

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 9 The Talents

AIM: to teach my pupils the importance of doing their best with what they have been given by God.

POINT OF CONTACT: This is one of those parables that would be easy to act out. A talent in the Bible was really a piece of money. You might get fifteen coins and act out the parable using three or four of the pupils to do so.

- I. THE TYPOLOGY OF THE PARABLE. Read the parable as found in Matthew 25:14-30.
 1. The man traveling in a far country represents Jesus Christ. See verse 14a.
 2. The “far country” of verse 14a is Heaven. This pictures Jesus leaving earth and going back to Heaven.
 3. His servants represent people who claim to be servants of Christ; in other words, professing Christians. Notice verse 14b.
 4. The goods represent the possessions—both material and talents—that He gives to each of us. Notice the phrase, “his goods,” in verse 14c.
 5. Notice the words, “After a long time the lord of those servants cometh,” in verse 19a. This represents the coming of Christ.
 6. Notice the words, “and reckoneth with them,” in verse 19b. This represents the fact that all of us must face the Lord and be judged. Read Romans 14:10-12; II Corinthians 5:10.
 7. Notice the words, “I will make thee ruler over many things,” in verse 21. This refers to the kingdom when Christ shall rule and reign over all the earth. We call it the Millennium.

- II. THE THREE SERVANTS.
 1. The servant who received five talents. This servant doubled his talents; and because of this, he received a reward, as we see in Matthew 25:16.
 2. The servant who received two talents. This servant doubled his talents and brought back four, as we read in Matthew 25:17.
 3. The servant who received one talent.
 - 1) This servant hid his talent and did not reproduce. Notice Matthew 25:18.
 - 2) This servant was not a true Christian. He had no faith in the master, as you will notice in verse 24, “...I knew thee that thou art an hard man.” No Christian would say this about Jesus Christ; hence, he was a professing servant but not a true servant. He did not trust the master. Some have erroneously suggested that this servant represents the fact that you are saved by works and not by grace. This is a direct contradiction to the truth of this parable. The fact that he did nothing for his master and the fact that he thought so poorly of his master certainly teach us that he was a “professor” but not a “possessor.” Another thing that would lead us to believe this is the fact that it is a twin parable to the parable of the ten virgins, which showed that five had no oil in their lamps. This was one of those without oil in his lamp.
 - 3) Notice the words in verse 25, “I was afraid.” This certainly does not show faith, and without faith a man cannot be saved.
 - 4) He was wicked and slothful. The Lord puts slothfulness and wickedness hand in hand. It is certainly a vile sin to be lazy.
 - 5) He was cast into Hell, where all false servants will be cast. Read verse 30.

- III. GENERAL TEACHINGS TAKEN FROM THE PARABLE.
 1. We are not expected to be someone else. We are not in competition with other Christians, trying to beat them or be better than they are. We are in competition only with ourselves, to do our best. Notice, he speaks no higher of the man who received five talents and brought back ten than He does of the man who received two talents and brought back four. We are not expected to do what someone else does, but we are expected to do the best we can with what we have.

2. To whom much is given, much is expected. People who have rich backgrounds, many opportunities to learn the Bible, and belong to strong, fundamental, soul-winning churches are expected to do more than those less fortunate. Blessings from God are good, but they carry with them a tremendous responsibility.
3. We are expected to do our very best. Be the best you that you possibly can be. God does not give us a quota of how many, but rather a command—"Do your best."
4. All have a talent. One man received five, one received two, and one received one; but there is no mention here of a man receiving none. This means every man has something he can do for God and something with which he can produce and reproduce for God. Whatever it is—how small or how large does not matter—we are to use it for Him.
5. Our works here will determine our position in the Millennium or the kingdom. The Bible teaches us that someday we shall reign over the earth with Christ. Notice II Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26, 27; 5:10; 20:4. When Jesus comes again at the end of the Tribulation Period, He will rule the earth for 1,000 years. We will rule and reign with Him. The authority and position that we will have will be determined by how much we do for Christ now.
6. All should grow in grace. You will notice that the man who had five increased to ten and the man who had two, to four. The man who had one did not increase at all. A Christian is to be better this year than last, better tomorrow than today, better today than yesterday. We are constantly to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. This teaches the sin of Socialism, Communism, etc. The idea that prevailed in Russia and is becoming prevalent in America, that it is wrong for one man to have more than another is certainly shot full of holes by Matthew 25:28, 29. Some people are given by God more than others, as is found in the parable of the talents. He gave to one five; to another, two; to another, one. The Communistic and Socialistic system is against man's initiative and hard work, and it is an effort to bring the same rewards to the lazy and shiftless as are given to the hardworking and thrifty. Taking from the good workers and giving to the lazy gluttons is contrary to the Scripture and against God's purpose and plan in building society. God does not intend that all men receive the same things. Neither does God intend for success to have to forfeit its spoil. The entire Communistic system and, I am sad to say, much of the American system is wrapped up in this false ideology. Perhaps we will never have another Abraham Lincoln become President from the humble beginning of a log cabin. If the same amount of energy spent in demonstrating for one's rights, picketing, etc. were spent in hard, diligent study, preparation and work, one would get his rights and have a sense of pride and accomplishment in so doing. Let us teach our pupils that God will give just desserts to those who have earned them, not to the lazy who picket for them!