

# The Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

The main distinguishing difference between the servants is their *proper use* or *improper use* of the Householder's goods by trading and trafficking during the time of His absence. Two servants are shown to have brought forth varying amounts of increase through a proper use of their Householder's goods, while another servant brought forth no increase at all through a failure to use his Householder's goods. The servant bringing forth no increase had stored his Householder's goods for safekeeping in a place where they could not be used.

This last servant's stewardship was supposed to have been the means through which he would have successfully gained greater responsibilities. However, failure in his presently assigned stewardship meant his future rejection as a ruler. This unfaithful steward at the time of his Master's return, will be judged unfit to occupy a position with his Master in the Kingdom, with ensuing chastisement.

The LORD Jesus will not take lightly the matter of household servants because of their unfaithfulness, spurring proffered positions as co-heirs with Him in the Kingdom. Unfaithful servants will receive treatment of such a harsh nature at the hands of their LORD that many students of this parable completely turn away from the thought of saved individuals being in view. To them, it is completely unthinkable that the LORD will extend treatment of this nature to redeemed individuals, His own people!

Because of the unfaithful steward's chastisement by his LORD, issues surrounding one's eternal salvation or eternal damnation are often read into this parable, with the unfaithful servant being understood as an unsaved individual.

However, the question concerning how the LORD could extend such treatment to the unfaithful steward does not address eternal salvation at all. The question asked in a proper biblical framework would have to be just the opposite: "How can the LORD be perfectly just and righteous without extending treatment of this nature to one of His own? If faithfulness calls for commendation and reward (which it does), then unfaithfulness has to call for rebuke and loss (which it does). The inverse of one must be true relative to the other, otherwise our LORD's perfect justice and righteousness can not be satisfied.

## The Servant's Plea

The unfaithful servant is seen pleading his case before the LORD in frank, open and unrestrained manner. Nothing appears to be held back as he relates the reason(s) for the particular course of action he had taken while servant in his Master's house and in charge of a portion of the Master's goods.

The unfaithful servant does not try to hide or cover up that which he has done. To the contrary, it is just the opposite. He appeals to his LORD, while in His presence, in an open and almost brazen manner, relating exactly what had occurred. Paul, in his message to the Romans, stated, “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16).

[Paul proclaimed both the “good news of grace” and the “good news of glory”; the reference in Romans 2:16 pertains only to the “good news of glory”, for no future judgment of the “secrets of men” awaits individuals in relation to the gospel of grace. Paul’s gospel in this passage (and elsewhere in the Pauline epistles where the expressions “my gospel” or “our gospel” appear) must be understood as the good news concerning the coming glory of Christ, to be proclaimed to steward in the house (cf. Matt. 24:45; Rom. 16:25; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Gal. 1:11-12; Eph. 3:1-6; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 2:8). This gospel deals with the message concerning present faithfulness of household servants in view of their occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in His coming Kingdom (note the context of 2 Tim. 2:8)].

The unfaithful servant accuses his LORD in order to justify his failure to use the goods entrusted to his care. He accuses the LORD of reaping a harvest and deriving an increase through the labors of others, which was true, but viewed from a completely erroneous perspective. He looked upon the entire matter from a carnal, humanistic viewpoint, rejecting spiritual values. He envisioned his LORD doing these things only for self-gain, and gave little or no thought to the revealed reason (which he should have known) concerning why the Householder was conducting affairs in His house in this manner.

The Householder had a relationship with His servants of this nature for a purpose involving far more than just self-gain, as supposed by the unfaithful servant. The Householder, for a particular reason, had delivered His goods to His servants and assigned them responsible positions in His house, with a view to their bringing forth an increase (bringing forth fruit).

Servitude during the present day of trials and testings will be the means through which the Householder will one day elevate His servants from positions in the house to positions in the kingdom. The Householder was allowing them, through faithfulness in lesser responsibility, to show they are qualified to assume greater responsibility (cf. Matt. 25:29; Lk. 16:10-12; 19:26); and upon the Householder’s reception of the Kingdom and His return in possession the Kingdom, those servants having shown themselves qualified will be elevated from household servants of their Master to co-heirs with Him.

The self-gain which the Householder will eventually realize is that of gaining co-heirs, companions to ascend His throne together in His Kingdom. The work in the fields was to be accomplished by the household servants, using their Master’s possessions

(everything belonged to the Master of the house); and the work was to be accomplished on the Master's behalf.

The Householder, through this means, is extending to His servants the privilege of earning positions with Him in the Kingdom, allowing them to one day be elevated to the highest place of honor and glory one can possibly receive. They will be recompensed for their labors by being elevated into positions as co-heirs with the Householder in His Kingdom. The fruits of their labors will not only benefit the Householder, but the servants as well, with the Householder and His servants both realizing the results together.

Numerous positions in the coming Kingdom which the Lord Jesus has gone away to receive must be filled upon His return. The failure of a servant to show himself qualified will not leave the position which could have been his vacant. The Lord will simply assign that portion to another servant, adding to the responsibility which that servant will have already been accorded. When all factors are considered, no other meaning can really be derived from the Lord's action of taking from one servant and giving to another servant at the Judgment Seat.

(C) July 1997 by Christian Publisher's Bookhouse  
William D. Ramey

**Fair Use Copying Notice:** These pages may be reproduced and used, without alteration, addition, or deletion, for any nonpecuniary or nonpublishing purpose without permission.

