

Today's Text: Matthew 25:14-30 English Standard Version (ESV)

### **The Parable of the Talents - Stewardship**

14 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants[a] and entrusted to them his property. 15 To one he gave five talents,[b] to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. 17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.[c] You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' 26 But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

## Definition of *stewardship*

1. *1* : the office, duties, and obligations of a **steward**
2. *2* : the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; *especially* : the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care *stewardship of natural resources*.

### **1. First, this parable teaches us that success is a product of our work.**

In the book of Genesis we see that God placed Adam in the garden to work it and take care of it. We were made to work. **As Christians we have a mission that our Lord expects us to accomplish in the here and now.**

Far too many evangelical Christians today see their salvation as simply a “bus ticket to heaven.” They believe it doesn’t matter what they do while they “wait for the bus.”

- **The Parable of the Talents teaches us what we are supposed to do while we await the return of our King.**
- **We are to work, using our talents to glorify God, serve the common good, and further God’s kingdom.**
- **Biblical success is working diligently in the here and now using all the talents God has given us to produce the return expected by the Master.**

### **2. The Parable of the Talents teaches that God always gives us everything we need to do what he has called us to do.**

**Have you ever wondered what a talent is worth in today’s dollars?** It is hard to know for sure, yet whatever its exact value, in the New Testament a talent indicates a large sum of money, maybe even as much as a million dollars in today’s currency.

**We are tempted to feel sorry for the servant who received only one talent, but in reality he received as much as a million dollars from the master and buried it in his back yard.** He was given more than enough to meet the master’s expectations.

Just as the master expected his servants to do more than passively preserve what has been entrusted to them, so God expects us to generate a return by using our

talents towards productive ends. The servants were given enough to produce more – it is the same with the gifts God has given us.

**The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2:10:**

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

We seldom associate this verse with our work, but we should.

### **3. The Parable of the Talents teaches that we are not all created equal.**

The most overlooked part of this parable is the second half of verse fifteen: the master gives to each servant talents, "...each according to his ability." The master understood that the one-talent servant was not capable of producing as much as the five-talent servant.

We want to protest this as unfair. Yet we know this is true from our own experience. Diversity is woven into the fabric of creation.

**But even though we're not created equal in regard to the talents we're given, there is equality found in the Parable of the Talents.** It comes from the fact that it takes just as much work for the five-talent servant to produce five more talents as it does the two-talent servant to produce two more talents.

This is why the reward given by the master is the same. The master measures success by degrees of effort, as should we.

### **4. The Parable of the Talents teaches that we work for the Master, not our own selfish purposes.**

The money that is given to the servants is not their own. The money they earn with the capital is not theirs to keep. The servants are only stewards of the master's investment, and it is the quality of their stewardship that the master seeks to measure.

We should maximize the use of our talents not for our own selfish purposes, but to honor God.

We know that we work in a fallen world. Because of the curse of sin, our work will be difficult.

*But we should feel satisfaction and joy from doing our best with what God has given us in the place where his providence puts us, seeking to succeed in order to honor him.*

**5. The Parable of the Talents shows that we will be held accountable.**

The Parable of the Talents is not about salvation or works righteousness, but about how we use our work to fulfill our earthly callings. It is about whole-life stewardship, or “Stewardship with a capital ‘S’.”

*The unfaithful steward in this parable didn't so much waste the master's money – he wasted an opportunity.* As a result, he was judged wicked and lazy. We are responsible for what we do for God with what we have been given, and one day we will be held responsible.

What we hear from the Master on that day is up to us.