- *How about the 3rd servant?*

What did the third servant do with their talent?

- *What is Jesus trying to teach us about this servant?*
- *What are some ways that we “hide” our talents today?*

In the church today, is the church made up more of the first 2 servants or the 3rd servant?

Explain your answer.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Matthew 25:19-23](#)

For both the first and second servant, we read that the reward was the **same** – despite the fact that they were initially given different amounts based on their “ability.” They were asked to “enter into the joy of the master,” and each received the same reward. “Entering the joy of the master” seems to imply that this is a place of high **reward**. Something that only the master can invite them to and a place only the master has **access**.

QUESTIONS

In verse 19, what is the significance about the phrase “Now after a long time...”?

Notice that the first two servants were not rewarded according to who had the largest amount of talents, but according to their faithfulness of what they were given. What does this teach us about how we are created?

- What does this teach us about how God will judge each person?
- How can it speak to a person who is a missionary in an “unreached area” or a person holds babies in a nursery?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Matthew 25:24-25](#)

In his actions and in his speech, the third servant really shows an unawareness or **ignorance** compared to the first 2 servants.

- He didn't seem to really **know** the master. Although the master was initially generous to the servant, the servant called the master a, “a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed.” Because he did not know the master, he was more “afraid” of the master than obedient.
- And, he obviously didn't know what to do with the **talent**. So, he simply just gave the talent back to the master.

QUESTIONS

In what way did the third servant attack his master's character?

- Why would he have done that?

Why do you think so many waste the “talents” that they have been given?

A.W. Tozer is known for saying “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

- What comes into your mind when you think about God?
- How is this represented in the way you live your life?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Matthew 25:26-30](#)

Those who **obey** God – who truly know God – will be invited into the “joy of the master.” They are the master's sheep. They are about the master's business and He calls them “righteous.” In our parable, the first and second servants fall into this category. Despite being given different talent based on their abilities, they immediately went and were about the master's business. As a result of their obedience and faithfulness, they doubled what they were given. For those who are obedient and faithful to God, an invitation is extended of, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Those who are **disobedient** – who are wicked and slothful – will not receive the invitation to experience the “joy of the master.” These “goats” will receive the command of “depart from me you cursed,” and cast “into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Our third servant falls into this category. He did not know the master and his talent did not see the light – but was buried. In the end, he too received what he deserved.

QUESTION

Practically speaking, how does the reality of eternal joy or eternal punishment affect how you live day to day?

CONCLUSION

In the larger context of Matthew 25, the main point of this parable is clear: our readiness for Jesus' return is determined by our stewardship of the resources that He has given us. Some think that readiness for Jesus' return is a very spiritual and abstract thing. It really isn't — it is a matter of being about our business for the Lord. In light of this parable, we must ask ourselves: What have we done with

- Our knowledge?
- Our time?
- Our money?
- Our abilities?

The sins of omission [what we don't do] may ultimately be more dangerous than the sins of commission [what we do].

The remaining parables we will be discussing this spring are:

- ***The Parable of the Ten Virgins - Matthew 25:1-13***
- And, ***the Parable of the Good Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37***

I would encourage you to read ahead and study these parables in the days and weeks ahead. I am excited to see where this study leads us as a group and individually in understanding the teachings of our Lord, Jesus Christ.