

Matthew 25:14-30 NAS

The Parable of the Talents

Sunday, Nov. 16 at 9:00 & 2:00 + Monday, Nov. 17 at 7 PM

23rd Sunday after Pentecost / 22nd Sunday after Trinity – 2014

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Jesus is God in the flesh; He lived and died to take away our sins. He has also entrusted us with various blessings; then, *when He comes again*, the Bible says that “...each one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Rom 14:12 NAS) Which of these statements will describe you?

- From my faith came *responsible* management of God’s blessings.
- My *irresponsible* management points to the deadness of my faith.

1. **The Gifts are Distributed:** ¹⁴ “For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them [Gen. 24:2]. ¹⁵ And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.” // So Jesus is the Slave Master, the slaves are believers, and His journey began with His ascension into heaven.

- a. A talent was valuable: “A silver talent was worth 7,300 denarii (a denarius equals one day’s wage), and a gold talent could be 30 times more valuable.” (TLSB, 1639) So in *today’s numbers* (with a daily wage of \$100), 1 silver talent = \$730,000, 2 silver talents = \$1,460,000, and 5 silver talents = \$3,650,000.
- b. We have also been entrusted with possessions – not to own them, *but to manage them*. Therefore, we look to *the Giver* and *His Word* to discover His instructions for responsible living.

2. **The Slaves Respond:** ¹⁶ “Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same manner the one who *had received* the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸ But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master’s money.” // So the first two slaves took action *immediately* and, *with God’s blessing*, doubled their amounts. But the third slave made absolutely no effort to put his talent to work.
3. **The Master Returns:** ¹⁹ “Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.” // Note that the Master was gone “a long time,” even as Jesus has been gone a long time to heaven. Also, “a long time” means that we should view our lives in Christ like a long trip – so we should ♦keep remembering our destination— *heaven*, ♦avoid distractions—*like sin*, and ♦keep trying to follow God’s will—*each step of the journey!*
 - a. First slave: ²⁰ “And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.’ ²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’” // Jesus stated this reality in **Luke 12:48** “From everyone who has been given much, much will be required...” (NAU) So the first slave – *blessed with the promise of eternal life and entrusted with 5 talents* – lived for His Master! Then when the Master came He said: Enter into my joy, *thus into eternal life!* So what is Jesus’ joy? That we ☺believe in Him, ☺live for Him, and ☺are finally with Him forevermore!

- b. Second slave: ²² “The one also who *had received* the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.’ ²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’” // So the second slave was very similar to the first – *in proportion to what was entrusted to him*. Remember, **from** our faith **comes** our deeds. Consider these words in **Revelation 20:12**: “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.” (NAS) Faith and deeds should NEVER be added; instead, by faith alone we know Jesus, by deeds alone we show our relationship with Jesus (“...whatever is not from faith is sin.” Rom 14:23 NAS)!
- c. Third slave: ²⁴ “And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. ²⁷ Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. ²⁸ ‘Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ ²⁹ For to everyone who has shall *more* be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he

does have shall be taken away. ³⁰ And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” //

- i. The blame game: The slave was at fault, yet he was blinded to his sin, *so he blamed his Master!* What about us: Are we using what God has given **or** making lame excuses?
- ii. Money back with interest: Even the **1** talent at 1% interest over ten years would have gained about \$75,000!
- iii. Wicked and lazy: Jesus used those words because this slave did NOTHING with what had been entrusted to him. He may have SAID he had faith, *but his lack of action confirmed his lack of faith!*
- iv. Cast out: Lenski wrote: “Here we learn that none who are... useless to the Lord, can remain in his kingdom.” (986) So James wrote that those who are “merely hearers... delude themselves.” (Jam 1:22 NAS) He also wrote: “If a person knows what is right but does not do it, he is sinning.” (4:17 NET)

Conclusion: Just before today’s gospel reading, *in regard to His return*, Jesus said: “keep watch...” (13) But what does that mean? We “keep watch” by ALWAYS → being sorry for our sins, → trusting in Jesus as our Savior, and → using what has been entrusted to us *according to God’s Holy Word!* No matter what our past has been, **let us journey through this life by ever-keeping watch!** And all God’s people said: **Amen!**