



“The For-Profit God”

Parable of the Talents—Matthew 25:14-30

Getting Started . . .

What is the largest amount of money with which you’ve ever been entrusted? What did you do with it?

For Discussion . . .

- 1) To whom is this parable addressed?
- 2) What was the intention of the Master in entrusting his servants with the talents?
- 3) What was the third servant afraid of? What was his real mistake?
- 4) How do you see the Master? What do you learn about God based on this?
- 5) How does Jesus measure success? Faithfulness?
- 6) What gifts or talents has God given to you? Which of those do you feel you are using to their fullest potential? Which are you not?
- 7) What prevents you from using what God has given you? Playing it safe? Laziness? Confusion?
- 8) What is at stake if we don’t use what God has given us in the way He intends?
- 9) What do you hear God stirring in you and/or your family as you read this parable?

Passage Summary . . .

This parable asks: “How does Jesus want me to live between His First and Second comings? How should I behave when I believe He is not physically present?”

In Jesus’ day, a *talent* was a measure of money worth about 6000 days’ wages (about 20 years worth) for a laborer. Even the “one talent” servant had quite a bit of money. Thus, the talent stood for “the great value of the Kingdom and the significant responsibility it brings.” To be an heir of Jesus’ Empire and a priest in His Kingdom entails responsibilities which begin at conversion.

Notice how the faithful stewards were similarly commended (vv. 21, 23). Jesus does not compare me with some other Christian. Rather, He evaluates “*each according to his ability.*”

It was very common for people to hide money in the ground for reasons of security, especially when their world seemed uncertain (i.e., war & the economy). Something like this would have been viewed as natural, even prudent. Yet—*shockingly*—this servant was condemned! Understand that the master did not intend the servant to keep the money safe, but to risk it! Failure to put the investment at risk was tantamount to dereliction of duty. Windsor Road may be a not-for-profit church but we serve a for-profit God! The servant’s laziness and lack of faithfulness distorted his view of his master. Out of his sloth, the

servant blamed his master. *"I knew you were a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and harvesting where you had not scattered seed. So I was afraid."*

Some think the master's punishment too harsh; yet the parable communicates that Jesus is paying attention to us. "Grace never condones irresponsibility." (D. A. Carson) Our lives matter to Him! We live in full view of Christ. What will you do with the one life Jesus has given you?

Notes:

Prayer . . .

Spend some time praying that you would know God better. Pray that He would help you to live in a way that fully uses the resources He's given you without holding back. Pray that you'd be able to recognize His voice and follow what He is stirring in you.