

PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE

The Parable of the Talents ... Are You Burying Yours?

I am one who is always asking, "what would you have me do Lord."

You see, I believe that the Father expects more from us as Christians. He expects more from us than just to be good; to love our neighbor; to not lie or steal; to go to church on Sunday; and/or to read our daily Bible readings.

I also think he expects more from us than to just have a relationship with Him.

I think He wants us to have a "hot" relationship with Him.

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Revelations 3:16.

I think He expects us to use the gifts, talents, experiences, and capabilities He has given us to build His Kingdom and to spread the Gospel.

The other day while in prayer, the Father began talking to me. He wanted to emphasize the importance of the times we are living. He wanted to emphasize that the time was short.

The parable of the talents rained down on me. I was soaking in its meaning, and in the message that Jesus was trying to convey to His disciples just a short time before calvary. I was given a new understanding and a new knowledge of His message behind His worldly example.

I had always understood the parable to be more about blessings, prosperity, and stewardship. But on that morning in that church, I began to better understand its second coming message.

"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. And to one he gave 5 talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey." Matthew 25:14-15 (NKJ)

In the opening lines of the parable given in Matthew, Jesus tells us clearly what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. The parable itself explains that we are accountable for our actions and that rewards await us if we are "good and faithful servants."

Jesus draws upon a real life example to explain what was about to happen in His life.

In those days, when a landowner would go away for an extended period of time, he would entrust the responsibility of his estate to one or more servants. Giving his servants such control was a significant sign of trust. The expectation of the landowner was that the servants given such responsibility would carry on in the same way as the landowner would have done had he been there. Upon his return, the landowner would summons his servants to come before him and account for what they had done in his absence.

In the parable, the Master knew his servants natural aptitudes. He knew what they were capable of doing, how much he

could trust them, how much responsibility he could give to each one of them, and what he could expect in return from each of them.

"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large one. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities." Luke 16:10 (NLT)

"Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise, he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money." Matthew 25:16-18 (NKJ) (turn to the scripture in your Bible and read through to verse 27 for the complete parable).

As we read through the parable we find that two of the servants were faithful to their master, and their actions contributed to his storehouse. However, the third servant in whom the master would only entrust one talent, did nothing. He was afraid. He was more concerned about himself than he was about serving his master. He did not take responsibility of his talents ... his gifts.

Although Jesus used coins in His parable, the talents given to the servants (in this case, His disciples) refer to the spiritual, physical and intellectual gifts that God gives each and every one of us to fulfill our calling in His Kingdom.

From the very moment that we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and received the Holy Spirit, we received His gift of grace. We were bought. We became His servants, and are now expected to serve His Kingdom.

We also became His children, and as His children we were blessed with spiritual gifts in which we can use in our service.

As we communion with Christ and our love for Him deepens, our spiritual gifts, talents and abilities will increase as we reach out to others with God's love.

By investing our talents in helping and serving others, we increase the value of our own gifts & in turn bless those that we help.

By witnessing and sharing our testimony of God's love, and His mercy and grace; we can save souls.

By being faithful and sowing our faith in Christ into others, we will reap a spiritual harvest through our actions and deeds.

By reaching others with the Gospel, we will one day receive a great reward.

Because God has blessed all of us with different capabilities, He expects us to use all He has given us to build His Kingdom. If Christ is living in us, then we are supposed to be the light of the world. We must glorify God through our faithfulness, our actions, and our love for and service to others.

There are severe consequences for those who call themselves servants of God, but have done little to show for it. If we do not use the gifts that God has given us in

servicing His Kingdom, we are basically living a sinful, worldly existence. If we hide our faith, if we don't share the Gospel, if we don't witness and share our testimony with the lost, we will pay dearly.

Will God even know us come judgment day?

Do you know what an apostate is? An apostate is someone who pays lip-service to God and Christ without experiencing a loving change of heart and displaying a positive change in behavior. Laziness, worldly endeavors, valueless works not related to our calling or His will for us, is all meaningless to God and shows our unfaithfulness.

The parable states that our Master is a "hard man." That is because we serve a righteous God.

In the parable, the increase in the number of talents was never the issue. Quantity is not what God expects from His servants ... His children. You read in the parable that both the servant that got five talents and the one who got two talents were equally praised by the Master. Faithfulness to God, utilizing our spiritual gifts to witness and to serve others, and to heed our Kingdom calling with action is what God is expecting from us. We are all expected to use our talents to serve God by serving others. We are all expected to build up His Kingdom by bringing more people to Christ and not just worrying about ourselves.

Love your neighbor. Get to know your neighbor, then have your neighbor get to know Christ.

"And He said to them, 'go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.'" Mark 16:15-16 (NKJ)

"Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven. Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand." Matthew 7:21, 24, 26.

What are you going to do with the spiritual gifts that God has given you? Are you going to act on it? Have you shared your testimony of God's love, mercy and grace? What are you doing to help spread the Gospel to all nations? If that's too far to go, what are you doing to share the Gospel with your neighbors down the street or your associates at work? Are you doing nothing? Are you trying to bury it, or act on it?

When our Lord returns, we must all give an account of what we did with the gifts that we were given. We don't know when that might be. Are you ready to give your account?