

# Jesus' Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24 & 25



Jesus continues to depict His spiritual expectations for saints in the Great Tribulation. We next encounter the parable of the talents. It implies there is work to be accomplished despite the persecution and suffering of those days.

Three servants are expected to further their master's influence while he is away. Two of them go for it; one turns out to be wicked and lazy.

Hearing this parable they would despise the wicked, lazy servant. It would trigger in them the understanding that, no matter how difficult the Great Tribulation, they must serve the Lord with zeal.

We can find application for ourselves because spiritual principles are timeless. Nevertheless we are looking in this parable at Jews who must endure the absence of their Master until Jesus returns in His Second Coming.

Matthew 25:14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

Matthew 25:15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

The "talent" in this story was a weight and its value depended on whether the object weighed was copper, silver, or gold. Talents were given to the several men according to their "abilities."

It would be best to interpret the talents as opportunities. In the parable each of the men is given opportunity according to ability and is expected to serve faithfully.

Though addressed to Tribulation saints, we too serve an absent Lord. Jesus ascended into Heaven and gave gifts to us. He deposited with us the Gospel.

Jesus did not, and does not, expect you to exceed the abilities He has given you. He only expects you to be faithful to use your abilities to take advantage of any and every opportunity to serve Him.

I feel like a one talent kind of person. Billy Graham would be a five talent guy. We're all in there somewhere on a scale of one to five.

God didn't want there to be two Billy Graham's and no Gene Pensiero. He required an international evangelist and He required a pastor for a local fellowship of believers in Hanford called Calvary Chapel.

Matthew 25:16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.

Matthew 25:17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.

Two of the servants immediately put their talents to good use. They put them in play and doubled their stewardship.

Though God gives abilities as He sees fit, and gifts as He wills, it doesn't mean you cannot improve upon them. Quite the contrary. You should do all you can to enhance your abilities and gifts. We need to adopt a disciplined approach to serving the Lord.

Matthew 25:18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

It shows discernment on the part of the master. He knew he was risking the one talent. Still he gave it to this servant.

We should never set someone up to fail. But we must let folks prove themselves. Being faithful in little things is still being faithful.

Matthew 25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

All three knew the master would return. They knew there would be a review.

I think every human being has an innate sense they will be judged one day. More than that - I think people want to be judged, thinking that they accomplished something with their lives.

Everyone will be judged but not the way they think.

Matthew 25:20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'

Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Matthew 25:22 He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.'

Matthew 25:23 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Both servants receive exactly the same commendation and reward. It challenges us in that we tend to think the one who accomplished more deserves more recognition.

The master was looking for faithfulness more than anything else. It is a great principle in the Christian life that God is looking for faithfulness. Holiness, sure; obedience, you bet. But when it comes to the talents and abilities God has given you, He only asks you be faithful.

You can be faithful with little or with much, in any culture, with any circumstances. It is a universal spiritual standard.

These two are told to enter in to the joy of their Lord. It is symbolic of saints entering in to the kingdom Jesus will establish on the earth at His Second Coming. Thus we would say that these invested themselves in things that promoted and hastened the return of the Lord.

Matthew 25:24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

Matthew 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

This servant blamed his master for his unfaithfulness. He accused him of being greedy. He claimed to fear him. The real problem, however, was not with the master.

Matthew 25:26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

Matthew 25:27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

If this servant had really believed the things he said he would have at least put the talent in the bank. This was a smokescreen for what the master labels as lazy.

We ought not be lazy servants. Laid back and casual is fine; but not lazy.

Matthew 25:28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

Matthew 25:29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

Let me break from exposition to make an observation. I've known several people over the years who believe God has given them talents and gifts they do not possess. It's sad to watch them spin their wheels trying to do something they are not called to while the talents and gifts they have been given are hidden and wasted.

Matthew 25:30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The parable touches upon reality as Jesus indicates such an unprofitable servant will be cast into Hades and (later) Hell.

The point for a saint in the Great Tribulation: Endure persecution and remain faithful serving the Lord until His return to earth.

The point for us is to be faithful with the talents and gifts God has given to us. ***Don't be lazy serving God!***