# Good and Faithful Servant

## (Matthew 25:14-30)

Last week, as we considered the coming of Christ, we read the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids, a fitting story encouraging the listener to be prepared. This week, our Gospel reading presents the story of the Parable of the Talents, which like Paul's letter, focuses our attention on what we do while we wait. Three servants are entrusted with talents while their master is away. Each servant is given a different number of talents. When his master returns, each servant has to give an accounting of how they used their talents. Those given multiple talents doubled their talents. The servant given only one talent hid it in the ground, explaining that he was afraid of the master.

Jesus said that the point of this parable was twofold. First, while Jesus is away, the believer is to do something and that something is: work—work faithfully and diligently. Second, while Jesus is away,

the believer is to know something and that something is: his work will be greatly rewarded or severely judged.

Again, Christ was dealing with His return. He went "on a journey" (v. 14), and "after a long time, the Master returned" (v. 19). Jesus was teaching a much-needed lesson: we must be faithful and diligent, for if we are not, when He returns there will be severe judgment.

Jesus used parables to present to us powerful pictures about God, humans, and life. By means of these stories, he communicated life-changing truths to his disciples and to those who are willing to listen and learn today. The Parable of the Talents, or the Parable of the Three Servants, is a parable that emphasizes the importance of faithfulness.

By means of this parable, our Lord let us know that in the final analysis, our lives will be judged not on

the basis of our fame, but on the basis of our fidelity—our faithfulness and loyalty. We will be rewarded not on the basis of our genius, but on the basis of our



goodness. This parable should confront each of us in a very personal way and disturb us to the depths of our being. It should encourage us to do our best and challenge us to become a better person.

Notice in verse 15 that the talents were entrusted to "each according to his ability." Each of us has an equal opportunity and charge to become a good and faithful servant of God. This parable points out that we will be judged and rewarded on the basis of our faithfulness in using what has been entrusted to us.

A word of caution: Let each of us beware of the possibility of becoming a twin brother or sister of the one-talent servant. **This man** failed to trust in the good character of his Lord. From the dawn of human history, Satan's strategy has been to

question the goodness of God. In the Garden of Eden, he dropped the hint that God was not really good, that he was restricting Adam and Eve from entering into what they had the right to experience.



The sin of no faith has been the undoing sin of God's people throughout the ages. The sin of little faith causes us to refrain from attempting to do the big things God wants us to do.

**This man** was not a bad man. He is not described as cruel and merciless. He is not described as a wasteful person or as a slave to his passions. **This man** counted his one talent as being of no real importance. Evidently he assumed that his one talent was not needed. He failed to appreciate that every talent is precious in God's sight. **This man** lacked the faith and courage to take a risk. He decided to be cautious and play it safe. He is like those who never "go for broke" in order to succeed in a business enterprise.

We must trust God to fulfill his promises if we are to do something significant. We must expose ourselves to the peril of embarrassment and loss if we are to do anything worthwhile. What if Abraham had played it safe and had refused to risk leaving his home and



going too far country for God? Moses wanted to play it safe and tried every excuse possible to avoid responding to God's call. Finally, he took the risk and became a great deliverer. And we can be grateful that Jesus did not play it safe. If Paul and the other apostles had played it safe and had never risked failure, we probably never would have known about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many people are tempted to think that their talent is so small that it does not matter, and therefore they neglect to respond to their opportunities. When we do this, we become a twin brother or sister of the one-talent man.

Let's look at the good news in this powerful parable. Each of us has been given talents by our King. The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to each believer according to the needs of the church. No one is left empty-handed. Each one has been given a gift.



We can double our capital (talent) by faithfulness. We can have twice as much of the same things that were first entrusted to us if we are reliable and trustworthy in using what God has already placed in our hands.

We can improve our own usefulness and fruitfulness. Someone has said, "One note is a sound. Add other notes and you have a song." One color, no matter how beautiful, is monotonous. Add other colors, and you have a cathedral window. Such is the reward to those who add to the gifts God has given them through faithfulness.

We can receive the Lord's approval and praise. We receive God's acceptance when we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. He accepts us and forgives us. We can have his approval and his praise if we are faithful in the use of the gifts he bestows upon us. All of us would like to hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."



We can enter into the joy of the Lord. All of us want to enter into the joy of our Lord in the hereafter. This parable teaches us that it is possible to enter into the joy of our Lord in the here and now. Ours can be the joy of doing good. Ours can be the joy of showing God's love to others. Ours can be the joy of seeing people come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Ours can be the joy of becoming what God wants us to be.

Let us beware of thinking of ourselves as one-talent people. We need to recognize that the little person

with a great gospel is mightier than a great person with no gospel. If we neglect to use our opportunities and gifts, we will lose them. If we bury our gifts, we reveal that we do not have the character that makes it possible for us to be compatible or comfortable with God. Let us use what God has given to us that we might bring glory to him and that he might be glorified in us.



How should we then live? We should use our talents to bless others, especially God's people, by deeds of love and kindness. This is the profit or reward that Jesus wants. These are the ones who are living in the light of Jesus' coming.

So, what are the lessons we can learn from this Scripture reading from Matthew?

Each servant is accountable for the gifts entrusted to them by God. And they are expected to use their

talents wisely and productively.  Servants who receive and invest their talents are rewarded, while the one who hides his talent out of fear is reprimanded.  The servant who buried his talent faced severe consequences, underscoring that failing to act can lead to loss.  These lessons encourage believes to consider how they can use their gifts to serve others and glorify God.



Please bow your heads as I pray.

Heavenly Father, everything we have comes from you and belongs to  you.  Help us to be responsible in the use of those resources, so that they increase in value.  Help us to respond to the trust you have placed in us.  There is so much you have entrusted to us, even the future of your kingdom of justice and love.  Give us the grace to work out with you the growth of mercy and goodness in this world, to be united with all Christians, and with all who seek you

with a sincere heart in bringing reconciliation and joy to everyone.  Let us go together the way to you, our living and loving God.  We ask this in the name of your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.  **Amen.**